

INTEGRAL REVIEW

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**Integral Consciousness:
From Cosmology to Ecology**



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August 2013 Special Issue Introduction

Issue Editor: Bahman A. K. Shirazi

The articles included in this special issue of Integral Review represent a wide range of integral scholarship at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS), founded in 1968 in San Francisco by Dr. Haridas and Bina Chaudhuri. Haridas Chaudhuri arrived in the United States in 1951 upon an invitation by professor Frederick Spiegelberg of Stanford University who was charged with directing a newly founded independent graduate school (American Academy of Asian Studies) devoted to introducing Asian studies to American higher education. Spiegelberg had traveled to India in the late 1940s to research the contemporary practices of the ancient spiritual traditions of India. His visit culminated in an encounter with the great spiritual figure of modern India, Sri Aurobindo, whose writings represented a grand synthesis of evolutionary spirituality with ancient Indian spiritual traditions.

Haridas Chaudhuri, one of the first to study and write about Sri Aurobindo, brought a creative and dynamic integral vision to the west which he articulated in terms of an educational framework based on integration of the highest eastern and western spiritual and cultural values aimed at educating the whole person. Later in 1968, he founded a new graduate school, the California Institute of Asian Studies (later renamed CIIS), implementing a triune approach to higher education comprising didactic, experiential and applied dimensions. The experiential dimension included the pioneering introduction of meditation, yoga and other eastern mind-body practices into American higher education.

The first article by CIIS president Joseph Subbiondo, *Integrating Meditation into Higher Education: The Founding Mission of CIIS as an Education for the Whole Person*, provides an overview of the introduction of meditation practice into higher education as part of an integral approach to education. The importance and relevance of mindfulness meditation in daily life is outlined and Haridas Chaudhuri's philosophy of meditation and its connection to action are explored.

We continue with several articles on integral ecology and its visionary extensions to new areas such as integral ecofeminism and integral ecopsychology. *The Quest for Integral Ecology* co-authored by Sam Mickey, Adam Robbert, and Laura Reddick, presents an exploration of the different approaches to integral ecology, including a historical overview and an exposition of some of the philosophical and religious visions that are shared by a variety of integral ecologies. A common aim of integral ecologies is to cross the boundaries between disciplines in order to develop comprehensive understandings of the intertwining of nature, culture, and consciousness in ecological issues.

In *Toward an Integral Ecopsychology: In Service of Earth, Psyche, and Spirit*, Adrian Villaseñor-Galarza presents a framework for the nascent field of integral ecopsychology, defining it as the study of the multileveled connections between humans and the Earth. After introducing different ecological schools, he focuses on ecopsychology as a unifying lens from



which to assess our planetary challenges by exploring three avenues in which the project of ecopsychology enters into dialogue with spiritual and religious wisdom.

Next, Chandra Alexandre offers an introduction to integral ecofeminism as a spiritually grounded philosophy and movement seeking to catalyze, transform and nurture the rising tensions of the entire planet. In *Integral Ecofeminism: An Introduction*, she articulates an approach toward healing and offering a possibility for creating and sustaining the emergent growth of individuals, institutions and our world systems through acknowledging the wisdom of creation in its multiplicity, specificity, and profound manifestation.

Loving Water: In Service of a New Water Ethic explores how a new water ethic could gain much from the Hindu concept *seva* (loving service) that arises from the traditions of *bhakti yoga* (loving devotion) and *karma yoga* (altruistic service). Elizabeth McAnally who visited India to participate in an interdisciplinary conference co-sponsored by Yale University and TERI University in Delhi, draws on David Haberman's work with the Yamuna River of Northern India, inviting the reader to consider a new water ethic that responds to contemporary global water issues and crises.

Next we turn to a unique application of integral thinking to our current economic crises in *An Integral Perspective on Current Economic Challenges* by Pravir Malik who presents a holistic model that draws inspiration from the journey a seed makes in becoming a flower in more fully understanding the nature of the crises we may be facing. After providing a brief overview of major economic crises of the last several decades, he argues that each economic crisis must be understood as a unique phenomenon requiring different and unique responses.

The next three articles explore integral spirituality, first in connection to western esoteric traditions, and finally with respect to traditional Indian spirituality. In *The Path of Initiation: The Integration of Psychological and Spiritual Development in Western Esoteric Thought*, Gary Raucher examines a strand of Western esoteric wisdom through the writings of Alice A. Bailey and Lucille Cedercrans that offers a particular integral perspective on psychospiritual development in relation to spiritual emergence and the mutually interdependent evolution of consciousness and matter. This view, influenced by theosophy, and thus in part by Asian spiritual traditions, considers human life to be a vital and necessary phase within the larger cosmic evolution of consciousness and matter. Emphasis is given to "The Path of Initiation," a phase of psychological and spiritual expansion into deepening levels of transcendent, supramental consciousness and functioning.

A New Creation on Earth: Death and Transformation in the Yoga of Mother Mirra Alfassa, by Stephen Julich is a Jungian cross-cultural hermeneutic exploration and analysis of symbols of death and transformation found in Mother Mirra Alfassa's conversations and writings. Focused mainly on her discussions of the psychic being (evolving soul) and death, it is argued that the Mother maintained her connections to her original western occult training throughout her later years of collaboration with Sri Aurobindo.

Debashish Banerji traces the Indian yogic and spiritual foundations of Sri Aurobindo's yoga in his article titled the *Traditional Roots of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga* through a psycho-

biographical approach to his life and work. He traces Sri Aurobindo's personal spiritual evolution, starting with the early years of his political activity and his introduction to yogic practices, and leading to his four major realizations. Sri Aurobindo came into contact with a number of Indian traditions of yoga and absorbed symbolisms, practices and lexicons from all of these—from Tantra and Vaishnavism and their synthesis with the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita and the Vedantic traditions—to shape his integral yoga, the ultimate goal of which became the acceleration of the evolution of human consciousness toward integrality and establishment of divine life on earth.

*Lastly, in *Metaphysical Instincts & Spiritual Bypassing in Integral Psychology*, I introduce the term *metaphysical instincts* in connection with Assagioli's *higher-unconscious* in the context of integral psychology. In traditional spiritual practices awakening the metaphysical instincts has often been done at the expense of suppressing the biological instincts—a process referred to as spiritual bypassing. In some western psychotherapies, the main focus has been the integration of the *lower-unconscious* into the conscious personality; whereas, in traditional yogic practices the focus has been on the integration of the higher-unconscious into the conscious realm, leaving out the subconscious and unconscious areas. This essay discusses how the metaphysical instincts, initially expressed as the religious impulse with associated beliefs and behaviors, may be transformed and made fully conscious, and integrated with the biological instincts in integral yoga and psychology in order to achieve wholeness of personality.*

It is hoped that these essays will provide inspiration and stimulation for those interested in integral consciousness and the diverse array of streams that feed into it.

On behalf of CIIS, much gratitude is owed to Integral Review for providing support for this publication.

Bahman A.K. Shirazi
San Francisco, August 2013

Integrating Meditation into Higher Education: The Founding Mission of CIIS as an Education for the Whole Person

Joseph L. Subbiondo¹

Abstract: This article discusses the introduction of meditation practice into higher education as part of an integral approach to education. A number of current authors are cited emphasizing the importance and relevance of mindfulness meditation in daily life. In addition, California Institute of Integral Studies founder Haridas Chaudhuri's philosophy of meditation and its connection to action are explored.

Key Words: California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS); higher education; integral education; meditation; mindfulness.

The 21st century is already being identified by several distinguishing themes, including the *Global Age*, the *Planetary Age*, the *Digital Age*, the *Spiritual Age*, the *Mindful Age*, and so on. All valid labels no doubt; and there will be many more that we can't possibly imagine from our present vantage point. In this article I will discuss one of these labels—the *Mindful Age*—by focusing on Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri's founding vision of integral education for CIIS and its relevance to the study and practice of mindfulness today.

Chaudhuri developed an extensive model of integral education that was inspired by Sri Aurobindo's integral vision and philosophy that connected meditation to human action. He intended that his version of integral education provide “a well rounded program for balanced personality growth of the human individual” (Chaudhuri, 1977, p. 77).

In his book *Integral Yoga*, Chaudhuri (1965a) wrote:

The essence of integral Yoga lies in the balanced union of meditation and action. It is only through such union that creative freedom can be achieved. Through meditation one is more integrated with the inner self and united with the Supreme Being. Through action one is more and more integrated with the outward environment, natural, social and historical, and communicates with the creative force of evolution (p. 117).

¹ **Joseph L. Subbiondo**, president of the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) since June 1999, has an accomplished background in both administration and academics. He brings a 30-year history of achievement in higher education, including appointments on several international academic committees; and has been active on many accreditation teams for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Prior to coming to CIIS, he served as Dean of the School of Liberal Arts at St. Mary's College of California, Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of the Pacific, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Santa Clara University, and as a professor of English and linguistics at four universities. He has published numerous articles in the areas of linguistics, higher education, and integral education.

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Mindful Age

Before discussing Haridas Chaudhuri's pioneering vision of integral education, we will consider the contemporary context that it foreshadowed by briefly looking at the *Mindful Age* in general and its emerging role in higher education in particular.

In 2011, Barry Boyce, Senior Editor at *The Shambhala Sun*, published a collection of essays by prominent scholars and teachers of contemplative practice including Pema Chodron, Daniel Goleman, Tich Nhat Hanh, Jack Kornfield, and Jon Kabat-Zinn. He entitled his collection by identifying it with the contemporary age, *The Mindfulness Revolution* (Boyce, 2011).

In the first essay, Jan Chozen Bays, physician, co-abbot of the Great Vow Zen Monastery, simply defines "mindfulness" as follows: "Mindfulness means deliberately paying attention, being fully aware of what is happening both inside yourself—in your body, heart, and mind—and outside yourself in your environment. Mindfulness is awareness without judgment or criticism"(Chozen Bays as quoted in Boyce, 2011, p. 3). This straight-forward definition is representative as it matches closely if not identically with every definition of mindfulness that I can find. Also, in the literature on the subject, "mindfulness," "meditation," and "contemplative practice," are often used synonymously. However, I should note that these terms are not synonymous in various traditions.

In his introduction to the collection, Boyce convincingly argues that "The Mindfulness Revolution" accurately and fairly describes our age, especially when we consider the extent and depth of the impact of mindfulness on nearly every aspect of personal and professional life. Boyce correctly asserts the relationship between meditation and action:

The mindfulness revolution begins with the simple act of paying attention to our breath, body, and thoughts, but clearly it can go very far. It helps us in our home life, with our family, friends, and colleagues. It helps us in our business, our voluntary groups, our churches, our communities, and in our Society at large. It's a small thing. We all can do it. And it can change the world. (Boyce, 2011, p. xviii)

To see the presence of the mindfulness revolution in the corporate world, one simply has to read *Search Inside Yourself* by Chade-Meng Tan ("Meng" as he is known), longtime product and thought leader at Google. Over the past ten years, he has not only introduced the benefits of mindfulness to the employees at Google, but his work has been adopted by many high tech corporations. In *Search Inside Yourself* with its far reaching subtitle of *The Unexpected Path to Achieve Success, Happiness (And World Peace)*, Meng (Tan, 2012) draws on the work of Mirabai Bush, the founder of the Center of the Contemplative Mind in Society, and Jon Kabat-Zinn, founder of the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Healthcare, and Society at University of Massachusetts School of Medicine as well as the founder of the Stress Reduction Clinic (also, he is an honorary doctorate degree recipient of CIIS). I note the affiliations of Bush and Kabat-Zinn to emphasize the extraordinarily broad reach of the interest in mindfulness.

Meng points out that “Our approach to cultivating emotional intelligence begins with mindfulness”(Tan, 2012, p. 25). He draws on a universal theme among teachers and practitioners of contemplative practice as he claims:

The process starts with an intention. Start by creating an intention, a reason for wanting to abide in mindfulness. Perhaps it is to reduce stress. Perhaps it is to increase your well being. Maybe you want to cultivate your emotional intelligence for fun and profit. Or maybe you just want to create the conditions for world peace, or something. (Meng, 2012, p. 35)

Commenting on Meng’s book, Daniel Goleman, the principal scholar of emotional intelligence, notes Meng’s “brilliant insight” in realizing “that knowing yourself lies at the core of emotional intelligence, and the best mental app for this can be found in the mind training method called mindfulness” (Goleman quoted in Tan, 2012, p. viii). Jon Kabat-Zinn writes in the forward to the book that Meng’s approach will help people not only know themselves better, but also relate better to others. Kabat-Zinn fully supports Meng’s claim that mindfulness can transform the world.

In the corporate community, the growing interest in mindfulness is not confined to high-tech companies. An article in the *Financial Times* by David Gelles (2012) entitled “The Mind Business: Yoga, meditation, mindfulness”...reports that some of the west’s biggest companies are embracing eastern spirituality as a path that can lead to bigger profits.” Gelles reported on mindfulness programs at General Mills in Minneapolis, and he profiles and quotes Janice Marturano, deputy general counsel at General Mills, who claims the many benefits of mindfulness practice: she states, “It’s about training our minds to be more focused, to see with clarity and to have space for creativity” (Marturano quoted in Gelles, 2012, p.2).

As in the corporate world, there has been an extraordinary increase of contemplative practice and study on college and university campuses. Alexander Astin, Helen Astin, and Jennifer Linholm in their book *Cultivating the Spirit* (Astin, Astin, & Linholm, 2011), define meditation as including “a family of spiritual/contemplative or psychophysical methods and practices that while considerably diverse in approach, share as a common theme or goal: the discovery of a deeper realm of experience or awareness beyond the ordinary discursive (thinking) mind”(pp.148-49). Like Haridas Chaudhuri, they recognize the need for meditation in higher education: “Our findings also show that providing students with more opportunities to touch base with their ‘inner selves’ will facilitate growth in their academic and leadership skills, contribute to their intellectual self-esteem and psychological well being and enhance their satisfaction with the college experience”(p.157).

Haridas Chaudhuri’s Vision of Integral Education

Let us now turn our attention to Haridas Chaudhuri and his groundbreaking work at CIAS (California Institute of Asian Studies—former name of CIIS) in integrating meditation into higher education. In 1974, a year before his death, Chaudhuri published an essay in the journal *New Thought* entitled “Education for the Whole Person” in which he summed up his philosophy of education and articulated his founding mission of CIIS. As he so often did throughout his

writings, Chaudhuri offered in the 1960's and 70's a glimpse of the future as he outlined a role that meditation could and should play in higher education as well as in professional and personal life. Nearly a half century ago, he knew what many higher education leaders are discovering today—that higher education is enhanced significantly by the theory and practice of meditation.

Chaudhuri recognized that ...

There is a growing realization today that human personality is a multifaceted and multidimensional phenomenon. No scheme of education can therefore be worth its name without a well rounded program for balanced personality growth of the human individual. [A person] is neither all intellect nor all emotion; neither all intuition nor all reason; neither all body nor all spirit; neither all outward behavior nor all inward vision. Personal integration of all these closely interrelated functions is the ultimate goal in the [human] evolutionary process.... (Chaudhuri, 1974, p. 50)

He acknowledged that educators faced a challenging task:

The concept of integral or holistic education does no doubt pose a serious challenge to all those responsible for curricular development in educational institutions. It imposes a new responsibility of serious proportions upon all teachers and educators with sincere dedication. (Chaudhuri, 1974, p. 51)

To achieve “a well rounded program for balanced personality growth of the human individual,” Chaudhuri proposed an integral education—an education that, among other distinguishing characteristics, balanced meditation and action.

Soon after his arrival in San Francisco in 1951, Chaudhuri and his wife Bina created the Cultural Integration Fellowship where he taught classes and workshops on meditation. In addition, he taught courses on meditation at the American Academy of Asian Studies (a predecessor of CIIS) as part of the required curriculum for all students. In addition to teaching meditation, Chaudhuri wrote extensively on the subject: for example, he wrote a book based on his teachings at the Cultural Integration Fellowship, *Philosophy of Meditation* (Chaudhuri, 1965b); he wrote a lengthy chapter, “Meditating for Self-Perfection,” in his book *Mastering the Problems of Living* (Chaudhuri, 1968). In all his works, he encouraged the practice of meditation not only for its own sake but also for an integral education—an education that he envisioned could lead to a “balanced life.”

In this “Meditating for Self-Perfection,” Chaudhuri defined meditation as follows:

Meditation is the art of deeper self-awareness. It aims at the awareness of the self on subtle levels of personality. It culminates in the realization of the inmost center of one's own being. In realizing his inmost center of being, the individual attains self-fulfillment by transcending the fetters of the ego. He is released from the prison of egocentricity. He discovers the transcendental dimension of his existence which unites him with all other individuals. (Chaudhuri, 1968, p. 158)

Please note the similarity of his definition to those of others that I have cited.

In his definition, Chaudhuri focused on personal transformation, social change, self-awareness, ego transcendence, and transpersonal union. To exemplify his definition, he added:

The Buddha in the posture of meditation is the perfect picture of the extroverted introvert. Meditation is the ingoing movement of consciousness. It explores the inner regions of the mind with a view toward self-integration and the eventual discovery of the non-temporal dimension. (Chaudhuri, 1968, p. 160)

To Haridas Chaudhuri, meditation was not in any way set apart from human action; rather, he insisted that meditation informed action. He held that "...meditation culminates in universal compassion" (Chaudhuri, 1968, p. 160). Moreover, he claimed that "Intelligent communion with one's depth of being and loving communication with the outside world supplement each other in illuminated living" (p. 160). He also linked meditation to spirituality as he believed that in prayer, a person could talk to the Divine; but in meditation, he believed the divine could talk to the person.

Chaudhuri thought of meditation in cosmic terms:

Meditation is an all out search for the ultimate truth. It is a search for the truth about oneself and one's relationship to the universe.... Fixed ideas and unconscious intellectual assumptions are the last impediments to the unclouded vision of truth. (Chaudhuri, 1968, p.163)

He believed that reflection separated rational thinking and emotion. He noted, however, that "meditation aims at eliminating all discrepancies between intellect and emotion, between reason and passion. It opens channels of communication between the conscious mind and the unconscious psyche" (p. 165). He added: "While reflection is a function of the intellect, meditation is an integrative movement of consciousness, a function of the total self" (p. 165).

In 1974, Chaudhuri invited Dr. Rina Sircar to join the faculty to expand the teaching and practice of mindfulness at CIAS. Prof. Sircar was educated in Burma, both in the Theravada Buddhist monastic tradition—where the practice of mindfulness meditation was integrated in her teaching—and was also present in the mainstream setting of higher education at Rangoon University. When Rina Sircar began teaching at CIAS, she would hold a meditation session each morning. In the beginning no one came to her sessions, because no one knew what mindfulness meditation was. But sitting there alone she thought to herself, "Never mind, they will come." During the next 37 years that she taught meditation—both in the classroom and in retreats—students and non-students did come, and her efforts melded with those of other spiritual teachers who helped shape and advance the "Mindful Age" in which we live.

Neuroscience

Chaudhuri's vision of an education that integrated meditation and action is as relevant today as it was 45 years ago. While the mindfulness movement of our age continues to draw on ancient

wisdom traditions including those that Chaudhuri studied and practiced throughout his life, the neuroscientists in their current breakthrough research are defining the benefits that mindfulness can have on human action. Unquestionably, neuroscience is an emerging field of the current moment, and it is a field that Chaudhuri recognized would have significant potential judging by the early developments in the study of the brain that he was aware of in the 1960's and early 1970s. In short, neuroscientists are confirming Chaudhuri's thesis of the interrelationship of meditation and behavior. Neuroscientific research supports the notion that through meditation, one can change the structure of one's brain and consequently change one's perspectives and actions.

UCLA professor, Daniel Siegel, and a growing cohort of neuroscientists claim that "one of the key practical lessons of modern neuroscience is that the power to direct our attention has within it the power to shape our brains [neural] firing patterns, as well as the power to shape the architecture of the brain itself" (Siegel, 2010, p. 39). Siegel notes that "*Neuroplasticity* is the term [that describes] this capacity for creating new neural connections and growing new neurons in response to experience" (Siegel, 2010, p. 5). He explains that "Mindfulness [the aspect of mindfulness of most interest to him] is a kind of focused attention that allows us to see the inner workings of our own minds" (p. ix). According to Siegel, mindfulness "...helps us to be aware of our mental processes without being swept away by them, enables us to get ourselves off the autopilot of ingrained behaviors and habitual responses, and moves us beyond the reactive emotional hoops we all have a tendency to get trapped in" (Siegel, 2010, pp. ix-x). He adds that "Our understanding of mindfulness can build on these studies of interpersonal attunement and the self-regulatory functions of focused attention in suggesting that mindful awareness is a form of intrapersonal attunement" (Siegel, 2007, p. xiv). Siegel concludes that "...relationships are woven into the fabric of our interior world." and "We come to know our own minds through our interactions with others" (Siegel, 2010, p. 63).

Rick Hanson in his best-selling *Buddha's Brain*, points out that "What happens in your mind changes your brain, both temporarily and in long lasting ways; neurons that fire together wire together" (Hanson, 2009, p.18). Hanson's research indicates that "Small positive actions everyday will add to large changes over time, as you gradually build new neural structures" (p. 19). Throughout *Buddha's Brain*, he provides specific exercises that will gradually change our attitudes and behaviors.

Andrew Newberg and Mark Waldman (2009), professors of neuroscience at the University of Pennsylvania, have published the results of their studies of the contemplative practices of members of religious groups drawing upon their respective faith and wisdom traditions: for example, Franciscan nuns in Philadelphia engaged in "centering prayer." In their *How God Changes Your Brain*, they report the results of their measuring brain waves of religious practitioners while in meditative states. Similarly, Marion Beauregard and Denyse O'Leary (2008) in their book, *The Spiritual Brain*, document their research on meditation with Carmelite nuns in Montreal. In most, if not all, cases, there is a shift in brain wave activity during a variety of forms of contemplative practice.

Conclusion

In February 2013 CIIS co-sponsored the Wisdom 2.0 Conference in San Francisco—a conference devoted to exploring the intersections of spirituality, mindfulness, neuroscience, education, and technology. CIIS Sages Jon Kabat-Zinn, Jack Kornfield, and Joan Halifax shared center stage with the founders and CEOs of leading social media corporations including Google, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. In many and various ways, CIIS has contributed and continues to contribute significantly to the *Mindfulness Revolution* of our age. As one participated at Wisdom 2.0 in the heartfelt conversation about the connections of mindfulness to compassion, personal life balance, organizational leadership, and community service, one could sense the presence of CIIS where, mindfulness is part of the curriculum in many programs. For example, in the Community Mental Health Program, one can take a course in Mindfulness Therapy; and in the Public Programs and Performances, one can take a certificate program in Mindfulness and Compassion in Psychotherapy.

Forty five years later, we express our gratitude to Haridas Chaudhuri for a vision of integral education that linked meditation to action. In his view, it was an education for the whole person. Today, there are growing numbers of educators who are integrating meditation into higher education in order to prepare their students to cultivate the knowledge and practice of mindfulness among all areas their professional and personal lives.

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The Quest for Integral Ecology

Sam Mickey, Adam Robbert, Laura Reddick¹

Abstract: Integral ecology is an emerging paradigm in ecological theory and practice, with multiple and varied integral approaches to ecology having been proposed in recent decades. A common aim of integral ecologies is to cross boundaries between disciplines (humanities, social sciences, and biophysical sciences) in efforts to develop comprehensive understandings of and responses to the intertwining of nature, culture, and consciousness in ecological issues. This article presents an exploration of the different approaches that have been taken in articulating an integral ecology. Along with a historical overview of the notion of integral ecology, we present an exposition of some of the philosophical and religious visions that are shared by the diversity of integral ecologies.

Keywords: ecology, integral ecology, religion and ecology, speculative philosophy, Thomas Berry.

“The quest today is increasingly for an *integral ecology*” (Boff and Elizondo, 1995, p. ix). That quest is our topic in what follows. Although Boff and Elizondo were among the first to use the phrase “integral ecology” in 1995, the quest for an integral ecology is not entirely new. It is an increasingly pressing quest today, but the quest itself has a very long and complex itinerary, with routes extending to the earliest attempts of human beings to understand and respond to the relations and patterns between the myriad beings that they encounter alongside them in the world.

The quest for an integral ecology is at work, at least implicitly, in the control of fire, the invention of cooking, cave painting, the cultivation of plants, and the domestication of animals. All of these activities required humans to develop a sense of relationships (e.g., between wood,

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moisture, friction, combustion, food, and hunger), and a failure to integrate multiple dimensions of those relationships (e.g., interiority and exteriority) could prove fatal. For instance, understanding how to make fire does not do much good if one cannot also discern how the capacities of fire relate to experiences of safety and wellbeing. That is the quest of integral ecology in a nutshell. It is a quest for knowledge, theoretical and practical, of the depth and complexity of relationships between beings, including their subjective and objective facets.

In this essay, we explore multiple approaches people have taken in the quest for an integral ecology, providing 1) a historical overview of the idea of integral ecology, and 2) an exposition of some of the common threads tying together the diversity of integral ecologies, including a) an engagement with speculative philosophical visions of the cosmos and the place of humans therein and b) inquiry into the ecological implications of religion and spirituality.

Integral Ecology in the Making

Although a quest for integral ecology can be discerned in early humans, it is not entirely appropriate to call them ecologists, since they had not formally developed theories or practices of ecology or of any field of scientific inquiry per se. They are more accurately called “proto-ecologists,” which is a term that is used for describing “those who had ecological insights before a formal science of ecology was formulated” (McIntosh, 1985, p. 15). Although proto-ecologists are not modern scientists, they nonetheless practice what is typically defined as the task of ecology—inquiry into the relationships between organisms and environments.

Some forms of ecological inquiry are more integral than others. In his account of the history of ecology from antiquity through the twentieth century, Donald Worster (1994) discerns two distinct approaches to understanding and responding to the interactions between organisms and environments: first, the “*arcadian*” approach, which is oriented toward “*peaceful coexistence*” with organisms and environments, and second, an “*anti-arcadian tradition*,” which fosters an “*imperial*” view of nature focused on objectifying Earth’s resources and exploiting them for human ends (pp. 2, 29). Integral approaches to ecology resonate more with the former.

An example of the tension between arcadian and imperial ecologies can be found in the view of plants expressed by Aristotle (384-322 BCE). For Aristotle (2001), each living being has a soul, with “soul” (psyche) defined as the form that causes life in the material body. Different kinds of living bodies are distinguished by the presence of one or more of the following potencies of the soul: intellect, perception, movement with regard to place, and nutrition. A plant has a share in the nutritive part of the soul, which manages the work of growth and nutrition. Animals also share in this nutritive potency of the soul. However, animals also possess the perceptive potency of the soul and the capacity for moving themselves with respect to place. Furthermore, some animals have the capacity to reason and think things through. The way in which an animal’s senses are directed and attuned to the sensible world is a kind of ‘*ratio*’ or rationality. However, this does not mean that animal thinking is identical with the kind of thinking proper to humans, for a human being is also capable of imagination and intellect, which make it possible to discern what is true from what is false.

On one hand, Aristotle represents an arcadian ecology insofar as he affirms the soul or interior agency of plants, in contrast to modern scientific perspectives for which plants are studied only with respect to their exteriority as calculable and measurable objects. On the other hand, Aristotle's hierarchy of the different capacities of the soul privileges human intellect over the cognition, perception, and locomotion of animals, and those animal capacities are privileged over the nutritive capacities of plants. Why is human intellect privileged? More than the other capacities of soul, intellect allows humans to become virtuous and happy. As Matthew Hall (2011) puts it in his philosophical botany, "the higher faculties of soul are higher purely because they are thought to belong solely to human beings. This value-ordering is fundamentally anthropocentric, with humanity becoming the yardstick for value"(p. 25). That value-ordering denies any intrinsic value in plants, leaving them with only instrumental value as objects to be used and consumed according to human ends.

Thus, there is a tension between Aristotle's arcadian attribution of soul to plants and his more imperial view, for which humans are the primary center of value and plants are seen as having only instrumental value as objects to be used by animals and humans (for food, shelter, etc.). The arcadian side of Aristotle's philosophy of nature is carried forward by his pupil, Theophrastus, who does away with Aristotle's imperial hierarchy, investigating plants on their own terms instead of measuring plants according to what they lack with respect to animals and humans (Hall, 2011, pp. 28-35). The arcadian view expressed by Theophrastus was subsequently backgrounded in favor of Aristotle's more imperial view, so that the history of Western approaches to botany, from Aristotle through Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), can be seen as propagating mostly an imperial view of nature (p. 36).

Although Western philosophies of nature have tended to follow a more imperial than arcadian approach to understanding and responding to the natural world, the arcadian view has persisted. For instance, in the Romanticism of German *Naturphilosophie* (philosophy of nature), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 – 1832) and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775 – 1854) proposed evolutionary theories for which the material world and its ideal structures (archetypes) were not separate realities, but were manifestations of a unified and dynamic evolutionary process, "*dynamische Evolution*" (a term developed by Schelling and adopted by Goethe) (Richards, 2002, p. 10). Schelling viewed natural phenomena in terms of an organic process of development that cannot be captured by the mechanistic explanations that mark imperial views of nature (p. 9). Although this original, arcadian view of evolution was a significant factor in the traditions informing the development of evolutionary theory and ecology, the deeper Romantic spirit was suppressed in favor of the rising mechanistic worldview, eventually reemerging in the 20th century in the works of philosophers like Sri Aurobindo (1872 – 1950) and Jean Gebser (1905 – 1973), with whom articulations of explicitly "integral" philosophies began.

A particularly important figure in the historical development of integral ecologies is the German biologist Ernst Haeckel (1834 – 1919), who first coined the word "oecologie" (from the Greek *oikos*, meaning "dwelling" or "household") in 1866, defining this field of study as a scientific inquiry that would further the development of Charles Darwin's theory of biological evolution. Drawing explicitly on Darwin, Haeckel defines ecology as the study of organism-environment relationships, saying that "ecology is the study of all those complex interrelations referred to by Darwin as the conditions of the struggle for existence" (Merchant, 2007, p. 178).

Haeckel's approach to ecology is, for the most part, indicative of a mechanistic or imperial view of nature. Haeckel's approach is only capable of accounting for ecological relations as "the necessary results of mechanical causes," thus excluding as "unscientific" (p. 179) any accounts of soul, interiority, or agency in the natural world. This does not mean that there is no theology or psychology in Haeckel's view. Rather, his interpretations of God and consciousness are described in terms of his monistic view, according to which God, consciousness, and all of nature can be explained rationally according to mechanistic causes.

While Haeckel's theological and psychological views have been generally ignored or abandoned by subsequent ecological theorists, Haeckel's mechanistic approach to investigating organism-environment interactions became the dominant approach to ecology, and it remains the dominant approach today. Throughout the twentieth century, there have been numerous thinkers who have critiqued that dominant paradigm and proposed alternatives to it. It is in that context that the explicit development of integral ecologies first took place. Integral ecologies, on one hand, challenge the mechanistic approaches to ecology that characterize imperial views of nature while, on the other hand, including the insights achieved through those mechanistic approaches. An example of an important forerunner to an explicitly integral ecology is the American forester and conservationist Aldo Leopold (1887-1948).

Michael Zimmerman (2009) notes two ways in which Leopold's work anticipated integral ecology. First, Leopold accounts for interiority as well as exteriority, such that, "in addition to natural and social science perspectives, people need to bring to bear ethical, cultural, and aesthetic perspectives on land use (environmental) issues"(p. 77). This is reflected in Leopold's experience of a "fierce green fire" in the eyes of a dying wolf he had shot (Leopold, 1989, p. 130). He had previously never comprehended that a wolf and the mountain it inhabits have their own value apart from the measurements and calculations of human use. After experiencing the green fire, Leopold began articulating his land ethic, which aims to overcome the rift between two distinct approaches to the values of the organisms and ecosystems comprising the land. There is an "A" approach, for which the value of land is given in terms of human use and economic value, and a "B" approach, for which the value of land is intrinsic to the land itself, including the integrity and stability (exteriority) of the land as well as its profound beauty (interiority) (p. 221).

The second way in which Leopold anticipated integral ecology is that he understood evolution as a unified and dynamic process that needs to be accounted for not only in biology but also in human moral development (Zimmerman, 2009, p. 78). Just as ethics has extended to encompass villages and tribes, then cities, nations, and eventually all of humanity (e.g., universal human rights), the next phase in human moral evolution is the extension of ethics to the land.

The 'key-log' which must be moved to release the evolutionary process for an ethic is simply this: quit thinking about decent land-use as solely an economic problem. Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and esthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise. (Leopold, 1989, p. 224)

The land ethic facilitates a moral transformation that reinvents the human species. More specifically, it “changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain members and citizen of it” (p. 204).

The environmental degradation to which Leopold was responding in his life continued increasing after his death in 1948, and as the environmental degradation increased so too did public awareness of it. In the United States, two notable events indicate the growing public awareness of environmental degradation: first, the publication of Rachel Carson’s (1962) *Silent Spring*, in which she warned of the spreading ecological harm caused by the use of the chemical pesticide DDT, and second, the widespread news coverage of the Cuyahoga River (northeast Ohio) catching fire in 1969 due to excessive pollution and debris in the river (Rolston, 2012, pp. 10, 21). Following the growth of the environmental movement in the 1960s, the 1970s saw the emergence of multiple ecologically oriented fields of study in the humanities, including ecofeminism, deep ecology, and environmental ethics (pp. 15-19).

Those fields of environmental humanities aimed to connect the biophysical evidence of ecology with the interior dimensions that had been neglected by the dominant paradigm of ecology (e.g., ethical value, beauty, experience, culture, and religious worldviews). However, those fields were not coordinated with one another or with the biophysical and social sciences that they drew upon. A more comprehensive approach was needed to cross disciplinary boundaries and address the profound complexity of ecological problems. An important example of such an approach comes from the contemporary French theorist Edgar Morin.

Morin’s approach to ecology is grounded in a transdisciplinary method that he describes in terms of “complex thinking,” which crosses boundaries between sciences, social theory, anthropology, philosophy, and more. For Morin, complex thinking “endeavors to connect that which was separate while preserving distinctiveness and differences” (Morin, 1999, p. 114). It is an “ecologized thinking,” which accounts for the recursive interactions and retroactions composing the relations between beings, while also accounting for the “hologrammatic character” of these relations, whereby the whole (e.g., the planet) and the parts (e.g., humans, insects, ecosystems) are internally interconnected, each part present in the constitution of the whole and the whole present in the constitution of each part (p. 130).

Morin’s approach to ecology includes an account of the history of modernization, which he describes as “an evolution toward a planetary consciousness,” in other words, an evolution of “the Planetary Era” (pp. 6, 24). The recognition that humans are inextricably interconnected with one another and with the entire Earth community has been growing rapidly throughout the last five centuries of colonial expansion, militarism, and economic globalization. Although those processes of modernization have supported the emergence of the global environmental crisis, they have also supported the emergence of “planetary solidarity,” which facilitates mutuality and reciprocity between humans and the denizens of the whole planetary community (pp. 106, 116, 130). Morin knows that planetary solidarity is not a given, but is something that must be developed amid the uncertainty of our evolutionary unfolding. Planetary solidarity is possible, but it is “a possible impossible”—an impossible realism, which “*grounds itself in the uncertainty of the real*” (p. 108). Accordingly, the solidarity of our “partnership” in “the complex web of the Planetary Era” does not presuppose any imperial mastery over nature or over ourselves; on the

contrary, this fellowship is based on a realization that humans are “vagabonds of the unknown adventure” (pp. 144-146).

Morin’s work resonates with the approaches to ecology articulated by many of his contemporary compatriots, including Michel Serres, Bruno Latour, and Félix Guattari (Whiteside, 2002). Although their work is not explicitly labeled “integral,” they nonetheless contribute to the quest for an approach to ecology that accounts for the exterior as well as interior facets of ecological phenomena as they are situated in the uncertain dynamics of an evolving universe.

The first explicit use of the term “integral ecology” comes from a marine ecology textbook in 1958 by Hilary Moore, specifically in the distinction between three kinds of ecology: the study of organisms (autecology), the study of ecosystems (synecology), and an integral ecology that includes autecology and synecology (Moore, 1958, p. 7). However, Moore does not include interiority or the humanities, in contrast to thinkers typically labeled “integral.” Aside from Moore’s use of the term, the next mentions of integral ecology began in the 1990s, as three thinkers independently proposed integral approaches to ecology: the cultural historian Thomas Berry, the liberation theologian Leonardo Boff, and the Integral theorist Ken Wilber. The first of these thinkers with a published writing that uses the phrase “integral ecology” is Leonardo Boff in an essay written with a fellow liberation theologian, Virgil Elizondo.

Noting the lack of coordination between the numerous and varied aspects of ecological theories and practices, Boff and Elizondo (1995) articulate the quest for integral ecology.

The quest today is increasingly for an *integral ecology* that can articulate all these aspects with a view to founding a new alliance between societies and nature, which will result in the conservation of the patrimony of the earth, socio-cosmic wellbeing, and the maintenance of conditions that will allow evolution to continue on the course it has now been following for some fifteen thousand million years. (p. ix)

Boff has continued developing his approach to integral ecology, especially in his recent collaboration with Mark Hathaway in *The Tao of Liberation* (Hathaway & Boff 2009), in which integral ecology is defined as an evolutionary vision that brings together three other approaches to ecology. First, there is an “*environmental vision*,” which explores the exteriors of the members and the whole of the Earth community (p. 300). “*Social ecology*” is next, raising socioeconomic and political issues about ecology, including implications of justice, democracy, violence, consumerism, etc. “*Deep ecology*,” thirdly, investigates various kinds of interiority and mentality, including ethical and religious issues of responsibility and reverence for the natural world (Hathaway & Boff, 2009, p. 301). Integral ecology coordinates environmental, social, and deep ecologies, and it situates those ecologies in the evolutionary adventure of the cosmos.

Boff and Hathaway draw extensively on the work of Thomas Berry, whose approach to integral ecology is like the former insofar as it integrates three different registers into a comprehensive vision of the unfolding universe. Berry began developing his integral ecology around the same time that Boff began articulating his. Sean Esbjörn-Hargens (2011, p. 93)

reports that, according to the activist-poet and student of Berry, Drew Dellinger, 1995 is the year when Berry began referring to his cosmological work informally as “integral cosmology or integral ecology”. Berry’s integral ecology is grounded in the “cosmogenetic principle” that he developed with the cosmologist Brian Swimme in their co-written work, *The Universe Story*. As Swimme and Berry (1992) define it, the cosmogenetic principle holds that all evolutionary processes are characterized by differentiation, subjectivity (or “autopoiesis,” i.e., self-organization), and communion (pp. 66-78). Differentiation corresponds to the environmental vision of Boff, which accounts for the differentiated exteriors of things. Subjectivity corresponds to Boff’s version of deep ecology, which accounts for the different kinds of interiority and agency at work in things. Communion corresponds to Boff’s social ecology, seeking to develop mutually enhancing forms of community between humans, the Earth community, and the cosmos as a whole.

Like Berry and Boff, Ken Wilber developed his integral vision around the same time. First published in 1995, Wilber’s *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* (Wilber, 2000) did not use the phrase “integral ecology,” but it did explicitly develop an Integral framework for addressing ecological issues. That framework is the AQAL model—an “all-quadrant, all-level” model that accounts for physical, mental, and spiritual *levels* of reality, each of which traverses all of the four *quadrants*: subjective (“I”), intersubjective (“We”), objective (“It”), and interobjective (“Its”) (Wilber, 2000, pp. 127-135). Simplified as the “Big Three,” this model clearly corresponds with Boff’s and Berry’s, as it suggests that any phenomenon can be understood in terms of exteriors (“It/s,” including collective systems, “Its,” and the behavior of individuals, “It”) and in terms of subjectivity (“I”) and communion (“We”) (pp. 149-153).

Wilber’s Integral vision was brought into a more explicitly ecological context by the leading Integral theorist Sean Esbjörn-Hargens and the environmental philosopher Michael Zimmerman in their groundbreaking work, *Integral Ecology: Uniting Multiple Perspectives on the Natural World* (Esbjörn-Hargens & Zimmerman, 2009), which applies Wilber’s AQAL framework to ecology while also including insights from other integral ecologists (e.g., Berry, Boff, and Morin). Although Esbjörn-Hargens and Zimmerman privilege the AQAL map to other approaches, they celebrate the emergence of “a variety of integral ecologies,” as they recognize that “much work remains to be done,” including collaborations as well as critiques to help the variety of integral ecologies become more comprehensive in their respective engagements with the depth, complexity, and mystery of beings in the natural world (pp. 487, 552, 667). Such collaborations and critiques are presented in the forthcoming anthology, *Integral Ecologies: Nature, Culture, and Knowledge in the Planetary Era* (Mickey, Kelly, & Robbert, n.d.).

In sum, the diverse variety of integral ecologies reaches back to the arcadian tendencies of the proto-ecologists of antiquity, and it extends into numerous ecological approaches articulated throughout the twentieth century, including the development of explicitly “integral” ecologies by Berry, Boff, Wilber, and Esbjörn-Hargens and Zimmerman. In the remainder of the present essay, we draw out some of the common threads and shared commitments that make integral ecologies unique and make them relevant for contemporary attempts to address ecological issues. We focus on two areas in particular: 1) speculative philosophy and 2) the field of Religion and Ecology, both of which reflect the aim of integral ecologists to cross-disciplinary boundaries to include multiple perspectives on the interiority as well as exteriority of ecological phenomena.

Speculative Ecology

The quest for integral ecology suggests a re-visioning of ecology in a more comprehensive context, which is evident in the cosmological visions of integral thinkers like Berry, Boff, and Wilber. Accordingly, in articulating the common threads connecting integral approaches to ecology, we draw attention to the shared commitment of integral ecologies to speculative inquiry, which facilitates the development of comprehensive visions of the cosmos and the place of humans therein. Here, one might ask, what does speculative philosophy have to do with ecology? Are we not mixing the empirical world of the natural sciences with the subjective world of a philosopher's fantasy? Far from a regressive exercise, introducing elements of speculative thought into ecological thinking allows for a new mode of integrative practice that can greatly aid in relating human beings to the larger Earth community. Integral ecology can be understood as speculative ecology in an etymological sense. "Speculative" (or "speculation" more generally) connotes "contemplation," "seeing," or "observing." It is also a term used when transactions involve a considerable risk or unknown outcome. One could say, then, that "speculation" is the art or practice of risky contemplation. The second word, "ecology," also has a variety of meanings. As a whole the word refers to the branch of science dealing with organisms, environments, and their coevolution. The "eco-" comes from *oikos* which is Greek for "home" or "dwelling place," and the "-logy" means the science, discourse, or theory of something, deriving from the verb *legein* ("to speak") and the noun *logos*, which can variously mean "speech," "reason," or "divine word." "Ecology," then, is the *logos* of dwelling, the discursive elaboration of the coevolutionary contexts of organisms and environments.

We could thus define speculative ecology as the risky contemplation of inter-dwelling beings. Furthermore, insofar as ecology is about understanding the relationship between living beings and their worlds, and insofar as speculation involves making a claim about the reality of being and the world (beyond *our* interests in them), one can say that speculative philosophy and ecology go hand in hand. As an integral practice, speculation involves taking everything that we know, and everything we know about *what* and *how* we know, and using these tools to respond to the demands of a given situation. In a sense, speculation is about taking a point of view that is both deep and wide in the attempt to understand how our own bodies are both subjects of speculation and the vehicles by which we speculate. But speculation is also about drawing a line, about questioning the very practice of who gets to draw lines where. It is about determining when the infinite regress of critique (i.e., the subject that knows about how the subject knows about how subjects know) has gone too far. Thus speculation makes a claim about the situation it attends to from *within* the limits of that very situation.

This mode of speculative ecology is one we can think of as akin to what Isabelle Stengers (2010) calls "cosmopolitics," Bruno Latour (1993) calls a "parliament of things," Val Plumwood (2002) calls "dialogical interspecies ethics"—further echoed by her commitment to "earth others," or what Donna Haraway (2008) calls "companion species." Speculative ecology also resonates with Alfred North Whitehead's (1978) claim that "We find ourselves in a buzzing world, amid a democracy of fellow creatures," (p. 50) which is not unlike Thomas Berry's (1999) vision of the universe as a "communion of subjects" (p. 82). Ecology implicitly involves coordinating these complex spaces where the multiple interlocking worlds that make up Earth are mobilized. In this way, any question with an ecological component—involving, say,

questions about land use, ethics, and eating habits, or spiritual practices, resources, and social justice—necessarily brings with it the consideration of not just diverse peoples, but diverse peoples, their worlds, and all the nonhuman beings that get caught up in the human dramas of political decision making.

The quest for integral ecology is the ongoing struggle to understand the needs and worlds of these humans and nonhumans in all their relations, including their contradictory, mutually exclusive entanglements as well as their complementary and symbiotic connections. It is about developing of a vision for which all beings possess agency and interiority, such that there is “something that it’s like” to be a bat, squid, or barracuda. In other words, integral ecology requires a speculative leap into the phenomenological experience of other beings. It means practicing what Ian Bogost (2012) calls “Alien Phenomenology”—a task that requires empirical science, but also an imaginative leap into the worlds (i.e., subject positions) of other creatures. From this perspective, we find that humans are not simply engaged within an “ecology of mind,” as Gregory Bateson (2000) put it, but rather that the human mind emerges within context of myriad other beings.

There is an ecology of minds. This ecology of minds pre-dates the existence of human beings by at least four billion years, and finds its genesis at the very emergence of life on Earth. Thus, in addition to the material conditions of ecosystem functioning, integral ecologies are concerned with theorizing the interlocking forms of interiority present within all ecological communities. Integral ecologies in their speculative mode are thus a matter of playing a game of risky contemplation of the worlds of other beings, risky contemplation of what it is like to be something else, something nonhuman, in the hopes that such practices of thought can open up spaces for new ecological practices to emerge.

Religion in Integral Ecology

The quest for integral ecology is a quest to expand the concern of ecological work to include scientific inquiry along with all fields of study and aspects of human life, thus providing a well-rounded way of viewing ecological problems and developing potential solutions. Seeking to include a vast set of perspectives and fields of study, as well as personal and social perspectives, integral ecologists consider the multifarious dimensions of an ecological problem—cultural, religious, psychological, social. Beginning with the work of Thomas Berry, scholars have addressed the religious dimensions of ecological issues, giving rise to a new field of study: religion and ecology. The field of religion and ecology seeks to integrate religious discussions of moral obligations towards the earth with similar ecological discussions. With the ecological implications of religious systems in the forefront, the hope is that followers will consider the environmental effects of their personal decisions. Integral ecologists who consider the religious dimensions of environmental problems bring ethical concerns to the forefront of ecological conversations.

Catholic priest and cultural historian Thomas Berry used the term “integral ecology” in the mid-1990s around the time Leonard Boff and Ken Wilber were also developing ideas about the term. While religion is an important theme for each of those thinkers, we focus in this paper on Berry as a paradigmatic example of how integral ecology engages religious perspectives. Berry

considered himself a geologist, or historian of the cosmology of Earth. His focus on deep time, beginning with the moment the universe began, pervaded his ideas about integral ecology. Berry provided a vision of the integral ecologists as spiritual leaders who understands the implications of cosmological insights for the future. Berry's first published use of the term "integral ecologist" occurs in his 1996 essay entitled "An Ecologically Sensitive Spirituality." The essay was published in 2009 as part of a collection entitled *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-first Century*, edited by religious historian Mary Evelyn Tucker (2009). After recounting the spiritual legacy of North America, Berry claimed the Western world needs a new form of spiritual guidance. The current teachers, scholars, and religious leaders provide inadequate guidance because they do not prioritize relationships with Earth. Instead, "we need an ecological spirituality with an integral ecologist as spiritual guide" (Berry, 2009, p. 135). Berry recognized an understanding both of science and religion will be necessary in the future. The two can no longer be separate and distinct pieces of our realities and lives. This is a crucial component of the scholarly project of the field of integral ecology.

Berry called on integral ecologists to lead in uncertain times and create a new religious system based on both science and spirituality. He claims:

The integral ecologist is the spokesperson for the planet both in its numinous and its physical meaning, just as the prophet was the spokesperson for the deity, the yogi for the interior spirit, the saint for the Christian faith. In the integral ecologist, our scientific understanding of the universe becomes a wisdom tradition. (Berry, 2009, p. 136)

Not only will the integral ecologist understand ecological science, but he or she will be able to articulately communicate to others. Berry compared the integral ecologist to honored religious teachers to place them among the populace. In his vision, integral ecologists will be teachers speaking widely about the numinous and moral implications of ecological knowledge. Integral ecology fully incorporates the physical and spiritual history of the earth and draws on the most basic aspects of human life—clean water, clean air, healthy food, and a safe place to live. Respect for these elements forms the basis of an ecologically sensitive spirituality not focused on transcendent possibilities, but grounded in our immanent realities and local bioregion while accounting for universal connections. The integral ecologist incorporates these spiritual aspects into their worldview and directs others to also do the same.

Influenced by Berry's work, Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, both Senior Lecturers and Research Scholars at Yale University with joint appointments in School of Forestry and Environmental Studies as well as the Divinity School and the Department of Religious Studies, established the field of religion and ecology. This burgeoning field began with a conference series entitled "Religions of the World and Ecology" hosted by Harvard University's Center for the Study of World Religions between 1996 and 1998. Tucker and Grim provided the impetus behind the conferences, which brought together over 700 scholars and environmentalists to talk about how religious beliefs and practices are entangled with ecological concerns. The conferences resulted in the World Religions and Ecology series consisting of ten books describing each of the world's religions in relation to ecological concern (Tucker and Grim, 2001, p. 13). The work is now hosted at Yale University and bears the name the Forum on Religion and Ecology.

Scholars of traditional religions in this field seek to *retrieve* existing practices and beliefs that promote sustainability, *reevaluate* texts with an ecological lens, and *reconstruct* practices and beliefs that do not support sustainability. Religious morals that translate into environmental ethics are at the forefront of the field. During retrieval, scholars work to clarify ecologically sensitive aspects of existing texts and bring forward latent teachings that could augment more popular ones. Reevaluative work questions the relevance of existing teachings to contemporary environmental problems. Scholars who reevaluate traditional religious texts and teachings seek to find practices and beliefs that can be adapted to the present and identify concepts that may be detrimental to the ecological project. Reconstruction borrows Berry's vision within traditional religions by asking these systems to find creative ways to modify their practices or create new ones within the religion (Tucker and Grim, 2001, pp. 16-17). The intersection of religious and ecological practices can help formalize beliefs regarding sustainability by bringing existing practices to the forefront or encapsulating new ethical principles in religious creeds. These three methods of approaching religious traditions speak to an integral perspective by questioning religions from many angles. The scholars who take on these projects are leading religions to incorporate an ecological sensitive spirituality, fitting Berry's vision of the integral ecologist as spiritual guide. Moreover, Berry's vision is not restricted to the traditions of the world religions (e.g., Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism), but is also relevant to emerging forms of religion and spirituality, typically categorized as new religious movements (NRMs). Consider, for example, Paganism.

Contemporary Paganism, an earth-based nature religion, has much to add to the discussions in the field of Religion and Ecology. Paganism is an umbrella term for a group of religious systems held together as either recently created religions or modern interpretations of ancient traditions which seek to re-enchant the natural world, embracing a sense of animation and reciprocal relationship, and place humanity as part of the environment rather than above or beyond it. Many of the world's religions have ancient origins and are struggling to adjust to newfound environmental awareness. While contemporary paganism draws inspiration from ancient sources, the religion has developed along with growing environmental awareness and directly addresses the environment in its beliefs and practices. This positioning gives pagans a valuable perspective and potentially places them as integral ecologists. The relevance of paganism to integral ecology is further indicated by the fact that pagans bring a primarily, though not exclusively, female voice to the table (Berger, Leach, and Shaffer, 2003, p. 27). With women as the majority of adherents and a strong concept of female divinity, discussions that include Paganism must address women's participation. This stands in contrast to the relatively male-centered perspectives that dominate world religions. In short, paganism is enduring as a religious system and can be considered along with the world's major religions in integral discussions of religious and ecological ethics.

Seeking new, ecological forms of religious expression, integral ecology involves inquiry into what religious studies scholar Bron Taylor calls "dark green religion," which requires a deep sense of connection to nature and sees the earth as sacred and interconnected (Taylor, 2010, p. 13). In his most recent publication, *Dark Green Religion*, Taylor(2010) uses the term as an umbrella heading to describe any, "religion that considers nature to be sacred, imbued with intrinsic value, and worthy of reverent care" (Taylor, 2010, p. ix). He includes within this concept animism and Gaian earth religions, which either could be spiritual, having a supernatural

agency, or naturalistic, without a supernatural component. He describes four categories of dark green religion: Spiritual Animism, Naturalistic Animism, Gaian Spirituality, and Gaian Naturalism. Spiritual Animists and Naturalistic Animists both seek to communicate with non-human nature, but the former includes a belief in the supernatural while the latter does not. Similarly, Gaian Spiritualists also have a belief in the supernatural in a pantheistic or panentheistic sense while Gaian Naturalists do not. Gaians see the universe or planet as alive, conscious, or at least metaphorically resembling an organism (Taylor, 2010, p. 15). All of Taylor's examples of dark green religion privilege nature, and his sweep is broad, including radical environmentalism, surfing, and Disney movies in his conceptualizations of dark green religion (Taylor, 2010, pp. 71, 103, 132). While these examples would not typically be considered religious expression, he sees a new form of earth-based spirituality forming through these exemplars. While Taylor does not use the term integral ecologist, his conception of dark green religion fits into Berry's use of the term as a spiritual guide centered on relationships with Earth.

Integral ecology celebrates the very act of living on Earth as thinking, conscious beings in relationship with other similar beings and respects the places where we live. Because of this, religion is an important aspect of integral ecological study. Berry's foresight provided the image of the integral ecologist as a spiritual guide and leader, as someone who would integrate science and spirituality into a comprehensive understanding of the world which would lead to a widespread understanding of the importance of the environment. Since Berry's work, scholars and practitioners have engaged the intersection of ecology and religious studies through the field of religion and ecology and through exploring new and emerging forms of spirituality. Scholars are working to retrieve, reevaluate, or reconstruct beliefs and practices to assimilate ecological knowledge. The field of integral ecology encourages this type of relationship between seemingly disparate fields. Integral ecology allows us to bring our whole being to the study, honor multiple perspectives, and participate in the cosmopolitical work of composing a vibrant Earth community.

Conclusion

The quest for integral ecology has given rise to multiple approaches for understanding and responding to the complexity, depth, and mystery of ecological phenomena. Some of those approaches are implicitly integral (e.g., arcadian ecology, the complex thought of Morin, the cosmopolitics of Stengers) and some are explicit in designating themselves as integral (e.g., Berry, Boff, Wilber). This variety of integral ecologies is not a problem to be overcome in favor of one single approach. Indeed, as Esbjörn-Hargens and Zimmerman (2009) recognize, "there is no single solution" to ecological issues (p. 339). What is called for today is a diversity of integral solutions, and that diversity can be enhanced by cultivating the diversity of integral ecologies. In other words, an integral approach to ecology "need not be contained within any single framework" (p. 540). Moreover, the diversity of integral ecologies is not without common threads, as we have indicated in drawing attention to the shared commitments of integral ecologies to cross disciplinary boundaries in efforts to engage in speculative modes of philosophical inquiry and to further the study of the religious dimensions of ecological issues.

Let a thousand integral ecologies bloom! The rich contrasts between them provide a wide array of opportunities for humans to participate in the emergence of a flourishing planetary civilization. They provide opportunities for humans to participate in the Great Work of our time. As Berry (1999) defines it, our “Great Work” is “to carry out a transition” from the current destruction of the Earth community “to a period when humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner” (p. 3). The quest for such a transition is precisely the quest for becoming integral; “We are here to become integral with the larger Earth Community” (p. 48).

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Toward an Integral Ecopsychology: In Service of Earth, Psyche, and Spirit

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Abstract: In this paper, I advance a proposal for an integral ecopsychology, defining it as the study of the multileveled connection between humans and Earth. The initial section expounds the critical moment we as a species find ourselves at and, touching on different ecological schools, focuses on ecopsychology as a less divisive lens from which to assess our planetary moment. In the next section, I explore three avenues in which the project of ecopsychology enters into dialogue with spiritual and religious wisdom, thus expanding the project's scope while spelling out the particular lineage of integral philosophy followed. The next section addresses the value of integral ecopsychology in facing the ecological crisis, highlighting the importance of seeing such a crisis as a crisis of human consciousness. At the level of consciousness, religious and spiritual wisdom have much to offer, in particular the anthropocosmic or "cosmic human" perspective introduced in the next section. The relevance of the anthropocosmic perspective to cultivate ecologically sound behaviors and ecopsychological health is explored and presented as a main means to bringing ecopsychology in direct contact with religious and spiritual teachings. This contact is necessary for the study of the multileveled connection between humans and Earth. Finally, I propose an expanded definition of integral ecopsychology while offering three tenets deemed essential for its advancement.

Keywords: anthropocosmos, ecological crisis, health, integral ecopsychology, sacred.

The connection between humans and the Earth, in most industrialized societies, lacks the necessary depth and quality to appropriately address the ecological challenges of our times. The modern human has contributed to unleashing a global ecological crisis arguably comparable in magnitude and scope to the previous mass extinction that occurred 65 million years ago, known for exterminating more than half of the species inhabiting the Earth.² Meanwhile, the creative capacities of our species, *Homo sapiens*, seem to have developed exponentially along with a great ability to alter the functioning of the natural systems of the Earth. The celebration of the gifts of the human mind and heart stands in stark contrast with the systematic destruction inflicted upon the natural world. In fact, the very foundations and functioning of industrial societies appear to declare war against other species, the ecosystems they inhabit, and the geochemical processes that animate the whole planetary tapestry of the great blue jewel we have for a home.

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² Known as the K-T (Cretaceous-Tertiary) extinction event, it is one of five massive extinctions that have occurred in the past 500,000 years of the history of the Earth as evidenced in the fossil record.



Never in the history of humankind has the planet endured so many changes in such a short amount of time. According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005), “Over the past 50 years, humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than in any comparable period of time in human history” (p. 1). Biodiversity has rapidly declined in the past forty years, the demand on natural resources has doubled since 1960, and we are currently using the equivalent of 1.5 planets to support the lifestyle of industrial societies (World Wildlife Fund, 2012, para. 1). This signifies that the detrimental impact of humanity on rivers and oceans, forests and savannas, blue jays and snakes, the atmosphere and the rolling hills, is continually pushing the Earth to unknown territories with unforeseeable, and potentially catastrophic, outcomes. What would it take for us humans to envision the possibility of a healthier relationship with ourselves and our home, the Earth? In what follows I outline the bases for an integral ecopsychology as a more encompassing and spiritually informed lens through which to address our historical moment marked by the planetary ecological crisis.

Historical Background

As early as the publication of *Silent Spring* (Carson, 1962), it became evident that there is no ecosystem on the planet left unaltered by human activity. The ubiquitous influence of one single species, amongst the estimated 10 million currently populating the Earth, has led scientists to coin the term “anthropocene” (Crutzen, 2002; Zalasiewicz et al., 2008) to designate a new geological era dominated by human activity. Through penetrating studies in biology, evolution, and religion, the new era has also been referred to as the “pyschozoic,” (Teilhard de Chardin, 1999, p. 124) given the orchestration and illumination of humanity’s powers of self-reflection. The term “ecozoic” (Berry, 1999, p. 8; Berry, 2006) was coined to refer to the emerging epoch in which the planet as a whole is of utmost concern to the human, collectively referring to the human–Earth conscious coupling as the “Earth community” (Berry, 1988, p. 6). In the same vein, the “planetary era” is the period, initialized in the 16th century, where more or less continuous communication was established between the five continents (Kelly, 2010; Morin, 2005). Taken together, the conscious entrance of the human presence to a planetary level appears to be one of the primary stories of our time.

The planetary ecological crisis has also been described as a novel kind of collective initiation pertaining to all members of our species. The planetary crucible can be seen as involving a collective rite of passage with the potential to initiate global social transformation by purifying destructive habits and inviting less disruptive ways of being to emerge. This process would be so profound as to trigger a species-ego death, that is, an archetypal death-rebirth experience for the human species (Bache, 2000). It appears as if the human species and the wider Earth community has embarked on a “trajectory of initiatory transformation, into a state of spiritual alienation, into an encounter with mortality on a global scale—from world wars and holocausts to the nuclear crisis and now the planetary ecological crisis” (Tarnas, 2002, p. 8). In these times when “the earth is currently operating in a no-analogue state” (Moore, Underdal, Lemke, & Loreau, 2001, para. 7), different researchers ascribe an underlying cause (or set of causes) to the crisis, according to their own lens and field of study.

Social ecologists believe that the root problem of ecological devastation is to be found in the hierarchical and oppressive dynamics characteristic of the social domain of human activity

(Bookchin, 2005). Deep ecologists ascertain that the flaw lies in the anthropocentric bias industrial citizens exercise in our daily lives and the correspondent lack of intrinsic value perceived in non-human species and their habitats (Devall & Sessions, 1985; Naess, 1995a, 1998b, 2008; Sessions, 1995). Supporters of ecofeminism maintain that there is a correlation between humans' destructive relationship to the Earth, the subjugation of women by men, and the historical dominance of patriarchal culture (Griffin, 1978; Merchant, 1980). Transpersonal ecology (Fox, 1995), an extension of the deep ecology movement in dialogue with transpersonal psychology, holds the view that the inability to expand the notion of self via a process of identification with the natural world is the key to the ecological crisis. Social ecology, deep ecology, ecofeminism, and associated schools of ecological thought³ commonly center themselves either on nature and the more-than-human world, or on culture and the social order, often offering polarizing points of view and repressing vital aspects needed for a more integral understanding of our relationship with the Earth.

A less divisive approach has been uncovered that highlights the inner aspects of the eco-crisis. This approach has at its core a fundamental pattern that pertains not only to the human domain but also to the ecologies of the Earth, helping to soften alienating narratives of the human-nature relationship and thus delving deeper into the causes of the ecological crisis. "What is the pattern which connects all the living creatures?" asks Bateson (as cited in Todd, 2005, p. 77). The pattern, he suggests, is mind itself: an eco-connective and collective mind underlying and guiding the material and energetic cycles of the planet. There is a turn inward here, a shift from externalities to an inner view of the natural world in its eco-mental dimension. This inner approach to the eco-crisis allows an expanded degree of freedom, fluidity, and permeability between humans and the Earth, resulting in a more comprehensive, and potentially more effective approach, to dealing with the ecological crisis. In addition, an integral or multileveled view of industrial humans' crippled connection to the Earth invites more penetrating questions in regards to the paradigmatic assumptions that contribute to our alienation from the Earth at ecological, psychological, and spiritual levels. Ecopsychology, or the psychological study of humans' connection to the Earth (Greenway, 2000; Roszak, 1992), is amenable to adopting such an encompassing, integral approach.

Ecopsychology and Spirit

The project of ecopsychology is a diverse and often disjointed effort to heal the relation between industrial humanity and the Earth.⁴ Ecopsychology is not a unified discipline partly due to the lack of an overarching organization or operational definition that encompasses the plurality of efforts sheltered under the umbrella of ecopsychology (Kahn & Hasbach, 2012; Fisher, 2002; Scull, 2000, 2008). This disorganization makes somewhat problematic a thorough assessment of the efforts made to date that incorporate the subtle and spiritual dimensions of our engagement with the Earth. Nonetheless, the efforts to bring to the forefront of ecopsychology the significance of spirituality and move in the direction of an integral ecopsychology broadly derive

³ These schools are considered some of the most representative of the "radical ecologies" (Merchant, 2005). For a comprehensive survey, see Esbjorn-Hargens & Zimmerman (2009).

⁴ For a glance at the history and many origins of ecopsychology, see Greenway (2000), Roszak (1992, 1995), Schroll (2007), and Scull (2000, 2008).

from three areas: Jungian ecopsychology, transpersonal psychology, and the field of religion and ecology.

The first area of influence is the most widespread, as most of ecopsychology, in one way or another, is influenced by Jungian psychology (Merritt, 2010, 2012). This area carries the potential caveat to psychologize the world and reduce the Earth to its psychological value alone and fail to incorporate the nuances that spiritual wisdom has to offer. On the other hand, Jungian psychology provides a rich repertoire of concepts and practices connected to the world's spiritual traditions. In the field of transpersonal psychology, Metzner's (1992, 1999) pioneering efforts have played a key role in bringing together Earth-based traditions with transpersonal psychology. John Davis (1998, 2010, 2011) has advanced a transpersonal ecopsychology focusing on the spiritual and non-dual experiences facilitated by the Earth. As with the larger field of transpersonal psychology, there is a danger of overemphasizing the transcendent and of repressing our ecological embeddedness along with the value of community and service. The field of religion and ecology, as the third area of influence, offers a thorough study of how the world's religions can and should contribute to better deal with the ecological crisis (Chapple & Tucker, 2000; Tucker, 2004; Tucker & Grim, 2001). Depending on the religious tradition under study, the psychological component can be rather weak and thus potentially detrimental for achieving genuine personal and societal change.

Although I am aware of the several strands of integral philosophy (i.e., Aurobindonian, Wilberian, Gebserian), the integral approach advanced in this paper is mostly based on the work of Thomas Berry. In a way, the present research constitutes an extension of Berry's (2009) integral ecology⁵ with the explicit inclusion of the psychological dimensions of our relation to the Earth. For Berry (1999, 2009), the cosmos as a whole is a source of divine expression that manifests in a particular way through the human venture; for cosmos and human are born out of the same universal evolutionary matrix. There exists, according to Berry, a complete implication of the cosmos in the human and of the human in the cosmos to the extent that the religiosity of our species is an expression of the spirituality of the cosmos, of the Earth. "Within this context the human activates one of the deepest dimensions of the universe and is, thus, integral with the universe since the beginning" (Berry, 2006, p. 57). The confluence of Berry's anthropocosmic or "cosmic human" perspective (addressed below) with current advances in ecopsychology conform the basis for my initial proposal of an integral ecopsychology, a formulation that would further equip us to face the challenges and gifts of the ecological crisis.

Integral Ecopsychology and the Ecological Crisis

The ecological crisis, from an integral ecopsychological perspective, is primarily seen as a fundamental psychological misconception of the value and role of the Earth in the health and evolution of the human species. The industrial human relationship to the Earth appears to be characterized by a fundamental amnesia of the psyche's own source—*psyche* and *oikos* (dwelling place or habitat in Greek) are seemingly severed. The human mind has cut itself off from the surrounding landscapes and fellow planetary organisms by placing a psychological straitjacket upon itself. While in a state of forgetfulness, humanity is only able to perceive the movements of

⁵ For a concise history of integral ecology, including Berry's contribution, see: Esbjorn-Hargens (2011).

its own creation. The non-human world seems to lack psychic reality; it is devoid of soul (Hillman, 1982, 1992), making it untenable for humans to meaningfully relate to the Earth at a psychological level (Abram, 2000).

The ecological crisis is a sign of psychological impairment in dire need of healing. The ecological crisis is the outward manifestation of a subtle, yet perhaps more alarming psychological predicament that has been variously referred as a “crisis of perception” (Capra, 1984, 1997), a “crisis of consciousness” (Bache, 2001; Gangadean, 2006; Russell, 2004), and a “crisis of meaning” (Brown, 2003; Wilber, 2000; Zimmerman, n.d.). The reduction of the human identity to its tangible and material aspects neglects the emotional, psychological, and spiritual spectrum vital for healthy development. This neglect of the true spectrum of our humanness is intimately intertwined with our conception of home, the Earth. In essence, the troubled relationship between industrial citizens and the Earth seems to reflect an epistemological fallacy derived from the human condition itself, alluded to by the Indian notion of *avidya* or “ignorance” and the conditioned world of its creation (*samsara*). It is at this deep, existential juncture of our relation to, and conception of, the Earth that ecopsychology is considerably nurtured by the wealth of wisdom that the world’s spiritual traditions have to offer regarding humanity’s potential.

The fundamental challenges posed by the ecological crisis instigate a reformulation of deep-seated values and beliefs commonly informed by spiritual and religious wisdom. Transpersonal psychology proposes that human psychology is better studied in a spiritual context (Daniels, 2005; Grof, 1985, 2000), thus complementing the exploration of a more integrally sustainable engagement with the Earth. The presence of spirit, as a more transcendent vector of the sacred along with the immanent manifestation of that continuum of sacrality, take part in reengaging the human body–mind with the Earth (Adams, 2010; Besthorn, Wulff, & St. George, 2009). It becomes possible to rescue and value the sacredness of Earth’s immanence without disregarding the transcendent qualities of the Absolute. The shift demanded by the ecological crisis is better understood and navigated through frameworks and models in direct contact with the spiritual core of consciousness.

Tucker and Grim (2001) and Tucker (2004) esteem that religions have entered an ecological phase, potentially providing societies with key insights to bring health, fulfillment, and a sense of the sacred to our embeddedness in the world. Researchers suggest that for religions to stay relevant they must address, in one way or another, the ecological crisis (Gottlieb, 2008; Taylor, 2009; Tucker, 2008). “Can religions re-evolve and encourage the deep sense of wonder that ignites human imagination in the face of nature’s beauty?” (Tucker, 2004, p. 8). Amongst the plethora of attitudes pertaining to the sacred, perhaps the greatest gift of the confluence of religion and ecology involves bringing the role and presence of the divine to the forefront of the nexus between humans and the Earth.

For Thomas Berry (1999), the recognition of the sacredness of Earth requires the construction of a *new story* from which to derive meaning and guidance to embark on the great work of healing and transformation of our species. This story is attuned to the evolutionary epic of the universe from the big originating burst 14 billion years ago to the accretion of the Earth to the emergence of computers and complex life forms. The cosmos as an evolutionary, interdependent

continuum is the essential sacred story to root our efforts for shifting consciousness and dealing with the ecological crisis. Joanna Macy (2007; Macy & Brown, 1998) strategically differentiates three dimensions of what she calls the “Great Turning” (2007, p. 139) or the transition to a life-sustaining society. Whereas the first two dimensions have to do with slowing the destructive pace of societies and creating more viable structures, the third dimension is the shift in consciousness. Without tending the terrain of consciousness, the other two dimensions of the Great Turning would not endure.

On the other hand, since the Axial Age (Jaspers, 1951/2003), from about 800 BCE to 200 CE, certain elements of the world’s religions have contributed to a systematic alienation from the Earth and the cosmos. This alienation is facilitated by an emphasis on transcendence and the prime relevance of sacred scriptures (Berry, 1988; White, 1967). With the advent of the Enlightenment period and the rise of industrial societies, the Earth became subject to control and manipulation given that the presence of God had been posited beyond the manifest world. Although with a wide range of nuance, rationalism, the idea of individual salvation, a God figure removed from creation, and a machine-like world, are some of the assumptions underlying the industrial worldview (McKibben, 2006; Merchant, 1980). However, religious traditions often elaborate on how humans, Earth, and the cosmos, are infused with the sacredness permeating all creation.

The Anthropocosmic Vision

By engaging in a comparative analysis of religions, Eliade (1958) noted a pervading “anthropocosmic experience” (p. 455) in which the human is seen as permeable to the living, sacred ordering of the world. This permeability between human and cosmos is taken to be the epitome of religious experience and provides a fresh existential dimension wherein the human presence is situated within the cosmic matrix (Eliade, 1991). A religious experience constitutes the realization of belonging to the cosmos often achieved by way of micro-macrocosmic correspondences or “anthropocosmic homologies” (Eliade, 1987, p. 169) that favor a deeper intimacy between humans, the cosmos, and the sacred.

The anthropocosmic vision is present in several religious and spiritual traditions. The Christian tradition has the idea that humans were created in the “image” and “likeness” of God (Gen 1:26) and in Kabbalah the concept of *adam kadmon* or “primal man” figures prominently as the divine human expressed by the ten *sefirot* of the Tree of Life (Jung, 1977). In the Western tradition, the anthropocosmic knowing of unity and sacred reciprocity between humans and the cosmos is evident in the theory of correspondences (Faivre, 1994). This theory, based on the set of homologies between humans and the cosmos, is said to be one of the keystones of Western alchemy and philosophy (Hanegraaff, 1997) and is perhaps best represented by the Hermetic maxim, “as above, so below.” Paracelsus tells us: “Heaven is man, and man is heaven, and all men together are one heaven, and heaven is nothing but one man” (as cited in Jacobi, 1951, p. 113).

We find a long history of anthropocosmic awareness in the Eastern traditions as expressed in the Vedas, the yoga traditions, and Buddhism. The Rig Veda outlines the correspondence between the cosmic winds and the breath, the cosmic pillar (*skambha*) and the vertebral column,

and the idea of the “center of the world” as a point in the heart or axis traversing the human energy centers (Eliade, 1958, p. 117). The Purusha sukta, the hymn of the Cosmic Being in the Rig Veda, lays out a story of creation in which the cosmic being (Purusha) is dismembered and certain parts of its body constitute the different corners of the world, planets, gods, humans, animals, society, and so on. The Atharva Veda (10.7) relates how the outgrowths of skambha, a representation of Purusha and Brahman as the axis mundi, disclose the harmony between the numerous worldly expressions and their inmost source (Bloomfield, 1973).

The Upanishadic doctrine of atman-Brahman advances that the omnipresent, imperishable creative principle of the Absolute (Brahman) is said to be manifest in human form as atman, equally found at a macrocosmic scale in the entire cosmos. Specific correlations are made between the anatomy of the cosmic person and the world are outlined in the *Aitareya* and *Brihadaranyaka Upanishads* while the *Mundaka Upanishad* (2.1.4) gives a detailed correlations between the bodily parts of the cosmic person and the world (Radhakrishnan, 1995, p. 680). The resultant anthropocosmic vision, in which humanity is transformed into “the public property of the cosmos” (Weiming, 1989, p. 102) is given clear expression in the Bhagavad Gita (6.29), where we read that “the man whose self is in Yoga, sees the self in all beings and all beings in the self, he is equal-visioned everywhere” (in Sri Aurobindo, 1995, p. 29). *Atman* or the cosmic person from whom both cosmos and human emerge out of acts as a kind of holographic matrix that enters into a developmental process through the dynamics of the world ever extending into *Brahman*.

The anthropocosmic impulse is found even in the commonly considered world-denying *raja* or “royal” path of yoga. Patanjali tells us that meditating (samyaama) on specific bodily areas that correspond to the sun, the moon, and the stars, gives rise to cosmic wisdom and the orientation of the body within it (Yoga Sutras, 3.26–29).⁶ Similarly, asana or a sacramental bodily posture, when executed correctly, is aimed at uniting (samapatti) with the infinite (ananta) (Yoga Sutras, 2.47). Furthermore, the Yoga Sutras (2.18) maintain that asana has the potential to take the practitioner beyond the grip of the opposites of self and cosmos. Patanjali states that yoga is a means of refinement that leads to a transparency of being where, due to a diminishment of the factors of suffering, the unity among grasping, grasping, and grasped becomes manifest (Yoga Sutras 1.41). In a state of conscious transparency, unity is revealed and the practitioner becomes like a “clear jewel” (Chapple, 2008, p. 33). Human and cosmos enter into a state of unity (samapatti) and ecstasy (samadhi) that enables the inherent luminosity of existence, the “clear jewel,” to shine forth.

In the Tantric tradition, the identification and deep resonance of the human and the cosmos is taken to a fuller expression. “What is here is elsewhere; what is not here is nowhere,” says the Vishvara Tantra (as cited in Lysebeth, 2002, p. 5), conveying at once the essence of Tantra and the holographic nature of the human and the cosmos intimated since the Vedic period. The human microcosm (body–mind) is transfigured into a temple, a sacred symbol homologized with the macrocosms. In the Kalachakratantra, the Buddha reveals the great secret: “As it is without, so it is in the body” (Wallace, 2001, p. 65); and the Adibhudatantra adds, “as it is in the body, so it is elsewhere” (p. 66). The human re-enactment of cosmic creation is the key that restores divine

⁶ The translations of the *Yoga Sutras* used throughout the document are Aranya (1983) and Chapple (2008).

order (rita), yoking into conscious transparency the sacrality and mutual belonging of the micro and the macro, the human and the cosmos.

In the Avatamsaka or Flower Ornament Sutra it is said that Indra fashioned the cosmos by casting a jeweled net (Cook, 1977). The net stretched to infinity in all directions and a glistening jewel was found in each juncture of the net. An endless number of jewels adorn the infinite net. Any one jewel in the net reflects the luminosity of all the jewels and each of the jewels reflected within a particular jewel in turn reflects all other jewels resulting in a net of infinite reflection. The homologous relation between human and cosmos is present elsewhere in the Buddhist tradition. “Our body is the bodhi tree, and our mind a mirror bright,” Shen-hsiu tells us (as cited in Price & Mou-lam, 2005, p. 70). The human body is equated with the place in which the Buddha reached enlightenment, the bodhi tree, and the mind is said to reflect the luminous qualities of its true nature. The dharma (dharma), the body of teachings derived from Buddha *Sakyamuni*'s realization, aims to disclose the pristine essence of all that is. The Mahayana tradition sees dharma as the seed planted all throughout the cosmos, seed that is known as “Buddha nature.” The human body–mind and cosmos partake of the awakened, intermeshed nature.

Opening to the Healing Reciprocity of Humans and Earth

An anthropocosmic perspective provides an encompassing worldview that values the confluence of Earth, humans, and the sacred. In contrast with schools of ecological thought centered on human value (anthropocentrism), the whole of life (biocentrism) or life and its environment (ecocentrism), an anthropocosmic approach provides a conciliatory path between humans, life, and their ecosystems. The anthropocosmic perspective is based on the idea of a continuity of being (Weiming, 1985), a seamless continuum of interiority and sacrality between humans, heaven, and Earth. This continuum goes beyond any form of “centrism” that may give rise to fragmentary and ecologically detrimental worldviews and behaviors. As Mickey (2007) tells us, “Whether small or large, biotic or abiotic, human or nonhuman, home or beyond, everything and everyone can become an echo-box resonating with cosmic repercussions” (p. 244).

The ecologically oriented worldviews and attitudes facilitated by the anthropocosmic weaving of humans and the cosmos allow for the fullness of humanity to participate in the sacredness of Earth. This participation demands a reformulation of the understanding of religious experience itself. Anthropocosmic participation invariably manifests as a hierophany, a disclosure of the numinosity of both humans and the cosmos. The anthropocosmic vision summons a fuller understanding of humanity by virtue of bringing forth commonly repressed aspects of our being that exist in resonance with the cosmos, ultimately conceived as chief source of the sacred. Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh (1992) has coined the term “interbeing” to refer to the net-like Buddha nature at the heart of the cosmos. He tells us, “To be is to inter-be. We cannot just be by ourselves alone. We have to inter-be with every other thing” (p. 96).

The anthropocosmic view of Earth relies on a healthier mode of relation between humans and Earth that rests on the rediscovery of the transparency and intimacy of humans, the web of life, and the sacred. Similarly, orienting the body–mind toward the Earth in search of health is one of

the main tenets of ecopsychology. There is a wellspring of healing inherent to the Earth ready to be absorbed by the body–mind when it moves in harmony with the source of its existence (Buzzel & Chalquist, 2009; Hartig, Evans, Jamner, Davis, & Garling, 2003; R. Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Logan & Selhub, 2012), for this expansion and subsequent integration signifies a reclaiming of the totality of the psyche and the reestablishment of the covenant between humans and world. The underlying reciprocity between self and Earth suggests that effective efforts to move in the direction of healing are those that imply wholeness (Jung, 1965). It may well be that the ecosystems of the Earth represent wild, untamed regions of the mind that guard the medicine necessary for the health and wholeness of human beings (Plotkin, 2003).

The wholeness implied in an anthropocosmic perspective invites the recognition of humans' multidimensional connection to the Earth. The healing task of ecopsychology would invite recognition of the permeable boundary between the web of life or the "Earth without" and the human mind or "Earth within," along with the sacred ground from which both grow their sustenance. At the subjective level, humans' relation to the Earth is enlivened by what Jung called the "primitive within" (Jung & Sabini, 2002, p. 18). This primordial aspect of the psyche is at home with the rhythms of the Earth. Notions such as the "ecological self," (Naess, 2008, p. 82) or the "transpersonal self" (Daniels, 2005, p. 159) give voice to humanity's widened identity, echoing the Purusha of the yoga tradition or the seed of Buddha nature at the heart of creation. At the objective level, the ecological kinship of the Earth is manifest via the cycles and exchanges of particles, elements, and nutrients of which our bodies and those of other species are constituted. Earth within and without are in intimate reciprocity. The acknowledgment and alignment of inner and outer, of humans, Earth and cosmos, allow for the recovery of health. That is to say, humans and Earth partake in the healing qualities inherent in their mutuality. Berry (2006) reminds us,

the mountains and rivers and all living things, the sky and its sun and moon and clouds all constitute a healing, sustaining sacred presence for humans which they need as much for their psychic integrity as for their physical nourishment. (p. 136)

From an integral ecopsychological perspective, health for Earth and humans derives from psychological wholeness and the recovery of a pervading sense of the sacred. This integrative conception of health and healing goes well beyond the dominant mechanistic and individualistic understanding of the Earth and the human body–mind, yet it is implicit in the etymology of the word "health" itself. The word "healing" evolved from Indo-European roots variously meaning "wholeness," "whole," "sound," "holy," and "sacred" (Devereux, 1996). This encompassing approach to health is found in the ancient medical traditions of the world, including ayurveda, traditional Chinese medicine, native American traditional healing, and other medical systems, all of which take into consideration the physical and spiritual dimensions of health. The Parable of the Two Suitors (Tarnas, 2007) invites us to appreciate the need to conceive of a spiritually enlivened world, full of agency and meaning as opposed to a soulless, devalued one, for the former would more readily disclose its healing secrets. The healing of humans and Earth might just depend on how much we open ourselves to the multidimensionality of existence and make ourselves participants of such a numinous reality. This openness is readily accessible by the anthropocosmic vision outlined above.

The multileveled belonging and reciprocity between humans and Earth may run deeper than we commonly acknowledge. Instead of the mind being trapped in the skull and the body encased by the skin, the body-mind is better conceived as a reflection of a planetary and cosmic phenomenon that we partake in. If the matrix of the human presence rests in the dynamics of the Earth and the world at large, as suggested in the various ideas outlined above, the correspondence between our species and the Earth occurs at a deep, elemental level. How would our psychological theories and frameworks be like if we were to seriously consider our intimate belonging to the world? Where would we search for healing? The quest for a healthier and fuller relation to the Earth beyond the ecological crisis entails a radical shift of worldview; a sort of conversion in a spiritual sense where world and self are born anew and a transfiguration of seeing enables viewing the sacred in all. No less than a breakthrough of the profound kind is needed to face the ecological crisis, one supported by the dialogue between ecopsychology and spiritual and religious wisdom.

Toward an Integral Ecopsychology

From an integral perspective that aims to move beyond the materialistic and reductionist tendency of modernity, the task of healing the Earth-human relation could not be achieved, at least in an enduring way, without acknowledging the multidimensionality of both humans and the Earth. A concomitant shift takes place where ecopsychology as the study of humanity's psychological connection to the Earth shifts to the appraisal of not only the psychological sphere but of our multileveled connection to the Earth. Commonly used ecopsychological practices such as horticultural and animal-assisted therapy, green exercise (e.g., Japanese "forest baths"), ecological restoration activities, and so on, are joined by various contemplative practices that take into consideration the psycho-spiritual dimensions of humans and the world. Various spiritually engaged practices (Kelly, 2005; Nicol, 2010) Earth-based rituals (Gomes, 2009; Metzner, 2009; Watkins, 2009), and cultural therapeutic activities (Berry, 2009; Plotkin, 2007) become essential in order to regain ecopsychological health and sanity. An integral ecopsychology could thus be initially defined as the study of the multileveled connection between humans and the Earth. Although broad, this tentative definition allows for the inclusion of commonly neglected dimensions of human's relation to the Earth, including somatic, emotional, and spiritual aspects.

Given the relevance of the psycho-spiritual roots of the ecological crisis when in search of healing, an integral ecopsychology would necessarily invite a practice of constant self-study facilitated by spiritual and religious wisdom in the context of the Earth community. This practice would in turn release the necessary impetus to embark on a healing expedition for a renewed sense of intimacy and belonging to the Earth. Thus, we can elaborate on the tentative definition of an integral ecopsychology, entailing the study of the multileveled connection between humans and the Earth with the dual aim of restoring personal and collective health and contributing to the quest for wholeness and self-discovery. In the following, I would like to outline three key tenets that derive from the expanded definition of integral ecopsychology:

1. The bond between humans and Earth is multileveled and a complication at any of these levels can translate into disease. An encompassing effort to tend the Earth-human bond is most adequate to promote enduring health and ecologically viable behaviors.

2. Health and wholeness are two facets of the same process. To achieve health in an enduring and holistic way, it is necessary to uncover the deep dynamics of fragmentation and alienation that keep human beings from the awareness of the totality of our being.
3. Healing, wholeness, and the holy form a single continuum. The inclusion of spiritual and religious wisdom into psychological frameworks provides a fundamental vantage point to further concepts and strategies for the betterment of health and self-discovery.

These are some of the tenets deemed essential in the creation of a viable future for the Earth community and also serve as stepping stones for an integral ecopsychology. This paper outlines one expression of potentially myriad varieties of what an integral ecopsychology might look like. Perhaps the distinctive mark of an integral ecopsychology is that the human is to be permeable to the Earth not only for psychological healing but also for spiritual nourishment. Rescuing the multi-dimensionality of our humanness, the wholeness and true identity of human beings ultimately depends on an ability to behold the sacredness of the Earth. This ability of unveiling the numinous dimensions in which we participate with is at the heart of integral ecopsychology.

Much research remains to be done in order to envision and actualize a way in which “humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner” (Berry, 1999, p. 3). This is particularly true when advancing an integral ecopsychology given the presence of numerous integral philosophies, socio-political contexts, cultural nuances, and religious and spiritual inclinations available nowadays. However, models, theories, and frameworks that invite a reevaluation of the deep seated cultural assumptions that facilitate the plundering of the Earth while pointing at the multileveled reciprocity between humans and the world, including the deepest spiritual dimensions, may be crucial for the future of our species and all the beings we share the planet with.

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Integral Ecofeminism: An Introduction

Chandra Alexandre¹

Abstract: This article offers an introduction to integral ecofeminism as a spiritually-grounded philosophy and movement seeking to catalyze, transform and nurture the rising tension of the entire planet. It articulates integral ecofeminism as an un-pathologizing force toward healing, as the offering of a possibility for creating and sustaining the emergent growth of individuals, institutions and our world systems toward awareness. Doing so, it embraces sacred and secular, rational and emotional, vibrant and still, in its conception of reality; and with this, it is a way of looking at the world whole, seeking to acknowledge the wisdom of creation in its multiplicity, specificity, and completely profound manifestation.

Key Words: ecofeminism, non-duality, integral, consciousness, evolution, sustainability.

This introduction to integral ecofeminism is a meditation resting on the juicy, rich, layered, and deep context afforded by critical spirituality, embodied mysticism, spiritual politics and ecstatic devotion. It is a pathway motivated by a deep call to spirit and the various wisdom traditions of our world, indigenous and post-modern. It is also a prayer for helping us to understand that which we oftentimes cannot describe or explain adequately though the vehicle of language. It is a perspective dedicated to weaving together strands from opposing worldviews, all the while guided by a vision of global community as diverse, individual, intense and sublime as all of creation. It is a journey, a call to the realm of spirit or cosmic consciousness for initiation into the mysteries.

At its core, integral ecofeminism provides an orienting vision as well as some of the strategic tactics necessary for the creation of a sustainable, thriving way of life. It invites us into the challenge of implementing the particulars of our authentic selves in the fullness of our manifestation within the context of our daily lives. Why? Because doing so is movement toward realization that we are the essential elements required for achieving the benefits of integral ecofeminism—benefits resulting from the work of love in practice, or that which breeds optimism, peace, respect and equity.

But can we honor the invitation? Doing so attempts to give meaning to being alive. It propels us toward the schisms of the world so that healing might occur. In this way, integral ecofeminism asks us to experience more of the world by re-membering who we are in ways that are not limited by either external or internalized oppressions. To make this happen, we must question our belief in the nature of things. For if we can work from the premise that life is inherently intelligent, integral ecofeminism argues us into having faith in an evolutionary developmental process. In this, we may recognize the larger ocean that is the Divine, called by any name, as

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guiding our lives. This is the truth (holding both the illumination and the shadow) of our unfolding unique stories and our collective process as human beings on Earth. It is our increasingly unencumbered soul held within the mystery of our incarnation and our evolution. Integral ecofeminism as thus defined, catalyzes the process of conscious global transformation—and this is its essential motivation.

The Road Here and Beyond

Prior to our new science understandings, the Western position has generally been one of unquestioning domination. The fight of feminists has been with rectifying a man-woman dichotomy that values only one side of the equation. Environmentalists have most often struggled with a culture-nature dichotomy, where civilization has been deemed supreme and nature regarded as an expendable resource. For ecofeminists, the link between the struggles of women and those for nature has been made explicit. In fact, ecofeminists argue that the oppression of women is inextricably linked to the domination of nature: only through the realization that the two have been equated can we begin to re-value both spheres and remove the weight of imposed inferiority. Integral ecofeminism seeks therefore to empower those marginalized by patriarchal ideology, helping them to find voice and recognition within the local as well as global systems and institutions of the world.

Greta Gaard (1993) notes that the theoretical base of ecofeminism is generally expressed as a sense of self "interconnected with all life" (p. 1). This is a sentiment of relationship; of relationship to the whole of which we are each a part. And such a sense of relationship to the whole is exactly what is required in order to break dualistic mindsets and create a worldview that incorporates the worth and wisdom of the non-dominant (for example, the female and her body, the chthonic and the antinomian, the voiceless and the unheard) readily into its embrace toward fostering new consciousness.

At its outset, the project of integral ecofeminism is that of an embodied spiritual philosophy, one that understands the central role women's bodies, the Earth body and Goddess must play in dismantling the patriarchal paradigm. And not just because these are previously undervalued tokens present in a new worldview. Rather, what is represented here is otherwise missing from the lifeblood expression today of human evolution in its fullest. We are therefore asked to take in the rainbow provided by the rich red of menstrual blood, the blackness of Kali's skin, and the whiteness of silence in order to heal. As Ynestra King (1990) asserted, there can be no sustainable vision for the future until we realize that healing needs to occur. Embracing all that is, was and ever will be, integral ecofeminism then moves us to blossom love, realizing both the polarity of opposites and the sacred marriage that births us anew in the process.

Vandana Shiva (1989) proposed that we consider the example of Hinduism's Prakriti as a guide in our healing struggles. Prakriti is living nature or the feminine principle, and Shiva holds that this concept is a pathway toward accomplishing a more balanced worldview while also promoting environmental sustainability and the well-being of diverse, autonomous communities. Prakriti also represents the sacredness of relationships, inviting us to become one with self-other and personal-planetary concerns. While women are the foremost carriers of Prakriti, in part because they have been—in the eyes of patriarchal society and its constructs—equivalent with

exploitable nature, both women and men may engage Prakriti as a non-violent, non-gendered and inclusive alternative to instigations and affronts that sap women and nature of their vital energies for the production of unsustainable profits and greedy capital accumulation that serves the interests of merely a few.

When examined, Prakriti provides more than the dualistic counterpart to Purusha, the activating or male principle of Samkhya Indian philosophy. Instead, it is the entirety of nature, replete with its ability to create, sustain and destroy in order to continue the cycle of life. It is the blood required at the birthing, the energy of growth toward ripeness, and the vulture feasting on our remains. Prakriti thus considered asserts, "both a *holistic* perspective and an *inclusive* agenda of concerns based on its considerable respect for diversity—both in turn being principles of nature..." (Kothari, quoted in Shiva, 1989, p. x). As such, Prakriti is a source of inspiration for integral ecofeminism as it emerges from the grassroots of the world's rebellions against hate and oppression. Within its embrace, those in need of self-respect and community, healing and rest may find their space and time.

The Four Tenets and Three Levels

Integral ecofeminism arises as a tripartite philosophical methodology for planetary growth reflected in many correspondences; for example, the elemental, the seasonal, the alchemical and the physical. Offering the argument that three things are needed for both wildly dramatic and sublime transformation to occur, integral ecofeminism first calls for an instigator of change. Next, it demands a consciousness that embraces death as a part of life. And finally, it asks for the will to collectively create a container for birthing. Through this scaffolding of mindsets, integral ecofeminism engages on three levels: individual, cultural-planetary and mythological-cosmic. Within these three, it articulates as foundational principles of:

(i) **Dynamism**, representing the fundamental, ever-changing, spiraling forces of the universe both within and beyond our awareness of space-time reality. Dynamism enables the visioning of our planet as Gaia (named for the primordial Greek Great Goddess) as she is situated within a universe known to provide ever-expanding potentials for a fulfilled, resplendent, and sustainable life. This principle gives worth to the tensions danced through cycles of life, death and rebirth—all the while holding deep respect and empathy for our pain—as they dissolve and are forever generated anew. It is necessarily iterative and reflective, living as the constant of change present in and through both challenges and joys.

Dynamism is our dance of complementarities on Earth. This means that the oppositional dualities of a mechanistic worldview, such as self-other, culture-nature, mind-body, and reason-emotion, are held in partnership within a container where transformation arises by virtue of inherent tension. In this way, something greater can emerge and a reflection of truth be revealed. In this moment of birthing or transcending, we are able to find our grounding, our identity and our awakening Self.

(ii) **Advaita**, denoting a radical non-duality that acknowledges the forces of nature and that which contains as well as transcends them. This principle expresses 'All in One and One in All', simultaneously. However, it is not a totalizing or annihilating tendency, but rather recognition of

life's complexities and the offerings of wisdom they provide de facto. It represents a philosophical belief in the reality of the phenomenological world and the wisdom of the body coupled with an understanding of the pervasiveness of the Divine in life willing us, retro-progressively, into the future.

Experiencing through psyche and soma an awareness of spirit in all the realms above and below, this principle teaches that as we begin to come to our senses, we begin to see the beauty of creation as well as the meaning of the crossroads in our lives. In this way, we strengthen ourselves to create an ethic and morality of care that in turn provide the appropriate boundaries required to strengthen the human condition.

(iii) **Ecofeminism**, manifest as an environmental and feminist philosophy rooted in deep awareness and dedicated to eliminating biases such as those based upon race, gender, sexual orientation, age, species and other categorical distinctions. This is so because we exist in an androcentric and anthropocentric world, where value is placed on some but not on others. Emerging from the ground of various feminist theories, ecofeminism, as described by Carolyn Merchant (1990), Karen J. Warren (2000), Val Plumwood (1993), Carol Adams (1993), Maria Mies & Vandana Shiva (1993), et al., has benefitted from liberal, radical and socialist feminisms, while evolving an ecological ethic of care and empathy, as well as a spiritual fortitude born of a realization of deep interconnectedness. As Charlene Spretnak (1990) noted regarding some tactics of ecofeminism:

Perhaps the most effective strategy for us—and certainly the most difficult—is to lead by example: to contribute to the new philosophical base and to work in its new ecopolitics and ecoeconomics; to organize around the concrete issues of suffering and exploitation; to speak out clearly but without malice against those who further policies of injustice and ecological ignorance; ...to cultivate our spiritual impulses; to act, as best we can, with pure mind/pure heart; to celebrate with gratitude the wonders of life on Earth; and to seek intimate communion with the natural world. All of these are the flowering of ecofeminism. (p. 14)

The ecofeminist principle therefore breathes the essence of creation through a willingness to act. It underscores a world in which the inequities manifest in our constructed societies cannot be undone until the inextricable links between them are made conscious and their un-doing made a priority. It opens safe spaces for marginalized Others to raise up their voices and for those around to listen deeply, with intention, toward a better tomorrow.

(iv) **Awareness**, the pathway of psycho-spiritual growth that seeks a broken-open heart, one capable of being simultaneously with suffering and a love of the world. Mahatma Gandhi, the Great Soul of India, recognized, for example, that states of war and peace sustain a dualistic vision. He therefore advocated love born of *ahimsa*, or active non-violence, to enable being with suffering as we move toward peace. The principle of awareness demands that we live by allowing our strengths to emerge from our greatest vulnerabilities. This principle also takes us on the quest of the spiritual journeyer looking to awaken to Self. Here, awakening means awakening to the universe, as in the Hermetic dictum, "As Above, So Below." It also means holding open the possibility that Gaia has a soul, a guiding spirit, a unified field, and a purpose.

Holding open a belief in intelligent evolutionary change, Rupert Sheldrake (1991) reminds us that, "Gaia herself is purposeful and...her purposes are reflected in the evolutionary process" (p. 58).

Initiation and the Work Ahead

Instigating integral ecofeminism is the recognition that ours is a time of initiation. Whether through the difficulties of a present incarnation or the travails of our collective soul, the crises of our time demand we pay attention. Jean Houston (1996) suggests that:

we are on the brink of opportunities for human and cultural development hitherto unknown...[toward a] planetary consciousness [that] involves a profound awareness of the earth, a potentiating recovery of one's historical as well as herstorical self, and a deep willingness to learn from the genius of other cultures...[which is] both the consummation of where we have been and the next stage of the upward spiral. (p. 225)

As Arthur M. Young (1976) theorized, "The universe is a process put in motion by purpose" (p. 255). And as Ken Wilber (1996) reminds us, "If we really are in the hands of the Great Spirit or the Great Mother, do we really think She doesn't know what She's doing?" (p. 49). Integral ecofeminism invites us to trust that our spiraling forth is taking us through the pain of current afflictions, wars, deprecations, and injustices into something more powerful and important than what we currently know or can even presently fathom.

It is often noted that the co-arising of many forces today are changing the course of global development. Certainly, there are technological innovations and the communications networks that facilitate the spread of information and increase human accountability. There are also findings in the realm of science that call into question the nature of the knowable world and our assumptions about it. And there is a radically non-dual spiritual awareness born at the intersection of religion, philosophy and science where the Divine is seen as transcendent and immanent, *and* as the unifying principle that embraces the entirety of creation. To this we might add grass-roots movements in the feminist, environmental and other arenas that promote putting theory into practice that we might actually change the course of our planet's current trajectory, in order to arrive at an inflection point, our initiation.

Embracing our initiation, integral ecofeminism necessarily *is* and *does*, for it is through being and through action that our individual convictions are taken from an exercise in freedom of choice into a spiritual perspective that recognizes our common ground of being within the web of life's turnings. Thus, integral ecofeminism calls us to a re-awakening of the world through a dirtying of the hands that we may know one another and our Earth as fully as possible. It embraces the work of all whose creativity and sense of wonder vitalize the planet, and it recognizes the suffering of those who have been marginalized and abused. It provides vehicles for the exploration (through dance, dialogue, debate and other pathways in support of both individual particulars and the underlying universals that weave the whole together) of new outcomes.

In many cultures, doing spirituality is commonplace. As Matthew Fox (1990) has noted, "Our thinking about spirituality cannot take place from armchairs or academic towers but must include the dirtying of the hands" (p. 16). Through the development of awareness provided by education and self-reflection, as well as growth through personal and collective action, integral ecofeminism becomes a gateway to the mysteries that we all seek to understand, whether from the fields of California's central valley, the ivory towers of Cambridge, the garbage heaps of Mumbai's outskirts, the desert oases of sub-Saharan Africa, or the industrial centers of China. This is a new kind of religion: a coming together with shared purpose grounded in the real work of embodied life and living, unafraid of looking at the dirt we have underneath our fingernails.

As we conclude our meditation, I invoke the metaphor of life as an ocean of ever-shifting dynamic forces, much like the waves upon the sea that are ever rooted in the vastness of the water. As Charlene Spretnak (1986) notes, "all forms of existence are comprised of one continuous dance of matter/energy arising and falling away, arising and falling away" (p. 41). In this, we find integral ecofeminism where the Being of Heidegger becomes the Quantum of the physicists, becomes the Brahman of Hindus, and the cosmic, All-devouring creatrix spirals in a rapturous dance with the ever-expanding, ever-transcending One to keep the universe diverse and alive.

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Loving Water: In Service of a New Water Ethic

Elizabeth McAnally¹

Abstract: In this paper, I argue that a new water ethic is needed in light of the global water crisis, an ethic that responds to contemporary water issues as it draws from the values embedded within the rich religious and spiritual traditions of the world. This paper explores how a new water ethic could gain much from the Hindu concept *seva* (loving service) that arises from the traditions of *bhakti yoga* (loving devotion) and *karma yoga* (altruistic service). Drawing from David Haberman's work with the Yamuna River of Northern India, I investigate how the concept of *seva* has been recently used in the context of environmental activism that promotes restoration efforts of the Yamuna River, a river worshiped by many as a goddess of love.

Keywords: bhakti yoga, karma yoga, love, service, seva, water ethic, water crisis, Yamuna River.

“There is only one question: / how to love this world.” (Oliver, 1990, p. 6)

These words by Mary Oliver in her poem “Spring” beautifully and succinctly sum up our current task as humans. At a time of impending ecological crisis, it is crucial that we humans learn how to love and care for our planetary home again. Living together with a vast diversity of life forms, we co-inhabit a “blue planet,” for Earth, like the human body, is composed of 70 percent water. In the spirit of Oliver’s “Spring,” I would like to rephrase the “one question” to ask *how to love this watery world*. Let me rephrase it in a slightly different way and ask *how to love the waters of the world*. I find these questions to be extremely relevant in light of the global water crisis of the 21st century, which includes multiple crises pertaining to issues of pollution, scarcity, over-pumping, damming and diverting, desertification, inequitable distribution, and the uncertain effects of global climate change on the hydrological cycle. Asking how to love the waters of the world, how to love our watery home, is of utmost importance at this critical time.

Given the urgency of the looming global water crisis, it is imperative that we reinvent our relationship to water and cultivate a new water ethic. One such ethic could be enacted by responding to contemporary water issues while drawing from the values embedded within the rich religious and spiritual traditions of the world. In this paper, I explore how a new water ethic could gain much from the concept of *seva* (loving service), a concept that arises from the Hindu traditions of *bhakti yoga* (loving devotion) and *karma yoga* (altruistic service). Drawing on David Haberman’s research that he published in his book *River of Love in an Age of Pollution*:

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The Yamuna River of Northern India (Haberman, 2006), I illustrate how the concept of *seva* has informed environmental activism. *Seva* has been a concept traditionally understood as loving service in the form of devotional worship of the river (often accompanied by flowers, candles, incense, food, hymns, and more). In the past couple of decades, the meaning of *seva* has slowly expanded to include not only devotional worship but also environmental activism that is working toward restoration efforts of the Yamuna River.

I visited India for the first time during the winter of 2010-2011, and I had the good fortune of seeing the Yamuna with my own eyes. I was invited to go to India to participate in an interdisciplinary conference about the Yamuna River organized by the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale University and co-sponsored by Yale University and TERI University in Delhi.² I would like to share some of the things I learned about the Yamuna that were motivated by my travels in India.

The Yamuna flows from the Himalayan glacier Yamunotri down into the plains of Northern India, where it merges with the Ganges River at Allahabad, and the combined rivers flow to the Bay of Bengal and merge with the Indian Ocean. The Yamuna is the main tributary of the Ganges, and in many ways, the Yamuna and the Ganges are very similar. For instance, these two rivers are considered to be two of the holiest rivers of India.

Many Hindus who live near the Yamuna and rely on it for their daily needs also worship this river as a goddess of love, a divine mother who lovingly nurtures her children with her waters. These waters of the loving mother goddess flow through holy pilgrimage sites, such as Yamunotri, Braj, Vrindaban, and Allahabad, where many gather to worship this sacred river. Yamuna is known as the daughter of Surya, the sun god, and the sister of Yama, the god of death. The goddess's love affair with Krishna is said to manifest continually in the liquid love that is the river. The poet-saint Govindaswami of the 16th century offers this poem about Yamuna's love with Krishna, Lord Govinda:

Being united with Dark Krishna, Shri Yamuna herself is dark.
 Her flow of drops of love sweat rushes toward her beloved ocean.
 She is like a young lover who is so restless that she cannot remain in her own home.
 Look at her beautiful form; she surpasses millions of cupids.
 She makes love with Krishna, the young holder of Mount Giriraj.
 Lord Govinda becomes exceedingly happy while looking at her.
 She comes to him like a new bride.
 (Govindaswami, as quoted in Haberman, 2006, pp. 203-204)

The Yamuna is not only similar to the Ganges insofar as both are holy rivers, but also because these holiest of rivers are extremely polluted—indeed, two of the most polluted in India. While the Yamuna River is revered by many Hindus as a mother goddess of love, this river is severely polluted as it flows through the intensely populated city of Delhi. The river is transformed into a sewage drain as large amounts of untreated municipal and industrial effluent are released into the water, making the river unsafe to bathe in and the waters dangerous to drink. Large quantities of the river are extracted for agricultural, industrial, and domestic purposes, such that the rate of

² For more about this conference, visit: <http://fore.research.yale.edu/Yamuna-River-Conference>

flow of the river is drastically slowed during the trek to join the Ganges. In some pilgrimage sites like Vrindaban, the river is flowing so slowly and with such a large amount of pollution that the waters have become stagnant and toxic. When I saw the river while I was in Vrindaban, the water level was incredibly low (compared to the water level lines marked on the *ghats*, the steps leading down to the river), and the banks of the river were full of trash.

In his research, David Haberman has encountered three types of responses from Yamuna devotees in Braj regarding the modern pollution of the river. He recounts the following:

Some denied that the pollution has any real effect on the river goddess or on living beings dependent on her; some acknowledged that the pollution harms living beings who come in contact with the water but does not affect the river goddess herself; and some contended that the pollution is having a harmful effect on beings who come in contact with the water as well as on the river goddess herself. (Haberman, 2006, p. 133)

Haberman (2006) goes on to link these distinct views concerning pollution to particular ways that the Mother theology surrounding the river is understood and applied by the three groups. He says:

For the first, Yamuna is an all-powerful Mother who is not affected by the pollution and who takes care of her children no matter how naughty they are. The second group agrees that she is an all-powerful Mother unaffected by pollution, but posits limits to her forgiveness, suggesting that she will not protect those polluting her, and that she may even punish them with the horrible diseases caused by the human-generated pollutants themselves. The third group views Yamuna as an ailing Mother who is herself affected by the pollution and who is in need of the loving care of her devotees. (p. 138)

As Haberman notes, those who believe that the goddess Yamuna is affected by physical pollution are much more likely to engage in acts to protect the river than those who do not see the goddess closely connected to the physical river. This third group of Yamuna devotees has helped to broaden the meaning of *seva* (loving service) from its traditional religious context of devotional worship to include activities that could be classified as environmental activism. Devotional service to the mother goddess of love has inspired the creation of educational programs to raise environmental awareness and clean up the river, along with public interest litigation that has been effective in building sewage treatment plants, determining minimum flows for the health of the river, and holding polluting industries accountable. Here, ecological restoration efforts are encouraged as a way of enacting Yamuna *seva*, loving service to the goddess.

Environmental activism performed in the spirit of Yamuna *seva* is an example of applied, community-based service learning. This service learning seeks to develop greater water consciousness by integrating education about water issues into pedagogy at the same time that it is actively cultivating a water ethic based on love and service. I tell this story of Yamuna *seva* in hopes that those of us who are not Hindus living along the banks of this river might be inspired to love and care for the waters with which we interact. Learning how to be of service to water is an act of love that can rebuild our relationship to our watery home.

I would like to suggest that we consider creating a new water ethic based on love, service, and loving service. This topic inspires me, because I feel strongly that love is a quite powerful motivating force for change, perhaps even *the most* powerful motivating force for change. I feel that love can be the ground, the center, the focus, the drive for environmental consciousness, environmental ethics, and environmental activism. For when we love something or someone, we care for them; we actively work toward their wellbeing, happiness, health, and flourishing. Love, compassion, care, and concern can transform our lives and our relationships with others and the world in which we live. As Rumi so eloquently says, “Let the beauty we love be what we do./ There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground” (Rumi, 1997, p. 36).

So how can we love water? What would it look like to kneel and kiss water? There are hundreds of ways! In my humble opinion, learning how to love water entails respecting water as a sacred source of life, not merely as a resource for humans to use. This involves making sure that water is kept clean and healthy so that it can support the numerous life forms within the diverse watersheds around the world. Learning how to love water also involves recognizing that humans and other forms of life are water bodies (we are bodies full of water), and making sure that everyone has his or her fair share of water to survive before allowing some to have more than enough. Yet another aspect of learning how to love water implies learning to regard water as an agent, an actor, an active member of the Earth community, which means that water’s voice would be heard and represented when determining policy. Learning how to love water also entails cultivating a deep reverence for water, so that we hold water to be a sacred, precious gift, a holy other mystery. By learning to love water, we can develop a mutually enhancing relationship with our watery world. Loving water will motivate us to serve water and will ensure that we will continue to be served by water for generations to come.

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An Integral Perspective on Current Economic Challenges: Making Sense of Market Crashes

Pravir Malik¹

Abstract: Market crises are interpreted in much the same way. Hence action is also always of a similar type, regardless of the market crisis that may have occurred. It is a similar set of tools that are applied to all crises, and usually this has to do with managing the money supply, interest rates, and slapping on austerity measures. But this is a myopic view. Crises are never the same. Presented here is a holistic model that draws inspiration from the journey a seed makes in becoming a flower in more fully understanding the nature of the crisis we may be facing. Action will be different depending on what phase in the journey the economy is assessed at being. In this paper we look at market crises scanning four decades, from the Bear Market of the early 1970s to recent European Union Sovereign Debt Crises.

Keywords: integral economics, market crises.

Established wisdom suggests that one crisis is the same as the next. Hence each of the following crises tends to be addressed in similar ways: the 1973-1974 Bear Market; the 1987 Synchronized Global Crash; the 1990s Japanese Asset Bubble and the South East Asian Crises, the 2000 Dot-Com Crisis, the 2004 Housing Crisis, the 2010 Greek Debt Crisis. However, I propose a contextual framework against which each of these crises has to be assessed. This framework is based on a universal pattern of sustainable progress that is very commonly visible in a range of progressive organizations (Malik, 2009).

This pattern is a re-orientation from a physical, to a vital, to a mental standpoint. Here, the physical refers to a perception in which reality is determined by what the eye can see. In this orientation the status quo prevails, and it is the past that tends to determine the future. Vital refers to a perception in which it is the play of energy that determines reality, and it is usually the strongest as opposed to the most rational energy that wins. Mental refers to a perception in which thought and idea determine reality. This pattern is simply and powerfully represented by the growth a seed makes in becoming a flower. The seed is characteristic of the physical stage in which the status quo can persist forever. It is only through the action of an external agent and the

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subsequent germination that the growth enters the stalk stage. This is characteristic of the vital in that there is a lot of activity, even aggressive at times. The growth may culminate in the flower or mental stage, in which the idea present in the seed comes to fruition.

I start with the 1973-74 economic crisis because that was a result of a major shift in global economic reality when the Gold Standard was abandoned. For a good three decades the global economy had functioned in a relatively predictable and stable way, always maintaining the status quo because all currencies were pegged to the US Dollar. This state of affairs was more like the inert seed of a plant, the physical state where the world is what the eye can see. Little inflation existed, the money supply was fixed, and what happened was the result of stable recycling of possibilities. This state is depicted as the starting point in the seed-to-flower depiction on the vertical axis of Figure 1.

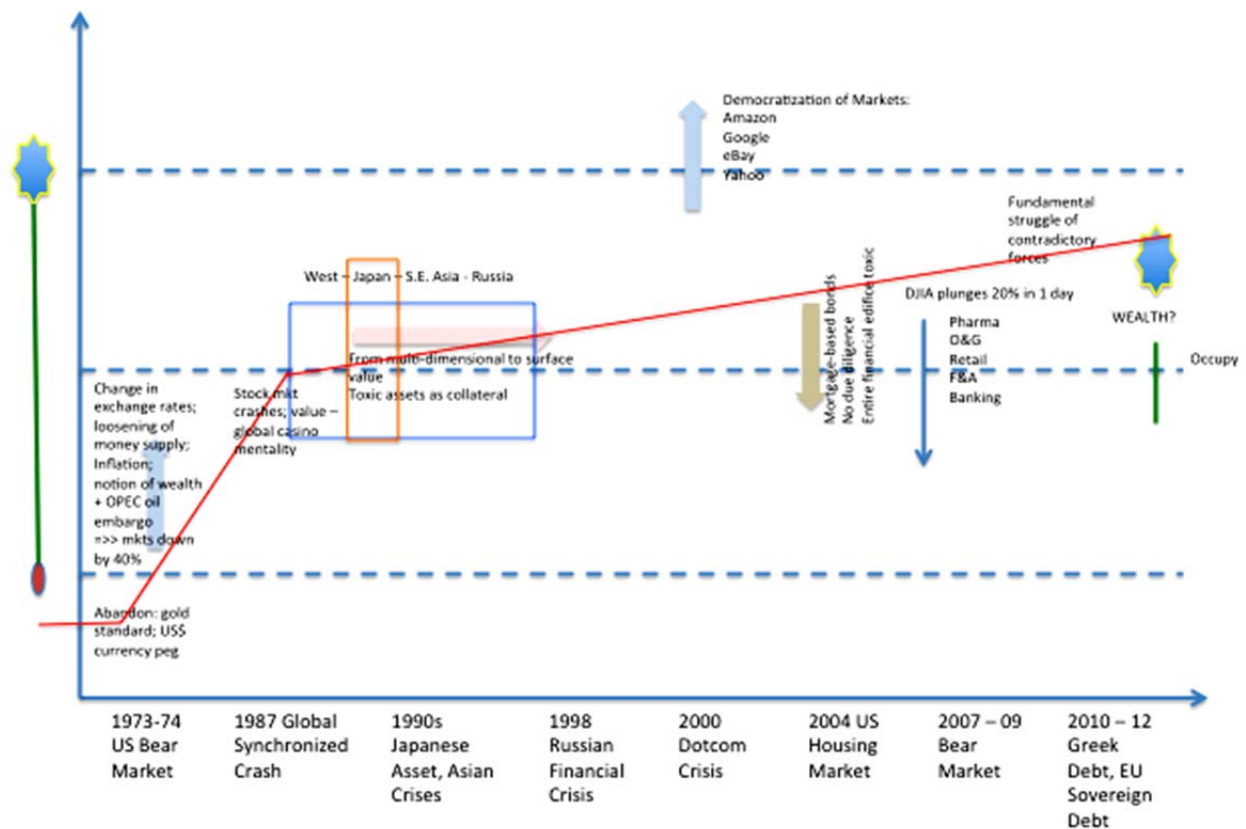


Figure 1: Evolution of Markets and the Seed-Flower Metaphor

However, when the Gold Standard—a monetary system in which the standard economic unit of account is based on a fixed quantity of gold—was abandoned, currencies began to float, and there was a lot more volatility that was introduced into the global situation. What had been known and what we had relied on for decades was abandoned, and no nation could anymore be assured of the wealth in its possession. Hence another standard was sought and the transition from the seed to the stalk stage, or the physical to the vital stage was securely put into place. The physical refers to a situation marked by maintaining the status quo. Activity in this situation is always controlled and predictable. The vital, on the other hand, refers to a situation when boundaries have been removed. Suddenly what had been constrained is allowed to move freely

and this can result in a much more dynamic and even chaotic reality. Hence, economic activity pegged to a fixed amount of gold can be thought of as a physical reality. Economic activity unpegged to gold, naturally becomes much more dynamic and can be thought of as a vital reality.

The oil embargo of 1973 precipitated the emergence of the Oil Standard, giving OPEC far more power on the global economic stage. Prices all over the world began to escalate and dynamics of inflation reentered the global economic situation with force. This resulted in the 1973-74 bear market in the United States and elsewhere and accelerated the destructive vital or stalk dynamics that has had relatively free reign over the last four decades.

By 1987 there was the first global economic synchronized crash. All major stock markets around the world lost significant value at the same time. From a rational perspective this makes no sense. Different regions around the world and different markets should be subject to different market conditions and a more local cyclicality in investment rhythm. For markets and regions around the world to divert from this, it implies that dynamics have become irrational. Such irrationality is a sure sign that the vital level has become far more active since it is now aggressive self-seeking that drives things. Subsequent crises of the 1990s, such as the Japanese Asset Crises, the Asian Crises, and the Russian financial crises quickly came into being as money unleashed from rationality and reason sought a home where it could make quick returns regardless of larger issues of sustainability.

Rationality, reason, purpose, and sustainability are the dynamics that are more prevalent when the flower or the metaphoric mental stage is reached. Reinforcement of such dynamics must be the aim of any policy-maker and regulator. The good news is that impelled by the flower in circumstance, the first decade of the 2000s has seen this urge coming more to the forefront. Hence in 2000 the dot-com crisis was of a very different nature. This signified the possibility of the mental or flower stage where a whole new infrastructure allowing power to shift from monopoly to democracy more practically came into being.

The US Housing Crises that began around the year 2004, powerfully brought to the surface some of the perversities in a finance led solely by the vital-level. This is the shadow that emerges to remind us of where to never go again. The 2007–2009 Bear Market was more of a tug-of-war between the past and the future, with the past, represented by the dynamics inherent in industries such as pharmaceuticals, oil & gas, retail, food & agriculture vying for further attention and investment to continue their self-serving patterns of the past, against the new dynamics represented by the Internet that we all know has begun to arise at the same time.

The Greek Debt Crisis and the European Union Sovereign Debt Crises and the Occupy movement bring into relief the whole question of wealth. What is it? Is it the one-dimensional metric that has driven the vital development of the last four decades to its current state of obvious instability, or is it something else that is multi-dimensional and factors in culture, spirit, human possibility, as symbolized by the flower?

When viewed in this manner, we can see more clearly what must be done to usher in a period of global financial and business sustainability.

Let us look at some of the particular movements in more details.

The Bear Market of 1973-1974

The Bear Market of 1973–1974 affected all the major stock markets in the world. Major stock markets lost as much as 40% of their value (1973-74 Stock Market Crash, n.d.). This period is especially important because of the many fundamentals shifting at the same time. The Gold Standard and the global currency peg to the US dollar were removed. Global order was therefore undone overnight. Consequently, not having to follow strict rules to keep currency values within bands, exchange rates began to float, with all their attendant changes in loss and gain of value at country and corporate levels.

Further, there was a loosening of the money supply that essentially ushered in a shift from the physical to the vital phase as per Graph 1 above. As though this was not enough, OPEC announced an oil embargo that, in effect, led to the Gold Standard being replaced by an Oil Standard. In the uncertainty and the immediate shifts that followed there was a slow-down in global stock activity. That this should happen is not unexpected. In contrast the recent global financial crisis that began in 2008 is almost the result of these shifts that happened in the early 1970s.

There has been a further loosening of the money supply and many shifts whereby the market has taken over the functions that should be performed by banks. The 1973–74 market is important to consider because, in effect, if some of the changes made then are not reversed then the current phase where we appear to be climbing back up in terms of stock market activity will be highly illusory, and will result in a scenario characterized by multiple-dips of increasing complexity.

The impulse after a slow-down in activity is to increase activity almost exponentially. If the fundamentals are not shifted though, if money supply is not brought back under a rational control, the effects will be devastating on many fronts. All bear markets are not the same. In their book *Crises Economics*”, Roubini and Mihm (2010) argue that all financial crises have the same fundamentals underlying them. In fact, I will argue differently that crises are fundamentally different, and in fact need to be handled differently. The evolution of markets as per the flower model summarized in Graph 1 summarizes this. The essential variability must be perceived against the backdrop of where in the physical-vital-mental progression or landscape the crash or the bear market is occurring and how in fact it is contributing to that universal pattern.

In effect, the money supply needs to be brought back under control. There are many ways to do this. Further, the oil standard needs to give way to a more long-lasting standard that is a source of wealth for global citizens, as opposed to the global elite.

The Crash of October 1987

The Crash of October 1987, when stock markets around the world crashed shedding a huge value in a short time, is also an important phenomenon in this view. The year 1987 is about the time when stock market activity began to enter an accelerated phase. This crash stands out

because it is the first time that a synchronized crash affecting global markets occurred. A synchronized crash implies that a true or deeper value has now been replaced by another notion of value. It is a sure sign that the stock markets were now deeply in the vital phase. It also marked the day of greatest stock market decline, and therefore of irrational loss of value.

The Japanese Asset Bubble

Following World War II the Japanese Government implemented policies that encouraged people to save their income. Having exited from the devastation of the war, there were a different set of energies active and Japanese companies and people worked in unison to recreate the country. Because of this solid, grounded approach, capital was more readily available, and having just exited from the pain there was a hunger to build value. This continued for a few decades and by many estimates Japan became a wealthy country.

However, the global shifts that had begun in 1971 under President Nixon's reign in USA had their effect on all countries, including Japan. Caught up in the fever of speculation the Tokyo stock exchange and real estate markets became hot-beds of investment. Banks became increasingly lax and granted riskier loans. The notion of value shifted from true-creation to one of vital-creation. That is, the notion of true value and worth were lost, and this inevitably caused a massive asset bubble, that fed further speculation and became the source for laxer credit release. Bubbled assets at the heart of the boom became surrogates for cash, and the notion of real value was further bastardized. Of course this was bound to burst. A couple of points: first, all that money should have continued to be invested in things that really matter. Just as reconstruction of the country really mattered for the Japanese following the war, there are a number of things that really matter now. The balance of the world's development depends on this. To maintain the value of money it needs to be invested in such things that matter.

Instead, because Japan in general has a lot going for it in terms of companies whose products are valued globally, it has become a sustainable source for carry trade. In essence the carry trade allows citizens of a country to incrementally sell off their country through devaluing their own currency and asset base. Japanese Yen are exchanged for bets on other currencies. Because of the short-term higher return due to other countries bonds paying higher interest, the longer-term repercussions are thrown aside. Instead of continuing to invest in what really matters in the country, the money is funneled elsewhere for purely vital reasons.

The carry trade itself funds other irrational bubbles the world over. Further, when relied on, it can cause havoc overnight if relative exchange rates change. This was the situation in Iceland where residents had borrowed money in Euro denominated loans. When the Euro rose Icelanders were unable to repay loans. This caused the Icelandic financial crises of 2008–2009. Further, the reverse appreciation can take place, and this can cause a major financial crisis if other loans are denominated in the appreciating currency. Arbitrage is of course a fact of financial activity. Still, there has to be regulation so that countries do not go bankrupt from relying on arbitrage as a source of value. Real value must be the result of real activity.

The Asian Financial Crises

The Asian Financial Crises were by many estimates caused because of the massive inflows of speculative money that needed a new home for quick returns. In part this was due to the higher interest rates offered by countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia that were at the epicenter of the crisis. Further, given that the Japanese Asset Bubble had just burst, there was a huge amount of money that had previously been invested there that needed a new home. All this money rushed about, driven by the lure of vital-value, of making that quick buck, regardless of true creation or destruction of value.

Naturally with large inflows of capital, asset prices began to rise. Corporations and individuals alike experienced a rise in their vital-level wealth—whether wealth was really increasing can only be judged by anchoring on the mental-level, where it is truer development that is the focus. This perception that all were richer because some asset—whether real estate or stocks—at the center of the bubble continued to rise in escalated vital-level value, caused heightened irrationality and risk-taking on the part of all constituents, including banks that began issuing loans based on the perceived vital-level wealth. When it was realized, however, that underlying development had not really taken place and that many individuals and corporations were naturally beginning to default on loan payments, then there was a massive retraction of capital, and the Asian Financial Crisis came into being.

Foreign investors flooded the exchange market with respective country currency and as a result the value of these currencies began to depreciate. This put even more burden on international loan payments and heightened the default rates on loans thereby causing more bankruptcies and even more pulling out of investments. To try and prop up the currency rate respective governments increased interest rates, which made further loan origination in the country even more difficult. Thus there was a senseless and destructive cycle put into place that naturally exceeded the boundaries of the vital-level notion of wealth to destroy truer mental-level wealth in the bargain.

What this teaches us is that it is necessary to maintain focus on true underlying development. To use mass-scale vital-level euphoria manifesting in a vastly increased demand relative to supply is in fact a highly misleading measure of value. We need metrics that peel these illusionary layers away to focus on what actually is being done with the money, how it is actually being used, and further how that development is in fact development of a true, sustainable, mental-level order. Anything else is going to cause massive turmoil and destroy the hard work and livelihoods of many innocent people.

The 1998 Russian Financial Crisis

The 1998 Russian Financial Crisis was triggered by the Asian Financial Crisis. Russia was a net exporter to Asia providing many commodities required to fuel the Asian Bubble. Such commodities included petroleum, natural gas, timber, and metals. With a sudden drop in revenues generated from these exports the government was not able to fund its debt payments thereby heralding the start of the crisis.

The Russian government was unable to institute market reforms to alter its balance of payments and investor confidence was further eroded with a run on Russian assets and a pulling out of foreign investments. Russia had to inject billions of US dollars to buy Ruble and artificially hold it up. Subsequently its stock, bond, and currency markets collapsed and the only thing that reversed this situation was the sudden increase in global demand for petroleum. This caused a massive trade surplus in 1999–2000, which ended the crisis.

The Russian Financial Crisis sheds insight into what is deemed to be a financial crisis. It is essentially about being able to meet international debt payments. This however, is a narrow view of crisis, and again, is rooted in dynamics representative of the vital-level. The fact is that the economy was already in a reality of deep crisis. The price of fundamentals such as food rose as much as 100%, basic wages of workers could not be paid, and several major banks were closed down. The primary constituent of wealth was commodity-based: the country obviously had not done much to push levels of creativity and build on inherent value in its land. Its basis of wealth was therefore at the physical level—commodities that could be touched and seen.

The suggested flower model demands that development continue to proceed along the physical-vital-mental trajectory. If there is stagnation then crisis must occur to allow the journey to continue. In that, all and any kind of crisis is useful, whether it is defined at the physical, vital, or mental level. But were the perception or interpretation of crisis to change to the mental-level, then the reality that the crisis has existed for a while would more effectively come into relief and would not result in irrational short-term fluctuations that in the final analysis do more damage than good.

At the physical-level crisis does not really exist so long as commodities exist. Perception of this nature will in fact cause major long term crises in that the bases of sustainability will most likely be compromised in the one-pointed pursuit of extraction of commodities, regardless of impact on environment. At the vital-level crises exist only when there is default on payments. The wrong levers of wealth are therefore being focused on. It is only when the focus is on the reason and more holistic development that truer wealth can manifest and that the compromising of this wealth can more effectively be managed. Risk can be called out in advance and subsequently the right developments and investments made. But this can only be if the mental-level metrics replaces physical-level metrics such as estimated availability of raw materials, and vital-level metrics such as real estate and stock prices. Mental level metrics, such as true development, true citizen happiness, true state of the environment from a sustainability perspective, true level of creativity, have to become the focus of attention and the levers by which decision to invest or not are made.

The claim that the Russian crisis was short in length is in fact a paradox. The longer-term effect on global sustainability of high-levels of perhaps even irrational extraction, driven by vital-level dynamics, will be disastrous. Wealth of the world will be reduced as a result of trying to maintain the semblance of vital-level health and wealth. The fact that Russia was not at the time heavily integrated with the global financial environment, in contrast to the South East Asian economies for instance, created the perception that its crisis was of a shorter duration. At the vital-level this is no doubt true, and its very physical-level focus buffered it from having to go through the fate of some South East Asian countries. But these narrow perceptions representative

of the physical and vital level are misleading and can easily cover up the seriousness of a situation gelling in the background. On the positive side its crisis is no doubt pushing it to move more to the vital level where more energy comes alive on a larger scale. Indigenous industry and creativity gets a kick-start. The dangers of this phase are of course huge. Hopefully Russia can learn from the lessons of the rest of the world though, to temper the negative effects of the vital phase through more mature regulation.

Dot-Com Crisis of 2000 and US Housing Crisis of 2004

The massive inflow of money leading up to the 2000 Dot-Com Crisis was in fact highly beneficial in this environment, because the Dot-Com phenomena was fundamentally about moving away from many of the irrationalities of vital-level monopoly toward the possibilities of a more diverse individual-level creativity. Plays such as Amazon, eBay, Yahoo, Google, and more recently Facebook and Twitter upset the balance of vital-level dynamics to bring another set of possibilities to bear. Of course there was a lot of wasted money and vital-level euphoria that caused a boom and a bust. But the net-net has been huge. Innovation of this kind, that is grounded in how activity, work, process of socialization are fundamentally altered, and in real greater freedom for the individual and different scales of collectivity, is of a real kind. People, communities, posterity benefits as a result of such risk and such flows of wealth. This must be contrasted to what has been termed as innovation in the financial field though. Innovation in the financial field is often not based on real tangible development.

The recent US-based housing crisis is a perfect example. Sub-prime type mortgages were securitized. Traditionally mortgages were one-to-one transactions; i.e., a bank gave a loan to an individual to buy a house after significant due diligence, and the buyer of the loan then made principal and interest payments to the bank until the loan had been paid off. The bank owned the reward and the risk. With mortgage-backed securities however, an Investment Bank created a Special Purpose Vehicle to pool mortgages together that it then sold to generate additional revenues. Thus, the originating lender of debt was first rewarded for issuing the mortgage. There was no risk they took on and therefore the level of due diligence and risk monitoring was completely removed. That mortgage was then pooled with many other such mortgages and marketed as a robust investment opportunity.

After all according to portfolio theory, which anyway is more applicable at the mental as opposed to the vital level and therefore quite inapplicable in current times, pooling assets will minimize overall risk and therefore in theory there is no more need to conduct due diligence – just keep adding in assets of different types, even if they are different types of mortgages, and all will be well. Securities were created and these securities were sold to investors around the world. Obviously the value of money gets inflated as a result. The buyers of the securities now in effect get paid a monthly payment by the would-be homeowner. The buyers of the securities can further sell financially-manufactured products based on that same tangible asset, and the value of money is further inflated. At the end of the day, if creation of money is not backed by an equal creation of tangible value then the world suffers in the bargain. But all recent financial innovation has been of this kind. A whole breed of mushroom-type activity is set up (Malik, 2011), and all the while everyone thinks everyone is getting richer. Financial returns of these mushroom companies increases. This draws more funds, and more of the same irrational type

cycles are initiated. A mega-bubble is created that ties everyone to illusory assets—when this one bursts, then real trouble results.

The 2008 global financial crisis was the result of over-dependence on toxic assets of this nature. They were toxic because they were not based on any real tangible value. There is one level of toxicity when adequate due diligence has not been performed—this of course was the case. There is another level of toxicity when the very same tangible product, the house, is used to inflate the flow of money in the economy. Creation of securitized mortgage and other products assured that. There is a third level of toxicity when highly leveraged funds such as hedge funds now focus their resources on the securitized products thereby in effect severing all links with reality. For now the game is focused on the illusory bubble and the asset at the center of this, the toxic securitized products, becomes collateral and a starting point for a whole array of additional financial innovations. The fourth level of toxicity is that such assets are viewed as assets rather than liabilities, in the first place. This points to the toxicity of the financial system itself which allows such meaningless valuations to drive, what is at the end of the day, highly destructive activity negatively affecting the lives of millions of people.

Clearly, when these two bubbles are contrasted—the Dot-Com bubble and the bubbles that followed it—discrimination as to where to invest has to come to bear. If all we focus on is the claims of organizations that they are generating huge profit, because they happen to be at the center of a financial innovation type bubble, at the end of the day that is like spreading a cancer through society because destructive wealth-diminishing type activity has overtaken productive activity. Claims by companies, and fluctuations of stock prices can hardly be taken at face value. A deeper penetration, a deeper, more meaningful array of metrics that indicate the truer ground-level value needs to be front and center, and become the arbiter of whether or not to invest in a particular stock. This will require corporations to become truly more accountable to society.

The U.S. Bear Market of 2007-2009

The U.S. bear market of 2007–2009 was declared in June 2008 when the Dow Jones Industrial Average had fallen 20% from its October 11, 2007 high (US Bear Market 2007-2009, n.d.). The underlying reasons for the bear market are of course related to the underlying levels of toxicity already described, and elaborated by the many shortfalls already pointed out in previous chapters.

It is useful to note though, that the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) is a price-weighted average of 30 large companies on the New York Stock Exchange. A price-weighted index is where the relative price drives the weight of the company in the index. That is, stocks are included in proportion to their quoted price. Companies on the DJIA primarily from the food processing, oil & gas, pharmaceuticals, banking, and retail sectors. Many of the companies represented are quite frankly yesterday's as opposed to tomorrow's companies. From this point of view, since we are operating at the vital-level, there is going to be a bias to support companies that are perceived as hot in terms of returns. In other words, we will be funding the continued acceleration of hot-spots. Money will go where money is, and will not necessarily be driven by the truer underlying value of a company, that will tend to be better captured by following a fundamentally-weighted index.

Capitalization-weighted indexes tend to be more like price-weighted indexing but vary in that it is the market value of the company as calculated by number of shares outstanding that gives it its relative weight in an index. From this point of view, capitalization-weighted indices will also be biased toward the vital consciousness. If something is attracting a lot of money, it will attract more, regardless of truer underlying value. Underlying value may be there, or it may not, but that tends to get obscured in this perception. Note that if we were in a reality of Efficient Market, truly operating at the mental-level, then both price and capitalization weighted indices would likely be a superior approach to fundamentally-weighted index since the wisdom of many different stakeholder groups would influence demand for a stock.

In research conducted by Arnott, Hsu, and Moore (2007), forty years of back-tested Indexes weighted by any of several fundamental factors including sales, EBIT(earnings before interest and taxes), earnings, cash flow, book value, or dividends in U.S. markets outperformed the Standard & Poor (S&P) 500 by approximately 2% per annum with volatility similar to the S&P 500. In non-U.S. markets, fundamentally based indexes outperformed capitalization weighted indexes by approximately 2.5% with slightly less volatility and outperformed in all 23 MSCI EAFE² (Europe, Australasia, Far East) countries. Even the fundamental indexation, from a sustainability perspective, is narrow, and more sustainability-oriented indexes that get to the true drivers of long-term wealth-creation need to become the arbiters of whether we are truly in a bear market or not. The point is, we may declare a bear market but that is hardly the case because we are just looking at the wrong metrics of development. What the decline of the common indexes may really be telling us is that an old vitally-driven world is drawing to an end. But we still do not have adequate metrics in place to see the dawn of a newer mentally-driven world. Stock markets need to be driven by these newer mentally-driven indexes so that we may hone in on, and rightly invest in tomorrow's world.

There has also been some significant legislation in the US that has exasperated the global financial crises, increased volatility in markets, and further obscured sense in the stock market. Significantly, the Gramm–Leach–Bliley Act (Gramm–Leach–Bliley Act, n.d.), also known as the Financial Services Modernization Act of 1999. It repealed part of the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933, opening up the market among banking companies, securities companies and insurance companies. The Glass-Steagall Act prohibited any one institution from acting as any combination of an investment bank, a commercial bank, and an insurance company. The Gramm–Leach–Bliley Act, by contrast, allowed commercial banks, investment banks, securities firms, and insurance companies to consolidate. It also allowed traditional investment brokers to create and sell high-risk investment products to traditionally low-risk commercial banks.

Considering the sub-prime mortgage crisis just discussed, what this means is that through the action of Investment Banks, the toxic assets were now widely distributed and in effect became an intricate part of the global financial landscape. It was inevitable that much of the edifice would have to crash, given that it was being rebuilt on such a flimsy foundation.

² The MSCI EAFE Index is a stock market index that is designed to measure the equity market performance of developed markets outside of the U.S. & Canada. The EAFE acronym stands for Europe, Australasia, and Far East. The index is market-capitalization weighted.

The Sarbanes–Oxley Act of 2002, also known as the 'Public Company Accounting Reform and Investor Protection Act' and 'Corporate and Auditing Accountability and Responsibility Act', is a United States federal law enacted on July 30, 2002, which set new or enhanced standards for all U.S. public company boards, management and public accounting firms. The bill was enacted as a reaction to a number of major corporate and accounting scandals including those affecting Enron, Tyco International, Adelphia, Peregrine Systems and WorldCom. These scandals, which cost investors billions of dollars when the share prices of affected companies collapsed, shook public confidence in the nation's securities markets. The act contains several sections, ranging from additional corporate board responsibilities to criminal penalties, and requires the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to implement rulings on requirements to comply with the new law. The SEC adopted dozens of rules to implement the Sarbanes–Oxley Act. It created a new, quasi-public agency, the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board charged with overseeing, regulating, inspecting and disciplining accounting firms in their roles as auditors of public companies. The act also covers issues such as auditor independence, corporate governance, internal control assessment, and enhanced financial disclosure. Some have denounced this act stating that it has caused capital flight from the US because of the additional onus on companies to comply with this. This is a typical vital-level response, and in the scheme of things, so long as we continue at the vital-level, is absolutely necessary to help keep sanity and further disastrous break-down typical at the vital-level.

The Greek Debt Crisis of 2010

The Greek Debt Crisis of 2010 brings up some very fundamental questions. Issues of national sovereignty, and therefore centuries-old wealth as established by deep cultural and spiritual values made evident in the uniqueness of a nation, versus adherence to stability measures at the regional collectivity level of the European Union come face to face in such a crisis. So too does the notion of wealth itself. Is wealth the one-dimensional trait as captured by modern-day currency, or is wealth multi-dimensional, transcending today's notion of it? Answers to these questions need to determine the limits and rules with respect to investment and speculation. This is true of financial markets in general, and also may suggest how stock markets are to be redesigned.

Is all of life tradable? Or should limits be placed on what can be speculated on and what cannot. If an institution opens itself to seeking for loans, how far should the consequences of default go? Like the story of Shylock the money-lender in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, what does a pound of flesh mean? Is it okay to reduce the soul or spirit of a country to nothing? Are austerity measures sending many into a state of poverty and compromising deeper spirit, the blood in Shylock's pound of flesh, and therefore off limits in trading or speculative relationships? What is the responsibility of a country to its people? It is almost as though the very basis of money-creation has to change. A rich, cultural community should have the bases for creating money based on its richness. It is a failure of government if this cannot be done. If natural talents and indigenous ability of a country cannot be utilized to mobilize creativity, then the government needs to pay for that in some way. This may be through social rebellion, as in the riots that plagued Greece following announcement of austerity measures.

The US Government's handling of the financial crisis that has hit USA over the last several years is a case in point. The Government has set new standards of intervention that seem to be progressively adopted by other Central Banks around the world. Its primary goal has been the facilitation of the flow of money in the economy to counter any possibility of deflation. Hence, not only has the Federal Reserve been a lender-of-last-resort to established commercial banks, thereby extending them an unprovisional line of credit to minimize the possibility of bank-runs, but it has also become the lender-of-last-resort to non-depository financial enterprises. Even those financial enterprises that were at the center of causing the crises in the first place were in effect 'forgiven'. Given the goal to assure flow of money and business transaction, and given the extent to which the financial world is in a sense a monopoly, a domino-effect that may hit innocent business could not be allowed to occur. The Federal Reserve in effect bought all the toxic assets on the balance sheets of US-based financial institutions (Roubini & Mihm, 2010). Because the US is a leader in the world by contemporary standards, the US dollar still commands respect and has proven to be a currency of investment amidst the global uncertainty spawned by the global crisis. This is so even though it lay at the center and was the starting point of the global crisis. Through these actions the US has preserved its infrastructure and asset base, and at a deeper level, its current culture, that very well could have become the target of internationally-led takeovers. In fact, the Federal Reserve has also extended swap lines so that Central Banks in troubled countries have been able to exchange their currencies, whether it be Swiss Franks or Japanese Yen or British Pounds, for the US Dollar, thereby in effect forgiving US Dollar-denominated loans in respective countries, while further strengthening the place of the US in the world. While this is admirable, at the same time the viability of money created to back toxic assets is clearly questionable. Such a deal has to have its negative effect sooner or later. Let us hope that something is quickly done to allow more 'positive' money to be created.

When we think about the Greek debt crisis, the question is, does Greece too not have a right to preserve its infrastructure and asset base and deeper culture? Because commercial enterprise is prized in today's world, and the institution of business is generally placed on a pedestal, we recognize and acknowledge the power held by USA. But every country has its strength and uniqueness, even though it may not be commercial. Why shouldn't then, their cultures be held intact and upheld? Greek people, as have the people of Mexico, S. America, S.E. Asia, Russia—wherever recent financial crises has struck—have been subjected to austerity measures and many have been permanently displaced as a result of bankruptcies. Arguably the social and environmental capital of these countries have been permanently negatively affected in the bargain. Does this mean that a country has to be commercially dominant to guarantee its place in the world? Because of its inherent commercial strength the USA was able to preserve its way of being, pretty much untouched. If countries such as Greece have from the outset established a different social contract with their people and have followed deficit spending as a result, it too should be able to wipe the slate clean and 'forgive' its accumulated errors, whether through innovative monetary or fiscal policy, as has USA, or simply as an application of what is to me an inherent principle of existence, whether for a person or for a country. And it should be able to do this on the promise of its unique wealth it brings to the world—not commercial wealth which frankly is incredibly one-dimensional, but on the bases of increasing the multi-dimensional wealth and therefore longer-term sustainability of the world.

If a country is to use fiscal policy to solve its ills, then the choice of where it invests money is critical. Road projects are well and good. But there are many environmental and social issues that need to be urgently addressed, whether of building up environmental capital through the replenishing of ecosystem services, or of building social capital through the creation of robust communities, for example. If Government is going to pull money out of thin air, such acts should be quickly grounded to create real benefit and a source of future wealth, at the very least, for the country. Deficit spending that is going to yield substantial positive returns even if they are 5, 10, or 20 years in the future should hardly be penalized. In the vaster scheme of things such social and environmental investments increase the wealth of the world. For is not every single resource we utilize in every single enterprise of any kind a part of the earth, and even of the splendor behind things? To therefore reinvest in it, as opposed to groundless financially-based securitization, Ponzi, and other financial-innovation type schemes is money well spent.

Greece as part of the European Union (EU) is unable to freely exercise monetary policy. This is part of the deal of becoming a part of the EU. Slapping on austerity measures in exchange for better borrowing rates from EU originated loans means, in effect, that even Greece's freedom to exercise fiscal policy is being curtailed. As a country, when one compares a Government's range of responses to crises between USA and Greece, for example then, it is clear then that Greece is fast losing control over its country and its people. It is being subsumed into a global financial protocol and machinery that recognizes bottom-line financial return only, and under this trajectory Greece will not be Greece for much longer, but just another clone in a senseless monopoly seeking for a headless and irrational world-dominion. If this is not a tragedy then what is? Clearly this has to be stopped in its tracks.

In a Financial Times article Niall Ferguson, the author of *Ascent of Money* (Ferguson, 2010), reflected that it is poignant that the financial crises of the West have started in Greece, the birthplace of Western Civilization, and is spreading from there, just as Western Civilization spread from there. Let us hope that this crisis is viewed as more than a spreading financial crisis, to get to what it really is—a failure to perceive and align with the deeper and truer meaning of wealth. Stock markets have to be redesigned to facilitate the emergence of such wealth.

Concerns over a European Sovereign Debt Crisis also arose with respect to Spain, Portugal, and Ireland, in addition to Greece. As one steps back from this, the question is what is the EU about? A union must be based on more than economic convenience. It is the short-fall of our times that economy is placed above the possibilities of the human spirit. No doubt excellence with respect to economic matters is desirable. But let us make sure that the economic is such that such excellence is based on something enduring. If a country has to sacrifice part of itself, and lead many of its people toward displacement, then the Union is likely not integral enough. For countries to come together in a sustainable way, all aspects of wealth have to be developed. Investments should recognize this, and creation of money should be based on such a holistic generation of wealth. Likely the intent of the EU needs to be expanded and deepened. Financial and stock market action that supports such an expanded and deepened purpose behind the EU is what should be focused on.

Conclusion

Hence, the fundamental direction implicit in the nature of subsequent market crises is such that it fully unveils the meaning of wealth. A seed gives rise to a stalk which gives rise to a flower. Our arbitration of wealth has been primarily one-dimensional and so long as this orientation continues the entire 40-year build-up from the early 1970s until now will be repeated, only with much higher intensity. It has been said that the current global financial crisis of the last few years is much like the Crash of 1929, also known as the Great Depression. This is true, and also not. The Crash of 1929 was on a much smaller scale. With the changing of the times and the surfacing of a far more integral and global consciousness the last four decades have been such that financial dysfunction has been united, in a manner of speaking. When we solve this current tug-of-war between the vital and mental orientations, the world will be a better place for it. The truer, and multi-dimensional meaning of wealth will have been unveiled. All that will remain to be done is for policy and regulation to allow such multi-dimensional wealth to be actively pursued and to persist.

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The Path of Initiation: The Integration of Psychological and Spiritual Development in Western Esoteric Thought

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Abstract: This paper examines, from an emic stance, a strand of Western esoteric wisdom that offers a particular perspective on psycho-spiritual development in relation to spiritual emergence, the mutually interdependent evolution of consciousness and substance, and the functional role of human incarnation within our planetary life. The writings of Alice A. Bailey (1880-1949) and Lucille Cedercrans (1921-1984) serve as significant reference points in this effort. These teachings hold an integral view of human development in which a person's awareness and self-identification progress from polarization in physical matter and sensation through progressively subtler gradients of emotional and mental experience, culminating in "The Path of Initiation," a phase of psychological and spiritual expansions into deepening levels of transcendent, supramental consciousness and functioning. The esoteric teachings described here portray this path descriptively rather than prescriptively, and have significant parallels to Sri Aurobindo's Integral vision. Both consider human life in form to be a vital and necessary phase within the larger cosmic evolution of consciousness and matter, and both are frameworks that expansively embrace the significance of the Divine as both immanent and transcendent presence. The important issue of epistemological methodology and the testing of esoteric assertions is also considered.

Key words: Alice A. Bailey, initiation, integral consciousness, integral philosophy, integral yoga, Lucille Cedercrans, neo-theosophy, path of initiation, perennial philosophy, psycho-spiritual development, science of impression, spiritual emergence, the ageless wisdom, western esotericism, western esoteric wisdom.

Introduction

Western esoteric thought and practice, though not extensively represented in the circles of integral scholarship, hold pertinent ideas that can enrich the discourse on several subjects of interest to the integral community. This article focuses on a Western esoteric perspective regarding one such issue: the relationship between the healthy and adaptive development of the human personality, as understood in mainstream psychological terms, and the emergence within

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that personality of spiritual experience and transpersonal perception. Furthermore, human psycho-spiritual development is viewed in the context of a much larger picture. Western esotericism has long held what is now called a “re-enchanted” and hologramatic view of the Cosmos, seeing it as a living, consciousness-endowed Being of which humanity is one integrated and intelligent organ. This hologramatic vision, now gaining currency among several integral thinkers (Tarnas, 2006, Elgin, 2009; Swimme & Tucker, 2011), sees humanity’s collective expansions of consciousness as one aspect of an evolutionary process through which the Cosmos Itself expands Its capacity to know and reflect upon Itself.

Western Esotericism in Context

Broadly considered, the term esoteric—derived from the Greek root *eso* for *inner* or *hidden*—relates to the philosophical position that all aspects of external, phenomenological reality are an effect and reflection of a deeper and essential order that is causal to phenomenal appearance. For the seeker, this essential nature holds the meaning behind all manifest appearances, and is amenable to investigation through particular modes of contemplative inquiry, the pursuit of which provides pathways to expanded understanding, self-actualization, and fulfillment. In relationship to religion, Jones (2012) situates esotericism “as the hidden side of any institutionalized religious tradition” (p. 16). She goes on to state that Western esoteric movements ...

... have existed much like an underground stream throughout Western history, surfacing in distinct places and times, but with similar principles and practices. A few examples to illustrate the breadth of esotericism include: Essenes, Greek Mystery Cults, Pythagoreanism, Kaballah, Sufism, Theosophy, Freemasonry, Anthroposophy, Rosicrucianism, Alchemy, Hermeticism, and groups following specific teachers.... (p. 17)

The strand of contemporary Western esoteric thought that I present here, though beyond facile classification, has been categorized by some as Neo-Theosophy (Hendon, 2005), a living continuation of work exemplified most notably by Alice A. Bailey (1880-1949) and to a lesser extent, Lucile Cedercrans (1921-1984). Other teachers have advanced this path, and are active today. As a group, they consider their efforts to be phased facets of an ongoing revelation of wisdom concerning humanity’s place and role in both planetary and cosmic affairs. A telling characteristic of these teachings, which will become apparent as we proceed, is that they synthesize spiritual insights from both Eastern and Western traditions, and relate them to a Perennial core. While Bailey (British) and Cedercrans (American) never had personal contact with one another, both found it important to categorize their teachings as *Wisdom*, which Bailey (1922) distinguishes from factual knowledge as follows: “Wisdom is the science of the spirit, just as knowledge is the science of matter. Knowledge is separative and objective, whilst wisdom is synthetic and subjective” (p. 11).

Bailey labels her work *The Ageless Wisdom* throughout the body of her writings, and Cedercrans uses simply *The Wisdom* as shorthand for the more complete but unwieldy *New Thought-form Presentation of The Wisdom* (Cedercrans, 2007, p. 1137). For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to them in aggregate as Wisdom or Wisdom teachings. Both authors were inspired by a level of perceptual understanding attained through contemplative training and

discipline, and considered the transmission of any teachings coming through them to be an important responsibility in service to humanity. Their aim was to make these Wisdom teachings and related supportive practices available initially to esoterically inclined students, while also contributing to the long-term emergence of a greatly expanded human consciousness and a more humane civilization. While these decidedly metaphysical teachings are detailed and specific, even technical at times, they are offered to students not as doctrine, but as hypotheses for consideration and rigorous personal inquiry through contemplative examination and practical application. Admittedly, many esoteric tenets may seem outlandish to thoughtful people in the context of our decidedly non-metaphysical thought-climate, so considerations of epistemology are important in this discussion. One methodology for the intuitive registration, interpretation, and testing of tenets within these teachings is referred to as “the science of impression,” which I will return to later.

While expansions of consciousness and spiritual development affect and involve what is commonly considered to be the personality, different transpersonal thinkers have argued that spiritual awakening is quasi-independent of personality development, some proposing that it *parallels*, and others that it *intersects* directly, with personality development. An important element of this discussion is necessarily a definition of personality, and how it relates to “spiritual” aspects of personhood; the interface between psychological and spiritual development has historically been one of the major areas of inquiry and disagreement in transpersonal discourse (Wilber, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000; Rothberg & Kelly, 1998; Grof and Grof, 1998; Washburn, 1998). Beyond philosophical considerations, the matter has immediate and even clinical consequence when one considers the life-difficulties of people experiencing spiritual emergence or spiritual emergency (Assagioli, 1989; Cortright, 1997; Raucher, 1999).

Human Development in the Wisdom Teachings

Wisdom teachings define the personality as that portion of the total human entity which comprises its form or appearance aspect, a three-fold instrument—mental-emotional-physical—which serves as a vehicle of experience and expression for an essential and transcendent aspect of personhood, the Soul. Of note here is that Western esotericism defines Soul as the unit of consciousness that indwells and underlies all forms (not only human forms), and further, that consciousness itself, in a larger context, results from the dynamic energetic interplay between the two Great Poles of All Being: Spirit and Matter (Bailey, 1936; Cedercrans, 1993). These three elements—Spirit, Consciousness, and Matter—comprise a Causal Triad or “Three-in-One” from which all existence emanates, and which underlies all forms as they evolve. Further, this principle demonstrates hologrammatically at all levels of being (for example, in the three-fold personality). It is a corollary of the Principle of Polarity in which Spirit (Purpose, Will, Unmanifest Source) is the positive pole, Matter (Substance, Form, Intelligent Response to Purpose) is the negative pole, and the cohering field of attraction between these is variously described (depending on context) as Soul, Love-Wisdom, or Consciousness—interesting equivalencies that take on resonance through contemplation. As stated, this Causal Triad is reflected, through the Law of Correspondence, in the three-fold human personality on its own level. Mind is the positive pole, the physical nature is the negative pole, and the astral or emotional-feeling nature is the interplay of attraction between the poles. This foundational

principle and the Law of Correspondence warrant a much fuller elaboration, but this brief introduction will have to suffice at this point in the article.

Bailey and Cedercrans posit a framework of human evolutionary development—both collective and individual—in which the Soul progressively moves through an initiatory pathway, first gaining a degree of competence and mastery within its materially identified form nature (personality) and then gaining increasing awareness of Itself as Consciousness (indwelt in turn by Spirit) operating within the material form. A fully Soul-infused personality (demonstrating what several traditions identify as a state of *enlightenment*) is capable of consciously serving and cooperating with an intuited cosmic evolutionary scheme. The outer evolution in form then unfolds in conscious alignment with subtle laws at a causal level, that which David Bohm, the esoterically trained physicist, called the *Implicate Order* (Bohm, 1980). The Wisdom teachings refer to this same concept as the Divine Plan. I find both terminologies for this idea useful in that an integral approach benefits from the synthesis of scientific and religious perspectives.

This line of Ageless Wisdom thought has a number of interesting parallels to Aurobindo's ideas on integral human development and potentials for human expansion into consciousness of a supramental existence (McDermott, 1987). These parallels are likely apparent to readers familiar with Aurobindo's work, however, they are not the focus of this paper. Rather, my intent is to convey several core concepts from these Western esoteric wisdom teachings related to the evolution of human consciousness, psychological health, the Path of Initiation, and the potential relevance of these ideas within integral thought and scholarship.

Initiation: Culmination of the Human Journey

The Path of Initiation refers specifically to the latter portion of the human evolutionary cycle wherein a person moves through several thresholds and expansions of subjective experience, proceeding incrementally from a relative ignorance of the subtle spiritual planes into their direct apprehension and therefore increasing appreciation of their actual existence and significance. Beyond perceptual expansions, an initiate increasingly develops abilities to work subjectively with energy for the benefit of others in a manner consistent with the implicate order. Bailey and Cedercrans discuss five discreet initiations on this path, each marking a specific expansion, starting with a birth of soul consciousness within the heart (First Initiation) and culminating at that point at which a human soul steps off the wheel of samsara and the karmic necessity of further incarnation, attaining the capacity and status designated Master of Wisdom (Fifth Initiation). The journey does not end there, but Bailey (1922) states that attempts to portray succeeding initiations are somewhat futile given the limitations of language and our current lack of experiential context. Before elaborating on the five major initiations that we can somewhat relate to, it will be helpful to situate this culminating phase of initiation within a larger framework of Western esoteric ideas on human evolutionary development. The following highly simplified schematic is adapted as a synthetic overview from various works of Bailey (1922, 1936, 1942), Cedercrans (1993, 1995), and other Wisdom-related material available in trainings but not in the public domain.

The Soul, which exists on a plane of consciousness above the manifested world, projects a portion of itself into cyclical incarnation through a series of personality vehicles; this is done for

the sake of learning and gaining mastery of the manifested planes of existence over the course of numerous incarnations. One of the paradoxes of this process is that the incarnate fragment of the Soul's consciousness becomes merged and identified with the substance comprising the personalities it inhabits, forgetting its spiritual source. This is a consequence of the dense and miasmatic nature of the material planes as they have existed in their historical and current states of development. Indeed, one of the long-range purposes of evolution on our planet is to allow the influence of incarnating Souls to gradually lift and refine the substance through which they incarnate. Thus, there is actually a reciprocating benefit for both the consciousness and substance aspects of existence. The substantial form reflects back to the Soul, via its personality circumstances, the Soul's current state of consciousness and degree of mastery over its material expression. The Soul, through its consequent learning and mastery, refines and increases the vibratory frequency of the substance that lends it form, bringing it into closer harmony with spirit.

The origin of the descent of the human Soul into incarnation is portrayed through myth in an esoteric version of the Narcissus fable cited in a particular unpublished Wisdom training on intuitive healing. Narcissus, in this version, was "a young god" inhabiting the luminous planes above the three worlds of form and personality. He discovered a reflection of himself in the waters of substantial appearance—and found it irresistibly attractive; never had his individuality and luminosity been reflected back to him with such vivid detail. Leaning into this image to more fully appreciate it, he lost balance and fell headlong into it, becoming mired in increasingly dense layers of substance, which proved to be much more opaque and confining than he had perceived from above. Plummeting into a solid bounded corporeality, he felt lost, disoriented, and no longer in touch with his core of Light. He was now a stranger to himself within a strange land, with only the Sun far above and a hint of that Sun's reflection hidden deep within him as the reminder of a distant home.

Like the Biblical Eve, Narcissus' curiosity propelled his fall, but it was not a serpent's promise of attaining godhead that lured him, but rather attraction to a godhead that was already his but that he had not explicitly recognized till beholding it reflected in substance. On the long road home, this Prodigal Son will regain recognition of that Light at his core, which has always remained intact, waiting to illuminate his way. And throughout this journey of homecoming, Narcissus will increasingly impress his Soular luminosity on all those layers of reflective substance that had initially obscured his Light as they swallowed him.

From the vantage point of personality, many incarnations on this return journey are spent in what Bailey (1922) calls *The Hall of Ignorance*, during which awareness of an overshadowing Soul is completely occluded and learning occurs strictly through trial and error. During this multi-incarnational phase the transcendent part of soul remains largely abstracted on its own plane. Meanwhile, the personality (or more accurately, series of sequential personalities with a common core consciousness) undergoes ego formation and gradually learns to be effective in its worldly affairs through maturation and coordination of its physical, emotional, and mental components. These gains accumulate over many lifetimes, but each successive personality remains self-identified as a separated, finite being while gaining knowledge of the planes of appearance. A point arrives at which the incarnate consciousness gains skill and efficiency in absorbing life lessons from experience, and learning becomes increasingly deliberate and

systematic. Bailey calls this next phase *The Hall of Learning*; i.e., progress towards mastery of the form nature, though propelled by ego-identification and ego-driven agendas, moves beyond the phase of random trial and error.

Taken together, the incarnate Soul's sequential sojourns in the Halls of Ignorance and Learning involve retracing Its involutory steps, rather blindly at first, through the layers of substance into which Its consciousness descended. The steps progress in reverse order from the most to the least dense layers of its three-fold persona instruments. Evolution impels the Soul's focus on successive tasks of mastery involving first the physical body (survival-maintenance tasks), then the emotional body (relational tasks), and finally, the mental body (cognitive tasks). Our learning also involves developing in the environmental spheres associated with each of these respective bodies, for example, learning how to relate competently with peers in social and intellectual venues. The Wisdom teachings hold that all three planes comprising the "worlds of appearance" are substantial. The astral (emotional) and mental planes, though far subtler than dense physical matter, are composed of substance oscillating at much higher frequencies than the physical. However, like the physical matter these planes of mental and astral substance interpenetrate, these subtler fluidic substances occupy time and space in ways that unmanifested consciousness and spirit cannot. In conceptualizing the three planes of appearance, a helpful analogy is that dense physical matter itself comprises three interpenetrating states: dense, liquid, and gaseous. Gases easily dissolve in fluids, and fluids easily permeate denser matter.

From the perspective of Wisdom teachings, a great many of the psychological difficulties experienced by individual personalities are related to developmental challenges characteristic of humanity's collective point of evolution. Bailey and Cedercrans have explicitly predicated much of their work on addressing a significant developmental threshold that, in their estimation, humanity is approaching. Both writers discuss at length how, taken on aggregate, humanity's collective consciousness has evolved from what was initially a primarily physical self-identification, or physical polarization, to a point that is now a primarily emotional in polarization, yet rapidly moving towards mental focus. A circumstantial corollary of this is a gradually emerging recognition in much of humanity of the need to relate and conduct our collective affairs less on the basis of emotional insularity and more in a manner consistent with reasoned discussion of mutual interests. Collectively, this is an ideal to which humanity aspires more than a point of realized accomplishment; yet educated public discourse is slowly illuminating the problems of emotionally charged separatism and its destructive corollaries: ignorance, fear, and greed. The turbulence of our times bears witness to this as a significant, and in many ways difficult, current transition. Our emotional nature, as it functions prior to regaining access to the Soul's broader perspective and all-encompassing compassion, is reactively enshrouded in existential anxieties consequent to identifying, falsely, as a separated ego. This profound problem ripples out to the manifold psychological challenges faced by many individuals today, and points to the potentials inherent in transpersonal (and some existential) approaches to psychotherapy.

Humanity's evolution towards mental polarization, while a necessary and positive step— in that reasoned understanding tempers emotional reactivity—is not free of potential difficulties either. The very nature of the mental plane is dualistic; mind apprehends some object of experience and creates a representation of it. The mind, prior to illumination by the Soul,

frequently succumbs to the dualistic illusion that its myriad representations are themselves reality. Thus, mind has capacity to be the “slayer of the real.” But it is also that aspect of the incarnate instrument through which “the great at-onement” may occur. When the mind is properly trained through contemplative practice it becomes the conduit by which impressions from the plane of Soul may be transmitted into the personality for absorption and transformation. This brings us to the developmental phase of spiritual emergence.

Spiritual awakening occurs after many incarnations in the preparatory phases of development just described. A point occurs in the maturation and integration of the physical-emotional-mental instrument at which the consciousness imprisoned within that form is able to invoke the transcendent, overshadowing Soul. Soul responds by lovingly, and with great patience, attempting to further awaken the imprisoned consciousness within the persona to its deeper indwelling identity. The Soul ultimately seeks to appropriate and fuse with its persona, becoming what Cedercrans calls a *Conscious Soul Incarnate* (1993, p. 514) for the sake of serving a higher purpose in the manifested worlds. Thus, the call to spiritual awakening that the personality experiences, is initiated by its indwelling Soul at a very specific point in their mutually interdependent development. The persona, however, still has its own momentum, and so the wake-up call is not always welcome or correctly appreciated and understood. Intimations of unboundedness can be very unsettling and disorienting to the ego—that part of consciousness that has completely merged with its form aspect. Here are the roots of the resistance and psychological confusion that many experience at this very critical juncture often referred to as spiritual emergence (Assagioli, 1989; Cortright, 1987; Raucher, 1999). Having a broader context for understanding this difficult phase can be very helpful for people going through it, and for those attempting to support them in constructive ways.

At some point, the persona consciousness musters enough will to resolve the conflicts and confusion attending spiritual emergence; it awakens to its innate aspirational nature, and begins to respond positively to the overshadowing Soul’s wake up call. The person enters into what Bailey calls *The Hall of Wisdom*, and from there, begins ascent through The Path of Initiation. Considered as a whole, this accelerated phase, often transpiring within relatively few incarnations compared to prior phases, is marked by a significant transition towards selfless motivation, expanded self-identification, expanded consciousness, and alignment of one’s sense of purpose to that of a greater Whole. Instead of responding to the evolutionary impulses of the Soul blindly and unconsciously, as was the case in the Halls of Ignorance and Learning, the persona now increasingly recognizes impressions emanating from Soul levels, and learns (though not without struggle) to consciously cooperate with them. The Path of Initiation is therefore marked by self-initiated discipline to overcome long-standing patterns of separatism, and the Soul-infused personality moves into what Wisdom teachings call conscious discipleship and occult obedience to one’s inner Self. This is not an easy phase of development by any means, but it is marked by an inspiring sense of clarity about one’s goals and ultimate direction despite the persistence and resistance of old, deeply ingrained habits. Again, having a conceptual map of these phases of rapid and often turbulent psychospiritual development is very helpful for people experiencing them.

The Five Initiations

The following is a brief summary of the five major initiations as described by Bailey and Cedercrans in their respective works. Both writers make extensive use of Christian symbology and terminology, and this is especially apparent in the nomenclature used for the initiations. This needs to be contextualized within the framework of Western esotericism, and also within the cultural timeframes during which these writers were active. Most esoteric systems embrace a perennial stance regarding the major religious and spiritual traditions in the world, seeing them as similar in inspiration and essence even though clearly different in cultural expression and in the specifics of practice and emphasis. Western esotericism makes copious reference to concepts and practices from both Eastern and Western spirituality, and recognizes particular significance in the roots of Christianity. The Causal Triad referenced earlier in this paper is viewed as an essential expression of ideas common to both the Hindu and Christian Trinities (Shiva-Vishnu-Brahma / Father-Son-Holy Spirit). Further, as both Bailey and Cedercrans were active in the early to middle 20th Century, they were addressing students and readerships immersed in the civil-religious zeitgeist of those times. They also viewed the life of Jesus as a rich symbolic illustration of the phases of initiation they were describing. Western esoteric wisdom conceptualizes Jesus as an advanced human disciple whose approach to Christ Consciousness—the fully expressed potential of the Soul nature—demonstrates important lessons for all aspirants, though not in the orthodox Christian sense. Neither writer was an apologist for the distortions and abuses of institutional religion, which they clearly recognized and named (Bailey, 1948; Cedercrans, 1993).

In considering these initiations, note that it is the Soul who undergoes Initiation, not the personality, though ripples from the subtle transitions occurring on a higher plane impact the incarnate persona at some level of conscious registration. However, up until the Third Initiation, the persona may experience these significant transitions without consciously understanding or recognizing their full significance as initiations in the manner described here. Initiates of the First and Second degree often experience the impacts of these transitions without an articulated conceptual framework.

The First Initiation: Birth of the Christ in the Heart

This is the point at which a person's Heart Center awakens to its initial intuitive perception that all of Life is One, and, as Cedercrans (1993) puts it, "brotherhood becomes... a fact in nature" (p. 8), at least in the realm of intuitive perception. The mind is not yet fully illuminated, despite this expansion in the heart, and so a person may still experience some degree of disconnect between these two centers of consciousness. Thus, cognition and behavior will still reveal residual doubts and not always reflect what the heart has come to recognize. Thus the First Initiation may mark something of a confusing psychological struggle between heart and mind.

The Wisdom teachings propose that humanity has entered into the proximal timeframe (the current century) wherein significant numbers of souls in incarnation will approach and undergo this First Initiation. This would, of course, signal the beginnings of a tremendous shift in the overall quality of human relationships and an increased capacity for mutual cooperation. Current events may seem to belie this possibility, yet the Wisdom teachings counsel us to look beneath

appearances and recognize with compassion the developmental challenges attending our state of collective transition, and what this may promise if we manage to focus on the potentials rather than the pitfalls of this difficult time.

The Second Initiation: Baptism and Consecration

With the heart illuminated by a new awareness of universal love, the aspirant soon recognizes the degree to which his or her emotional life remains habituated to patterns rooted in fear and self-oriented desires and aversions. S/he therefore enters into a phase of dedication, spiritual discipline, and self-purification, seeking to resolve the paradoxical pull between several classic “pairs of opposites” that emerge at this juncture (for example, between altruism and self-orientation, inward spiritual development and worldly engagement, sexual intimacy and spiritual abstraction...). This parallels the period of temptations faced by Jesus in the gospel stories after his baptism by John. The pairs of opposites are not antithetical, as the concrete mind may believe. Rather they are points along a spectrum that need to be reconciled by intuitive perception. The aspirant focuses on an ideal of fully realized and mature Soul Consciousness (sometimes called Christ Consciousness) as seen deep within the self, and seeks to realize that ideal in lived expression, adopting some form of spiritual practice toward that end. Needless to say, struggles with and between the pairs of opposites cited here pose a significant psychological challenge that many spiritual practitioners grapple with for extended periods of time.

The Third Initiation: Transfiguration or Illumination

This initiation equates, in the gospel account of Jesus’s life, to his Transfiguration on the Mount. To quote Cedercrans (1993), “This is the first major initiation in which the whole consciousness becomes illumined... with the Light of Logoic [Divine] Purpose” (p. 8). This is perhaps what other traditions refer to as the shift into an enlightened state, understanding that this is a new and significant beginning, but not an endpoint. A person approaching this initiation is in transition from what Wisdom teachings call probationary status into accepted discipleship among those Souls who have preceded him or her along this path. A growing sense of inclusion within a spiritual brotherhood, previously invisible, occasions a major shift in perspective towards identification with experiences vividly present in consciousness, yet beyond the individual self or evidence of outward appearance. The initiate of this degree increasingly intuitively perceives the causes behind the effects and currents of worldly events and perceives the manifold subtle energies underlying all form manifestations. S/he learns to work subjectively from the level of Soul awareness, often linked in group formation with other subjective workers, wielding spiritual energies as a positive influence in the psychological environment and in service to some aspect of the Divine Plan. This Initiate, working within an expanded range of consciousness, fully inhabits and works through a highly refined and disciplined Soul-mind-brain alignment, and a personality that is no longer dominated by ego-based delusions of separateness. S/he is fully dedicated to serving an intuited higher purpose, and works towards stimulating the expansion of human capacities within a discipline or area of life appropriate to his or her makeup and experience.

Each of these three first initiations represents a quantum leap in consciousness beyond prior states, and while at least some aspects of these first three are no doubt relatable in terms of the

reader's frame of reference, descriptions of the latter two may well seem abstruse and speculative.

The Fourth Initiation: The Crucifixion

As the name suggests, The Fourth Initiation is analogous to the gospel story of Jesus' sacrifice of his life in form, and by extension, into a state of freedom from the constraints of form and an expanded identification with The One Life—to an extent beyond that achieved in the Third Initiation. In highly esoteric terms, the causal body, the subtle sheath of the individual Soul itself, is sacrificed, as it is no longer necessary. The unit of consciousness previously held within that subtle sheath now stands in direct relationship to its Monad, its still subtler spiritual core (Bailey, 1922). In more human terms, personal karma has been resolved and birth within the worlds of appearance is now motivated entirely by considerations of service to The Divine Plan/Implicate Order.

The Fifth Initiation: The Ascension

To quote Cedercrans (1993, p. 9) "This initiation is so advanced that very little can be said about it. It is freedom from, and mastery of, the three planes of human endeavor: the physical, astral-emotional and mental. The individual is released from the wheel of rebirth, and if he does incarnate again, it is only in times of crisis, for the guidance of Humanity." From one perspective, a significant difference between the Fourth and Fifth Initiations is that the Fifth marks a soul's emergence as an Ascended Master, one of the Inner Plane Teachers who, as a group, function collectively as the Heart Center of Planetary Life and guide Humanity, the Planetary Throat Center, in its evolution. Such information, of course, only becomes meaningful through contemplation.

Assertions Surrounding "The Masters"

The prior references to Masters in this article requires some explanation, as assertions about the existence of such Masters, and about the nature of their relationship to students has proved to be one of the most controversial aspects surrounding several expressions of Western esotericism. Controversy and skepticism surrounded Blavatsky's references to their existence in *The Secret Doctrine* (Blavatsky, 1977) and continues today. The fact that Blavatsky, Gurdjieff, Bailey, Cedercrans, and additional contemporary (if less well known) teachers in this lineage have at times referred to, claimed inspiration from, or even asserted contact with such Masters has subjected these writers to criticism and doubt, especially in academic circles. This is understandable, and perhaps even necessarily so, as the existence of Masters who remain hidden and function on subjective planes of consciousness is beyond common human capacities for verification. Further, an assertion that a student's perception of such Masters may emerge at some future point in development through training and application of esoteric practices may understandably provoke skepticism and suspicions of self-deception and elitism. For this reason, it is important to devote a few paragraphs to considerations of epistemology and methods of inquiry in the Western esoteric practices under consideration.

The gist of the epistemological stance in these Wisdom teachings, which I will elaborate below, is that all assertions put forth must be regarded as hypotheses proposed for open-minded consideration and for rigorous inquiry by suitable and appropriate means; as all the aforementioned writers themselves insist, nothing is to be accepted on blind faith, least of all because of an alleged authority behind any assertion. These standards hold true for any assertions regarding the existence of Masters or their supposed role in offering these teachings.

Epistemology and Testing Precepts of the Wisdom Teachings

One hallmark of Western esotericism is its comprehensive scope as an essentialist, all-encompassing philosophy, traits that tend to render it suspect and unfashionable in an academic environment influenced by post-modern critiques of essentialism. The volume names of Blavatsky's (1977) *The Secret Doctrine*, (*Cosmogogenesis* and *Anthropogenesis*, first published in 1888) speak to the breadth of knowledge that Western esotericism seeks to address. Bailey's output of 24 volumes encompasses a gamut equally broad and ambitious in scope, as suggested by some of the titles: *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, *Initiation Human and Solar*, *Esoteric Psychology*, and *Discipleship in The New Age*. For Bailey, there was no possibility of side-stepping controversy concerning "The Masters," as she openly stated that the majority of her output was the work of one Master for whom she (and Blavatsky) both served as an amanuensis—a contact and connection through which the Master's message could reach a broader audience. The means by which this particular Master, known as both Djwahl Kuhl (or D.K.) and *The Tibetan*, imparted material to Bailey is documented in her *The Unfinished Autobiography* (Bailey, 1951), and a very similar process is also described in Cedercran's (2007) teachings as the "Science of Impression"(p. 497), which I will describe shortly.

Each of the books that Bailey composed, allegedly under impress from D.K., is now published with a front matter article called "Extract from a Statement by the Tibetan," first published in 1934. This extract explicitly addresses the attitude with which the reader/student may most constructively approach the material in these works. The following is an excerpt from that statement:

The books that I have written are sent out with no claim for their acceptance. They may, or may not, be correct, true and useful. It is for you to ascertain their truth by right practice and by the exercise of the intuition. Neither I nor A.A.B. is the least interested in having them acclaimed as inspired writings, or in having anyone speak of them (with bated breath) as being the work of one of the Masters.... If the teaching conveyed calls forth a response from the illumined mind of the worker in the world, and brings a flashing forth of his intuition, then let that teaching be accepted. But not otherwise. If the statements meet with eventual corroboration, or are deemed true under the test of the Law of Correspondences, then that is well and good. But should this not be so, let not the student accept what is said. (Bailey, 1951, p. x)

Exhortations such as this appear frequently throughout the Wisdom literature of Bailey, Cedercrans, and their successors. Different methods for corroboration of the teachings are mentioned which I will address briefly here.

The test of intuition is commonly cited, and D.K./Bailey (1950) devote the better part of one of their books, *Glamour A World Problem* to both the exacting definition of this faculty and methods for cultivating it as a fine-tuned instrument to penetrate through and dispel the distortions of perception connoted by the term *glamour*. One of the few books that Bailey claimed to author on her own, tellingly entitled *From Intellect to Intuition* (Bailey, 1932), considers intuition to be the soul's capacity for direct apprehension of a truth conveyed to the persona in waking brain consciousness. This is seen as a different kind of knowing and an evolutionary advance beyond intellectual apprehension or the conceptual representation of ideas, which is a strictly mental process. Cedercrans (1993) also provides a practical working definition of intuition:

Accept as Truth only that which you comprehend with both the heart and mind. There is within the basic structure of the inner, subjective man (the combined head and heart) a built-in intuitive response mechanism which has been placed there by the Soul. This is not the built-in emotional response mechanism, but rather a higher correspondence of that, which is responsible for the inner guidance known and experienced by many. It does not speak to you in either voice or formulated thought, but produces a response of instantaneous inner knowing which supersedes thought. (p. 24)

Use of the Law of Correspondence, also mentioned as a technique of inquiry and corroboration for assertions in these teachings, refers to the Hermetic principle, "as above, so below; as below, so above." Per *The Kyballion* (Three Initiates, 1912), a concise tome of esoteric precepts, "...this principle embodies the truth that there is always a Correspondence between the laws and phenomena of the various planes of Being and Life" (p. 28). A tangible example is found in the nature of musical octaves, in which the same notes recur throughout all octaves, only at differing, though mathematically related, frequency registers. Thus, musical scales may be viewed as symbolizing (and tangibly reflecting in sound) the multiple layers and planes of existence. As another example, I earlier referred to the fact that the three bodies of the personality (mental-emotional-physical) may be considered to correspond (on the planes of appearance) to the principles of the Causal Triad found at the very core of existence (Spirit-Consciousness-Matter). By extension, a student may use the Law of Correspondence to test assertions pertaining to subtle phenomena by carefully examining potential parallels within his or her lived experience on the sensible and intelligible planes of appearance.

I will conclude my remarks on epistemological methodology within these Wisdom teachings by elaborating on "the science of impression." This is the contemplative means by which a practitioner, in meditation, opens a channel of perceptual receptivity to phenomena (perhaps noumena would be a more appropriate term) that are necessarily very hard to describe in language because they are of an extremely subtle, non-conceptual nature. These impressions also carry a distinctive energetic quality that a student may learn to associate with the Soul operating on Its native plane. While it is vital to achieve a steadiness of concentration that allows one to consciously register subtle impressions from the plane of Soul, this is only the first phase of the total process. A second and vitally important phase involves stepping down and appropriately translating these subtle impressions into meaningful symbolic form that can be comprehended by the mind and, upon due consideration, acted upon by the integrated personality (for it is in

practical applicability that the true value and validity of a “spiritual” realization is best tested). This stepping down and translation process is difficult and requires practice.

The impressions received, though subtle, are discernible, carrying a distinct but implicitly sensed meaning. Translating or interpreting these impressions into symbolic form, whether linguistic or pictographic, is necessarily influenced by the specific frames of reference with which the personality is familiar. There is ample opportunity for some distortion in this translation, and it takes time and experience to master it. There is also a reasonable allowance for variations in the interpretive responses of different people to the same overshadowing impress. This recognition leads to an epistemological stance within the Wisdom teachings that accounts for and acknowledges as necessary diverse expressions of a particular archetype or subtle truth as it enters the consciousness of different personalities. One may reasonably ask how two people may reliably recognize that their diverse conceptual interpretations are in fact related to the same overshadowing input. This is the point at which intuition must be allowed to trump an over-reliance on the concrete intellect; rigorous attention to subjective experience over time helps the sincere student to refine and hone the application of intuition to increasing degrees of precision. While empirically objective proof of such progress may not be possible, the subjective feedback a student receives from life experience over time is.

One technique of meditation used in the Wisdom teachings to hone the intuition, and involving the science of impression, is the use of *seed thoughts*. These are symbolic representations of ineffable truths in word or pictographic form, used as portals of proximal entry towards a deeper intuitive grasp of their underlying meanings. Seed thoughts serve to bring the substance of the three personality bodies into a state of receptivity to spiritual impress. For example, one basic seed thought is, “I stand receptive to the Wisdom of my Soul as it is stepped down to me in meditation.” The successful use of this technique requires some preliminary training so that the physical and emotional bodies may be held in wakeful quiescence. The mental body is likewise held in alert stillness, ready to receive subtle impressions related to the non-conceptual meaning underlying the articulated seed thought, which is held in tight focus without stressful striving. Continual repetition of the seed thought is not used (which, in any case, is more characteristic of mantra meditation, a very different process). In a state of still receptivity, subtle impressions of the tacit meaning of the seed thought emerge into the mind and brain, received in full waking consciousness. The seed thought is thus illuminated and expanded. Through periodic use of the same seed thought over time, the depth and richness of the down-flowing impressions can be amplified, and then tested through application in daily life.

Epistemologically, it is indeed through practical application that the veracity and validity of Wisdom teachings can be best ascertained. Writers such as Bailey and Cedercrans, who had advanced training in this science of impression, used it to receive and translate highly abstract meanings received through their Sources into conceptual form and language in order to communicate them (essentially the inverse process of seed-thought meditation). Cedercrans explicitly told students in her trainings (unpublished) that though she was impressed with very specific ideas through her meditative alignment to a Subtle Source, the words she used to clothe these meanings were of her own very deliberate choosing (though these choices were intuitively guided).

Nonetheless, a frequent refrain in the writings of both Bailey and Cedercrans is how inadequate, how approximate the words available to them are in conveying certain meanings. This serves to remind us that portrayals in language of the subtleties of spirit or of states of consciousness are necessarily imperfect maps; their meanings must ultimately be grasped via a combination of intuition and application. Seed thought meditation allows students to use the stepped down conceptual formulations received from their teachers to approach and enter into the subtle meanings behind the formulations. When students then receive their own inner guidance on their practice, and discover that implementing the guidance deepens their practice, confirmation is achieved.

And ultimately, all such guidance has one general purpose and direction: to help the student come into ever closer alignment and harmony, in thought, feeling, speech, and action, with the implicate order/Divine Plan. That such a Plan actually exists and has immediate relevance to the student's life and affairs is distinctly testable in both subjective and objective application. I would go so far as to assert that coming into alignment with this innate order—of Self and Cosmos—is the essential basis of achieving psycho-spiritual health and well-being.

It is perhaps paradoxical that Abstract Truth—implicit and formless meanings encountered in meditation as pure energy—must be somehow registered within the form nature and there be translated into conceptual form and actionable intelligence in order to transform the world. Western esoteric Wisdom, like Aurobindo's system of Integral Yoga, sees our current age as a distinct and vital opportunity for developing and applying techniques to bridge the incarnate and the transcendental in this pursuit. In recognizing this opportunity, we must be patient and maintain a long and compassionate view of the processes that shape evolution and human psycho-spiritual development, even as we intensify our commitment to these processes to help that development proceed.

Applicability of Concepts from These Wisdom Teachings

As is the case with any spiritual or metaphysical pursuit, Western esoteric teachings attract a self-selecting group of students who find meaning and resonance within that particular articulation of wisdom. Nonetheless, I believe that some of the ideas in these teachings, particularly those discussed in this paper associated with psycho-spiritual development, have potential to prove useful to thinkers and students across the Integral Studies community.

Having Western esotericism's conceptual map for the collective psycho-spiritual development of humanity, even if considered conjectural, can provide perspective and new ways of relating to current events within a developmental framework. The broad, and far reaching vision of human development and evolution portrayed in these Wisdom teachings can provide a meaningful narrative context for considering human capacities, experiences, and levels of functioning across pre-egoic, egoic, and trans-egoic states of consciousness.

These Wisdom teachings portray a course of human development that addresses some of the questions within Integral discourse about the relationship between psychological and spiritual development, and shed some light on the enigmatic process known as spiritual emergence. For example, I have found the ideas discussed here regarding difficulties in the shift from emotional

to mental polarization and navigating “the pairs of opposites” very helpful in negotiating the terrain of my own experiences, and those of some of my students and clients in psychotherapy practice.

There is potential for cross-fertilization between schools of Integral inquiry that may use different vocabularies and frames of reference, yet still find common meanings beneath such differences. I think much might be gained, for example, for students of both Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga and Western esoteric Wisdom teachings in exploring the points of commonality and difference in these approaches.

Finally, for students and practitioners of meditation in different schools, the descriptions of the various Initiations found in these Western esoteric teachings can shed light on the developmental processes they are experiencing. I believe that many readers of this article will relate in meaningful ways to the developmental progressions associated with at least one of the first three initiations. Having language and a conceptual framework for reflecting on where one is situated within the trajectory of human psycho-spiritual development can provide both perspective and fuel for productive aspiration and effort.

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A New Creation on Earth: Death and Transformation in the Yoga of Mother Mirra Alfassa

Stephen Lerner Julich¹

Abstract: This paper acts as a précis of the author's dissertation in East-West Psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. The dissertation, entitled *Death and Transformation in the Yoga of Mirra Alfassa (1878-1973), Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram: A Jungian Hermeneutic*, is a cross-cultural exploration and analysis of symbols of death and transformation found in Mother's conversations and writings, undertaken as a Jungian amplification. Focused mainly on her discussions of the psychic being and death, it is argued that the Mother remained rooted in her original Western Occult training, and can best be understood if this training, under the guidance of Western Kabbalist and Hermeticist Max Théon, is seen, not as of merely passing interest, but as integral to her development.

Keywords: C.G. Jung, death, integral yoga, Mother Mirra Alfassa, psychic being, Sri Aurobindo, transformation.

Mirra Alfassa was one of those rare individuals who was in life a living symbol, at once human, and identical to the indescribable higher reality. Her yoga was to tear down the barrier that separates heaven and earth by defeating the Lord of Death, through breaking the habituated belief that exists in every cell of the body that all life must end in death and dissolution. Ultimately, her goal was to transform and spiritualize matter.

In my dissertation I applied a Jungian lens to amplify the Mother's statements. Amplification, as it is usually understood in Jungian circles, is a method used to expand an analyst's grasp of images and symbols that appear in the dreams of analysands. Of it Jung (1913/1985) wrote: "Once embarked on the task of examining . . . dream-material, you must not shrink from any comparison" (p. 145). "The analyst," he wrote, "collects the historical parallels to every part of the dream, even the remotest, and tries to reconstruct the psychological history of the dream and its underlying meanings" (p. 147). Thus, myth, history, anthropology, psychology, literature, and spiritual traditions from all periods and cultures are mined to enrich the understanding of the symbols from the dream.

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It might at first appear reductionistic to use such a method when looking at the Mother's visionary statements from the *Agenda*. To the disciple who experiences the Mother as the feminine principle of the Immanent Divine—the one whom Sri Aurobindo (Ghose, 2002) described as “the divine conscious Force that dominates all existence, one and yet so many sided that to follow her movement is impossible even for the quickest mind and for the freest and most vast intelligence” (p. 17)—it might even seem futile.

To this objection I would offer two arguments. First, the Mother often referred to her first teacher, Kabbalist and Hermeticist Max Théon, with whom she worked while she still lived in France. Understanding Théon's cosmology opens up extraordinary vistas wherein we can see the Mother's work as part of a network of esoteric teachings reaching back through Western history to the pre-Socratics, Mesopotamians, Dynastic Egyptians, Indo-Aryans, descending in broken and unbroken lines all the way to late 19th century occult circles (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008). Doing this will also help clarify certain confusions concerning Integral Yoga's terminology, especially the use of the term ‘psychic being’, which is considered to be unique to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's work (Pandit, 2006, para 1), while it is in truth an idea the Mother learned from Théon, who developed it from Lurianic Kabbalah.

Second, the often enigmatic visions the Mother had a striking resemblance to dreams, especially those of people approaching death (von Franz, 1986). Anyone who knows the Mother's work at all, knows that she was often focused on her struggles with the *asura* (anti-divine being) known as the Lord of Death. Since her struggles were with this being, and since her visions do bear such a remarkable resemblance to dreams of impending death, I argue that amplifying her statements as one would amplify dreams makes perfect sense. This is not to put the Mother on the psychologist's couch, but to develop a broader understanding of the images, which have not only historical provenience, but psychological as well. That said, I do not use Jung's ideas here in a therapeutic sense (I will not bring up any actual dream material in this paper), but in an attempt to understand their broader application as indicators of the multifaceted reality in which we are embedded, which Jung claimed was only approachable through the psyche—and even then only symbolically. In other words, I enlist him to help delineate the archetypal and symbolic dimensions of her statements.

One of the richest images from the Mother's (Alfassa, 1981) conversations, is that of Death as a veil, threshold, or doorway between worlds (p. 237). This is also the central revelation of Sri Aurobindo's (Ghose, 1993) poetic retelling of Savitri—a short tale of love's conquest of death from the Indian epic Mahābhārata, which Sri Aurobindo expanded into an epic of terrestrial and cosmic evolution. In Sri Aurobindo's poem, it is when Savitri, who has descended into the underworld to retrieve the soul of her deceased husband, reveals to Death that she is in actuality the Divine Mother, and that Death himself is merely a mask—a transitory prop of the Divine—that Savitri finally breaks through Death's persona (a Jungian term that literally means “mask”). When Death's grip is destroyed, the world above and the world below are united in the body of the reborn Satyavan. The Mother (Alfassa, 1981) stated emphatically that the sections of Savitri concerned with the confrontation of the Lord of Death were written about her “experience EXACTLY” (pp. 37–38).

One could unpack this revelation strictly from within Integral Yoga, expanding one's understanding through Sri Aurobindo's (Ghose, 1998) writings on the Vēda and other subjects. There, one would find riches abundant enough for a lifetime of research. I would suggest, however, that to neglect the rich Western heritage the Mother brought with her to Pondicherry would be to risk misunderstanding many of the images and ideas about which she spoke, which were aesthetically quite different from the Indian sources written about by Sri Aurobindo. Integral Yoga is the product of two individuals. To discount or otherwise negate the Mother's decidedly Western roots is to misunderstand the teachings.

Sri Aurobindo adopted many of the terms the Mother brought with her from Théon (Heehs, 2011, Julich, 2013). One obstacle to understanding the extent to which not only the terms, but the ideas of Théon are present in the Mother and Sri Aurobindo's work, is that until recently Théon's own writings were relatively unavailable to researchers, and very little critical work had been done on him as a result. This lacuna has gotten some attention from the scholarly community in the last twenty years (Deveney, 1997; Greenfield, 1997; Godwin, Deveney, & Chanel, 1995; Johnson, 1994), and Théon's (Theon, 1991; 1992; 2012) own idiosyncratic writings have been made available through Argaman Press in Jerusalem. When we look into his work, and research the lineages from which he drew his synthesis, we can begin to see that Integral Yoga sits at the confluence of numerous streams from both the East and West. A fascinating artifact of the nascent globalization occurring at the end of the 19th century, it is perhaps the very first historical example of a meeting of two such remarkable personalities from different cultural milieux, and perhaps the only major exemplar of its kind in the field of spirituality.

Transformation in Integral Yoga

My research is concerned with symbols of death and transformation in the Mother's yoga, through comparing the mythology of the Sun-Door (Coomaraswamy, 1997; 2004) and other Gnostic and alchemical symbols with images from her visions and conversations. Although both she and Sri Aurobindo believed that the change they predicted would happen in the natural course of time, they hoped to catalyze the coming evolutionary jump through actively engaging it in their yoga. The reason for this was twofold. First, they saw nature's lack of urgency as terribly wasteful—having created countless entities capable of experiencing the pain and suffering of mortality. Second, Sri Aurobindo argued that there was no guarantee that humanity would be able to keep from rubbing itself out through internecine hatreds, ignorance and greed. In this way their yoga was salvific.

Sri Aurobindo is said to have drawn down the spiritual plane of consciousness they called the supermind (understood to be a subtle plane that sits between Transcendent Being and embodied existence), into the vital sheath surrounding his material body. He could not complete the supramentalization of his physical body, however, and it was the Mother's task to draw the supermind into matter, where their union would catalyze a transformation of the Mother's body and so, through the law of similarity, the universe.

When discussing activities that occur at the subtlest levels of manifestation, the Mother (Alfassa, 1979, p. 69) resorted to symbolic language and stories. One image she used was that of a golden door, which she claimed to have broken in a vision, allowing the supramental energies

to flow freely down into the earth (on 29 February 1956). Symbols are the basic morphemes of myths, which, according to Jung, describe in projected images psycho-spiritual truths inaccessible to the rational mind. The Mother, from her training with Théon, as well as her years with Sri Aurobindo, felt that the most profound truths could never adequately be expressed in words.

The tension between reason and mystical realization has a long history. It was a central tenet of the Romantic movement in the nineteenth century (Ellenberger, 1970), which stood against the rising tide of scientific materialism, and out of which came both nineteenth century occultism and psychology. The central tenets of materialism—that existence is mechanical and unconscious, that nature's laws are purposeless and fixed for all time, that mind is an epiphenomenon of biology, and that spirit is a delusion (Sheldrake, 2012)—continue to dominate today in the fields of biology, technology and medicine. The Mother (Alfassa, 1981) believed enough in the scientific method—if pursued honestly—to say: “If Science went to its furthest possible limits . . . it would join up with true knowledge” (p. 156); however, she (Alfassa, 1993) also argued against all forms of dogma, saying: “Truth is not a dogma one can learn once and for all and impose as a rule” (p. 81). Scientific investigation needs to be open to the possibilities of realities other than material.

Truth, to the Mother, was realized at the nexus of the Individual and the Universal within each one of us. This notion can be traced back to the hermetic dictum, as above, so below, which speaks to the way in which the inner and the outer, the upper and the lower, mirror one another or even are one another in some essential way, although our conscious mind experiences them as distinct and even unrelated. In many ancient systems, it is not in the mind, but in the mystery of the heart, symbolized as the central Sun in the human organism, that the doorway to Truth is found.

The Psychic Being

In Integral Yoga, the transformative impulse is threefold. Called by Sri Aurobindo the Triple Transformation, it included the processes of psychicization, spiritualization, and supramentalization. Whether undertaken by the Mother, or by the *sādhaka*, this yoga constitutes an active participation by the yogi with an evolutionary shift or speciation into what Sri Aurobindo called the Supramental or Gnostic Being. The Triple Transformation is also present as an organizing structure in Sri Aurobindo's epic, *Savitri*. In it we find the Triple Transformation described in mythic language through the yoga of Asvapati, and the struggles of his daughter, Savitri, to overcome the Lord of Death and regain her husband.

The foundation of this process is the initial contact with the psychic being. The psychic being is considered to be the earthly half of the eternal, evolving part of the human soul, manifest as light in the heart of each person. As mentioned above, although the term is generally credited to Sri Aurobindo, it was coined by Théon, and brought by the Mother to Pondicherry. When Sri Aurobindo first heard it, the Mother (as cited in Heehs, 2011, pp. 237-238) said, he looked for a Sanskrit equivalent, settling on *chaitya purusha* plane of consciousness: “the portion,—Amsha—of the Divine which guides a man” (Purani, 1970/1990–2023, p. 259). The psychic being is, to Sri Aurobindo, the lower half of a greater “central being,” the upper part of which is the

Jivatman. In Savitri, this lower portion is described as a part of the Divine Mother placed in the soul of each individual, which is the agency of our experiences, and guides us in our evolution. It would make sense, then, symbolically, that the Jivatman represents the pole of the transcendent Father, held by Sri Aurobindo in his relationship with the Mother, who held the earthly pole.

Théon (as cited in Godwin, Chanel, & Deveney, 1995) also described the psychic being as dual, with an active and a passive component (p. 13). In Integral Yoga, it is the active component, lodged behind the human heart, and helping to guide our evolution in each life, which is normally discussed as the psychic being. It is “the God within” (p. 19). It is also gendered. In Théon’s writings (Theon, 1992), the active component is masculine, while the passive is feminine. In Integral Yoga, the genders are reversed. In this way the conception of the psychic being differs, pointing, perhaps, to a difference between Théon’s more patriarchal, Jewish training, and Sri Aurobindo’s Śaktism. The Sun deity prayed to by Aswapati in Savitri, is feminine, and Savitri her incarnation.

Jung (1954/1969) compared the divine portion of the soul to the Paracelsian scintilla, or spark of God present in the heart of every human being (p. 190). Paracelsus most probably learned this from Kabbalistic sources. In another context, Jung (Jung, 1937/1968b) cited an alchemical, Christian image of this, writing that, “this fire is the ‘spiritual seed’ which our Virgin has gathered in herself (p. 383). This is analogous to Sri Aurobindo’s understanding of it as of the Mother. In Christianity, the spiritual seed gathered up in the Virgin is the Christ, which is the principle of Divine Love that: “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians, 13:7, RSV). It is the Christ who is the divine portion of the human soul, which resides in the human heart. The Christ is also symbolized by the sun, the reflection of the Divine Light in the Cosmos.

In the Integral sādhanā, the psychic being is said to be “brought forward,” which means it is differentiated from the mortal aspects of the soul (our individual thoughts, emotions, will, etc.). Once one is in contact with this higher principle of Love within one’s heart, it is segregated from the lower being so that it can undergo the process of spiritualization, which is the union of the two lights—the lower (psychic being, feminine) and the higher (Jivatman, masculine). This union is what Jung, after the alchemists, called a coniunctio, or hierosgamos (divine wedding). After this process is completed, the transformed soul-spirit reunites with the individual (a further coniunctio), who is then said to be “enlightened.” Both Jung and Sri Aurobindo mentioned the Buddha as paradigmatic of this stage of development.

The final stage of the process is supramentalization, where the higher force transforms and universalizes the body. Théon (1991) wrote: “The occult end and aim of formation is the manifestation of Intelligence in being of light, in life” (p. 86). The union of the enlightened individual with the principle of Divine Love, symbolized as the Mother, leads to what the Mother and Sri Aurobindo called the Gnostic Being. Théon (Alfassa, 1981) spoke of this as a “New Creation on Earth and the glorified body” (p. 375), which amounted to a quantum jump beyond the human.

In Sri Aurobindo’s conception, there are two rhythms to the transformation: ascent and descent. Sri Aurobindo, as the masculine principle, was said to have accomplished the ascent,

which was twofold, corresponding to the stages of psychicization and spiritualization. In Sri Aurobindo's personal experience (as cited in Alfassa, 1982), these also correspond to his awakenings to the transcendent state of nirvana (p. 269) and the personal divinity (p. 355). These are also seen in Savitri, where Aswapati undertakes a twofold yoga of ascent to the spiritual realms, and Savitri, daughter of the Sun, born to Aswapati for his austerities, undertakes the descent, when she follows her husband Satyavan into the underworld to retrieve his soul from the Lord of Death. It was for the Mother, as it was for Savitri, to undertake the descent into matter. To transform the physical, the Consciousness-Force of the Mother needed to be drawn down into the body of death. This was the beginning of the final stage of transformation. To accomplish this required the Mother to confront the Lord of Death, who stood at the threshold between the worlds.

Death

The Mother made many statements about death in her talks and writings. I am interested primarily in two here: first, in accord with Théon's cosmology, in death as the third of four Angelic creator Beings (Light, Love, Life, Truth) who became demonic (Darkness, Hatred, Death, Falsehood) through belief in their independence from God, and ultimately their omnipotence; second, in death as a Threshold, Doorway, Mask, or veil.

The Lord of Death, in the original version of the tale of Savitri from the Mahabharata, is Yama. Yama has a long history in Indian myth. He is understood to have been the first mortal to die, the Guardian of Directions, the Dharmaraja, or King of the Law, and a child of the Sun. In some texts, Yama is even said to be one of the 108 names of the Sun—fascinating, given Savitri's identity as the Sun's daughter and even incarnation.

This deity shows an affinity with deities from a number of cultures across the Indo-European world. Whether they share the same name root (yemo, as we find with Janus, Ymir, Remus, and Gemini), or only like qualities, there are a range of qualities that link these beings. They are often the first born being, the first human, the first mortal to die. They often exhibit a dual nature, or are a twin, where they are associated with the night as their counterpart is associated with the day. They are often obstructors, gatekeepers, or guardians of the threshold between worlds. They are often depicted carrying a noose for binding or restraining their quarry. They are often associated with bulls or serpents, giving them astrological significance. They are often associated with space-time, the physical universe, the Milky Way. In numerous creation stories their dismembered body is formed into the world; in others they are a demiurge or usurper of the Creative power of the true High God, fashioning a false world as a travesty of the Ideal world created by the One.

It is the demiurge who traps the light of the Creator in the fallen creation. This Gnostic idea is fairly pervasive in the ancient world, although its significance varies from culture to culture, religion to religion. The demiurge veils the Truth from the Creation; and so, throughout the history of this idea, there have been those who sought to break through—for everyone or themselves alone—to the Original Light. In Théon's teachings, this being is one of four, created by the Absolute and tasked with building the Ideal World. Their activity, however, engenders in them a sense of agency. This leads them to feel independent of the Creator. In their hubris, they

create a second, false and fallen world, as a pale reflection of the original world planned by the Creator. This precipitates the necessity for the Mother (through whom the Creation was to have been effected) to enter into this world to combat and convert each of these beings in turn. According to Théon, the first two had already been converted. It was the Divine Mother's task in this life to confront and convert the third: the Lord of Death. Mirra Alfassa understood herself to be the incarnation of this Divine Mother.

I have mentioned that to the Mother Death was a mask or veil of the Divine. This mask has numerous characteristics and mythological resonances, one of which involves the association of the sun of this world with death. We find this idea in the work of Swedenborg, and later in Blavatsky. In Theosophy, as in Théon, this is tied to the sundoor myth and the yoga of the sundoor (Coomaraswamy, 1997), through which the yogi seeks conscious transcendence of this world, and so immortality. According to Coomaraswamy, the sun is often pictured as having a number of rays (most often seven, although Théon wrote of twelve). The path taken by the yogis is a hidden ray of light that descends into the body through the crown of the skull. If one can crystallize their consciousness around this light, they can follow it up through the sun, which is seen either as a door or as having a door within it, into the plane that transcends our own. Once able to pass through this door consciously, the yogi can reenter our reality into any body they choose: mineral, vegetal, animal, or human (White, 2009).

This yogic path of ascent and return, Coomaraswamy (1997) likened to the axis mundi—the symbolic pillar that holds up the universe. This pillar is seen outwardly in the sun beam, or inwardly in the rising Kundalini. As the serpent energy, it is also associated with the constellations Draco, Hydra, and Serpens, and at times associated with the Milky Way. Coomaraswamy (1997) wrote about this axis when discussing the smoke rising from the central hearth-fire of the ancient Hindu Temple, where the hearth is the navel, and the hole in the roof the fontanelle of the skull. The line of smoke from the navel (oomphallos) passes through the heart, and the brahmarandra (cave of Brahma), between the pineal and pituitary glands. The process is known as the crystallization of consciousness, an idea popular in Theosophical circles around the time the Mother began her studies with Théon (Anonymous, 2002).

As Swedenborg (1969) argued, all that happens beneath the sun of this world is in thrall to the Lord of Death. This Sun of Death, however, is dual. Its other face shines on eternity. Only by seeing his face as a veil, or a mask of the Absolute, can one hope to draw back his disguise, and experience the world of the Creator. Once this is accomplished, death has no more power over the one who has broken through. It is through engaging Death that we learn, as Neumann (1990) wrote: “What at first appears to the ego as the devil, becomes a psychopomp” (p. 143). The visible sun is death, the demiurge, or the devil, child and reflection of the Divine Sun, visible face of God and “shroud of ignorance” (Ghose, 1993, p. 658)—symbol of the doorway between worlds. It is a paradox that this being is also the door which leads to the Ultimate.

Death as Doorway

The goal of the yoga as stated by Théon (cited in Alfassa, 1981) was “a New Creation on Earth and glorified body” (p. 375)—what the Mother and Sri Aurobindo called the Supramental or Gnostic Being. This goal will be the natural result of terrestrial evolution in time; however,

because of the danger of the human ego, there is no guarantee we will not destroy ourselves first. Sri Aurobindo, as Théon before him, felt that it was the duty of those who could engage at this level to act as a catalyst for the evolutionary shift.

Théon wrote of seven cosmic epochs, of which ours is the sixth. Five times the universe has ended in destruction and renovation. Here, at the end of the last era of fallen humanity before the change, we are in the greatest danger. The demiurgic forces seek to remain independent of the Creator, and so fight with all the powers they have, to sow dissent and violence. We might very easily succumb to these shadow forces and destroy ourselves. Jung (as cited in von Franz, 1975/1998) remained pessimistic that we could, as a race, withdraw our projected enmities and so heal our relationship to the world. The Mother was more optimistic, and asserted that she had attained at least two of the goals she sought: The supramental descent, and its manifestation in the earth. To her, it was just a matter of time until the evolutionary shift that is occurring at this moment is complete, and death is no more.

This coming world, was written about extensively by Théon (1992). He saw the cosmic pattern through which everything unfolded as sevenfold. His idea that there are Seven Cosmic Epochs is rooted in Kabbalistic gematria. Kabbalah teaches that Creation took place in six days, just as the first word of the Torah, Bereshith, has six letters, and the first sentence of Genesis six words. In each case, the seventh (day, letter, word) is silent, or at rest. When the seventh stage is reached in the Seventh Cosmic Epoch, there will be no more need for the Creator to tear down the Creation in flood or fire. Humanity will have evolved into its divine destiny. Sri Aurobindo (cited in Alfassa, 1981) spoke of the coming Gnostic Age, saying that our universe would see “equilibrium” (or harmony) at the completion of the cosmic evolution, and that there would be no more pralayas, or dissolution. (pp. 267-268).

Jung (1959/1968a) also spoke of this shift, though he did so using astrological symbolism and the precession of the equinoxes from the age of Pisces to that of Aquarius. Pisces, symbolized by the two fish, which Jung points out, were associated with the tanninim (Leviathan and Behemoth) by the Talmudist Rashi, and which he interprets alchemically as the twin sons of God, Christ and the Devil, is the age marked by dualism, and the tension of the opposites (p. 80 [para. 133]). Aquarius, the water-bearer, is according to Jung the ideal of the individual owning their soul fully. Here, the transcendent and immanent become unified in the human being, which is the central symbol and focal point of the divine plan.

In the ancient Temple of Solomon it is said there hung a tapestry that veiled the Holy of Holies from the main court. Upon this veil stars supposedly were embroidered, symbolizing the veil of the heavens, behind which hid the secret and unknowable Divinity. In the Gospel of Mark, at the death of Jesus, the veil was rent. Symbolically, I would argue, the tearing of the veil meant the unification of the transcendent and immanent. From an orthodox Jewish perspective, such an event would probably precede the coming of the Messiah. Since Jews refused to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, then the tearing of the veil would probably seem to them more the result of blasphemy, as the order of the universe is broken when the separation between God and humanity is breached by human hubris. From the Christian perspective, however, rather than a blasphemy, this would seem rather the fulfillment of prophecy.

One way to understand this mythologem is through the myth of Inanna's Descent. Inanna was the Queen of Heaven, who determined to visit her sister, Ereshkigal, who was the Queen of the Underworld. In her descent, Inanna had to pass seven gates, where at each gate she was required to remove one of her seven "veils." With the removal of the final veil, all that remained was a side of meat, which Ereshkigal hung on a meathook behind her throne and left there to rot. Ereshkigal, as the dark feminine, represents Inanna's "instinctual beginnings . . . the Face of the Great Goddess, and of herself before she was born to consciousness" (Perera, 1981, p. 45).

Jung argued that the psyche has two poles: archetype and instinct. The archetypal pole is at the frontier between the higher aspects of soul and the ineffable spirit; the lower pole, or instinct, is at the frontier where the soul loses itself in the unconscious material forces of nature. Here is a tension between spirit and matter, and between the masculine and feminine. The veil, in both the Christian story and the Inanna myth, segregates the two realms. Its tearing seems to point to the necessity for the sought-for transformation to be effected through what Jung (1954/1969) called the "psychoid" realm: the biochemical roots of instinct, inaccessible to the psyche (p. 176). It is the psychoid that is the bridge between psyche and matter.

The mystery of the psychoid is the mystery of the transformation of matter through death. Somehow, Jung argued, death is the necessary final stage one must pass before the final work of alchemical transformation can occur. He (Jung, 1946/1966) cited the alchemists, saying that "no new life can arise . . . without the death of the old" (p. 257).

It is the body, built by demiurgic forces to entrap the Light of the Creator, that is the veil. To tear the veil is to free the scintilla within us to rejoin with the Light of the Creator, which is pure consciousness. Thus, both within us and at the center of all of existence is the transcendental Light of the Creator. As Jung (1954/1958) wrote: "Just as a door opens to one who knocks on it, or a way opens out to the wayfarer who seeks it, so when you relate to your own (transcendental) centre, you initiate a process of conscious development which leads to oneness and wholeness" (pp. 280-281). I would argue that no matter where we see this center—whether in the heart, or the brahmarandhra, or the Christ, or the sun, as von Franz (1986) put it: "Death is a problem of a threshold of perception between the living and the dead" (p. 155). To tear away the veil is to change our conscious perception of the world and our place in it.

This "threshold of perception" about which von Franz (1986) spoke has to do with what the Mother (Alfassa, 1983) called "changing government" (p. 183) from ego to Absolute, or what Jung would call from ego to Self. Zhu (2010) wrote about this change in reference to the Zen Cow Herding Pictures. In the traditional sequence, the eighth circle in the series is blank; the general interpretation is that this circle represents enlightenment, which because it is ineffable, cannot be pictured. Zhu argued, however, that what the empty circle might actually represent is that only through death can this transformation take place, because no matter how fine the line between the limited human awareness and the higher consciousness of enlightened being, what is lower cannot survive the transition.

What is it that occurs at the moment of transition? No matter if enlightenment takes one nanosecond or fifteen billion years, the moment of passage does not occur in space-time. It is what Jordan-Smith (2008) referred to as a "sojourn out of time," or "nuptial call" (p.116). This

idea of the nuptial call is apparent in the story of Savitri, where Satyavan is abducted by Death, in the story of Persephone, abducted by Hades, and in the story of Inanna, who is depicted as arrayed in a wedding gown when she begins her descent (Perera, 1981, p. 53).

Only three months before her death the Mother (Alfassa, 1983) said to Satprem that it felt as if her “body has a wish to go to sleep and awake . . . only after it is transformed (p. 390). This reminded Satprem of the fairy tale Sleeping Beauty, who though asleep for a hundred years, experienced it as only a passing moment. The change of government requires sleep, or death for the transformation to be complete. As Jung (1957/1967a) put it:

Evidently the veil of Maya cannot be lifted by a merely rational resolve; it requires a most thoroughgoing and persevering preparation consisting in full payment of debts to life. For as long as unconditional attachment through cupiditas exists, the veil is not lifted and the heights of a consciousness free of contents and free of illusion are not attained; nor can any trick, nor any deceit bring this about. It is an ideal that can ultimately be realized only in death. Until then there are the real and the relatively real figures of the unconscious. (p. 38)

However, Théon, in words the Mother might well have written, argued:

It is only in indissoluble union with the divinity who is within him, that man will be able to attain to the progressive transformation on earth which is his full right . . . whoever teaches that retrogressive transformation or mortality is the predestined, legitimised end of man . . . is, therefore, the enemy of man. Of right, man is immortal. (Theon, 1991, pp. 109-110)

Still, the Mother (Alfassa, 1983) said: “If the supramental is to manifest on earth, something of it has to relate to the physical (p. 262). This would make sense, as the supramental is a transitional state en route to Saccidānanda. As Jung (1946/1966) put it: “Because the body, even when conceived as the corpus glorificationis, is grosser than anima and spiritus, a ‘remnant of the earth’ necessarily clings to it, albeit a very subtle one” (p. 278).

What these statements illustrate, I believe, is an apparent difference between the Mother and Jung, which should not be played down. To Jung, the original state is an unconscious mixture of light and dark. Duality, the discrimination of the two, is a necessary step to the final unity, which incorporates both. According to Neumann (1990), “The road which brings salvation . . . is a road which leads downwards to a reunion with the unconscious, with the instinctual world of nature and with the ancestors” (p. 144).

To Sri Aurobindo, on the other hand, the fallen world of duality creates the shadow. The supramental being is still a mixture of light and dark in transformed matter, and so there will remain “a remnant of earth,” but the original unified state is pure Light, and it is to the Light that we will return.

Conclusion

When the Mother withdrew the integral yoga community suffered a crisis of faith. Was she not supposed to complete the yoga and transform her earthly body? Satprem (in Alfassa, 1983,

p. 423f) was furious with the Ashram for not following what he felt were the Mother's strict orders concerning the disposition of her body, arguing that her transformation would have occurred if they had done so. Nolini (as cited in Alfassa, 1983), the Mother and Sri Aurobindo's disciple and physician, disagreed, writing this to the community upon the Mother's passing:

The Mother's body belonged to the old creation. It was not meant to be the new body. It was meant to be the pedestal of the new body. It served its purpose well . . . for a new mutation, [a] new procedure was needed. "Death" was the first stage of that process. (p. 147)

This would appear to be more in line with what Jung (1957/1967a, p. 38) said concerning the alchemical teachings on the subject, and even perhaps Sri Aurobindo (as cited in Alfassa, 1987), who wrote in Aphorism #88: "This world was built by death that he might live. Wilt thou abolish death? Then life too will perish. Thou canst not abolish death, but thou mayst transform it into a greater living (p. 139).

Jung (1954/1969) felt that we could not escape our biological foundation. To him, the biological and the spiritual could be held in tension in the heart, or soul, of each of us, but there was no question of ever overcoming or transforming our physical nature. The ego requires a vessel for its transformation—that is the body. The mother wanted to transform that relationship, and so the structure of the universe itself. Yet it could be claimed that her work was alchemical in the best sense of the word: it was about the glorification of matter in the alchemically transformed resurrection body. My feeling is that Jung would have accused the Mother of concretizing what is essentially a symbolic process, while the Mother would have accused Jung of reducing the grand mystery down to the clouded consciousness of the human psyche. The Mother's defeat of the Lord of Death meant to her the breaking of the golden door that obstructs our contact with the divine, the release of the supramental force, and the promise of the final union of heaven and earth in the transformed body.

Within Integral Yoga, the Mother is typically seen through the filter of Sri Aurobindo's words and ideas. I have argued that her use of the symbols of death and transformation was more influenced by her Western occult training, and can best be understood in that way. I would also argue that, although Jung and the Mother would have differed in some essentials, through Jung's process of amplification one can come to a richer appreciation of both the uniqueness of the Mother's vision, and her universality. As she (Alfassa, 1977/2003) herself said:

Spiritual experience . . . is an experience identical everywhere in all countries, among all peoples and even in all ages. If you meet the Divine, you meet it always and everywhere in the same way. Difference comes in because between the experience and its formulation there is almost an abyss. Directly you have spiritual experience, which takes place always in the inner consciousness, it is translated into your external consciousness and defended there one way or another according to your education, your faith, your mental predisposition. There is only one truth, one reality; but the forms through which it may be expressed are many. (p. 17)

I will end with a quote from Jung (1942/1967b), which I feel sums up my own attitude on this subject succinctly.

We all have an understandable desire for unambiguous clarity; but we are apt to forget that in psychic matters we are dealing with processes of experience, that is, transformations, which should never be given hard and fast names if their living movement is not to petrify into something static. The protean mythologem and the shimmering symbol express the processes of the psyche far more trenchantly and, in the end, far more clearly than the clearest concept; for the symbol not only conveys a visualization of the process but—and this is perhaps just as important—it also brings a re-experiencing of it, of that twilight which we can learn to understand only through inoffensive empathy, but which too much clarity only dispels (pp. 162-163).

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Traditional Roots of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga

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Abstract: Sri Aurobindo's teachings on Integral Yoga are couched in a universal and impersonal language, and could be considered an early input to contemporary transpersonal psychology. Yet, while he was writing his principal works in English, he was also keeping a diary of his experiences and understandings in a personal patois that hybridized English and Sanskrit. A hermeneutic perusal of this text, *The Record of Yoga*, published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, uncovers the semiotics of Indian yoga traditions, showing how Sri Aurobindo utilizes and furthers their discourse, and where he introduces new elements which may be considered "modern." This essay takes a psycho-biographical approach to the life of Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), tracing his encounters with texts and situated traditions of Indian yoga from the period of his return to India from England (1893) till his settlement in Pondicherry (1910), to excavate the traditional roots and modern ruptures of his own yoga practice, which goes to inform his non-sectarian yoga teachings.

Key Words: integral psychology, Pancharatra, Sri Aurobindo, tantra, transpersonal psychology, Vedanta, yoga, yoga psychology.

Sri Aurobindo wrote almost all his major works between 1914 and 1920 in the journal *Arya*. These works include tracts on the practice of his yoga, on the metaphysical basis of his yoga and on the social and political history of the world in an evolutionary context. He also published interpretations of the Vedas, selected Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. In his works on yoga, there are sometimes references to the Upanishads, Gita or Vedas and the use of certain terms belonging to an Indian yoga psychology and metaphysics; but these are always translated into a western lexicon and made part of a narrative which may be considered "modern," belonging to a philosophical and psychological discourse of "world knowledge." This has allowed him to be seen as one of the founders of contemporary integral philosophy and psychology, a modern scholar of universal significance, rather than a purely sectarian teacher.

But at the same time that Sri Aurobindo was writing these major works, he was practicing his own yoga sadhana in a very intense way; and writing his diaries of yoga practice, experiences and analyses. These diaries have been published under the title *Record of Yoga* (Sri Aurobindo, 2001), a name he himself wrote as a title to some of the diaries. If one reads the *Record of Yoga*

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alongside the major works, one sees very different language practices in use and what might even seem to be different formulations of his yoga teaching. Later, some of these major works were revised, so that one may detect at least four formulations of his yoga: (1) the version we get from his diaries, which follows a terminology taken from the Hindu traditions of Vedanta, Gita, Tantra and Pancharatra Vaishnavism; (2) the version in the first three sections of *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Sri Aurobindo, 1999), which adapt the Bhagavad Gita's "triple path" of Works, Knowledge and Love; (3) the version elaborated in the chapter on "The Triple Transformation" of *The Life Divine* (Sri Aurobindo, 2005) and in a number of the letters to his disciples, where he utilizes an invented terminology of the "psychic being," "overmind" and "supermind" to develop his yoga; and (4) the version found in the compilation known as *The Mother* (Sri Aurobindo, 2012), and in many letters to ashram inhabitants after the final arrival in Pondicherry of Mirra Alfassa, his spiritual collaborator, enjoining surrender to her as the embodiment of the Divine Mother.

Through these formulations, one can see changes in terminology and emphasis. I hold that this is more due to the different kinds of audience for which his different texts were meant, the traditional terminology and emphases becoming translated into terms which were more approachable by these audiences. Of course, this is not to say that there were no changes in his understanding of the goals and processes of the yoga, but such changes are at an advanced stage beyond the division between *Vidya* (knowledge) and *Avidya* (ignorance). In this essay, I will explore the traditional roots of Sri Aurobindo's yoga which form the basis of his own diary notes. I posit that there is continuity in Sri Aurobindo's formulations, the core of which is to be found in his traditional roots.

A Psycho-biographical Consideration

To excavate these roots, I will take a psycho-biographical view of the yoga journey of Sri Aurobindo, relating this to the situated history of religious sectarian practice or influence. Sri Aurobindo's spiritual journey can be said to have begun when he returned to India. He grew up in England, and studied at Cambridge University, where he enrolled for a Tripos in the classics (Heehs, 2008, P. 27). He was also well versed in the European romance languages (p. 43). This education prepared him as a modern subject, who had internalized the post-Enlightenment values of social critique and creative freedom. Such a preparation must be considered significant in his eclectic and creative approach to the yoga traditions of India.

Sri Aurobindo returned to India in 1893, and joined the service of the Maharaja of Baroda. At this time, he took up serious study of two texts that were to last with him through the rest of his life, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita (Heehs, 2008, p. 57). He also began reading the books of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The Upanishads introduced to him the proto-philosophical complexity of the Vedanta, particularly its concern for an embodied freedom and delight (*jivanmukti*); while the Gita gave him the active doctrine of spiritual works and its revolutionary nature; as also a theistic and more integral spirituality, involving surrender to, and identity with, the Personal Divine. In Baroda, he also encountered situated traditions of Indian spiritual practice and participated in them. He had a few sporadic spiritual experiences; came across examples of paranormal power; visited the legendary yogi Brahmananda, who lived by the Narmada River and went to a Kali temple in the same area (Chandod) where he had an

experience of the “World Mother” (Heehs, 2008, pp. 85-86). He later gave poetic form to this experience:

The Stone Goddess

*In a town of gods, housed in a little shrine,
From sculptured limbs the Godhead looked at me,—
A living Presence deathless and divine,
A Form that harboured all infinity.
The great World-Mother and her mighty will
Inhabited the earth's abysmal sleep,
Voiceless, omnipotent, inscrutable,
Mute in the desert and the sky and deep.
Now veiled with mind she dwells and speaks no word,
Voiceless, inscrutable, omniscient,
Hiding until our soul has seen, has heard
The secret of her strange embodiment,
One in the worshipper and the immobile shape,
A beauty and mystery flesh or stone can drape.
(Sri Aurobindo, 2009, p. 68)*

This is the first mention of the “World Mother” in Sri Aurobindo's writings and attests to his introduction to the goddess traditions of India, that were to play a very important part in his personal and public life from 1906 onwards. The poem records a moment of *darshan*, which indeed, is also a moment of identity with Kali, perhaps his first (“one in the worshipper and the worshipped stone”). Here, he also started the practice of *pranayama*, taught by a friend who was a disciple of Brahmananda and close to the circle of hatha yogis surrounding Brahmananda (Heehs, 2008, p. 87).

Political Activism and Yoga

Sri Aurobindo began his political activism in Baroda in the company of Maharashtrian revolutionaries like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and his associates (Heehs, 2008, pp. 67-69), with a call for *poorna swaraj*, or unconditional independence based on the right of a people with its own cultural history to have independent expression and self-determination.

In 1905, the *swadeshi* movement, calling for a boycott of British goods and their replacement with indigenous manufacture began in Bengal as a consequence of the administrative partition of Bengal. Along with this, there rose a call for national education and Sri Aurobindo was offered the post of principal of the proposed national college by its primary patron. This was a chance Sri Aurobindo was waiting for, and in 1906, he left Baroda and moved to Calcutta to join this college and to pioneer and engage himself fully in the anticolonial resistance movement (Heehs, 2008, pp. 91-93, 97). A proto-nationalistic culture had been brewing in Calcutta for close to a century before Sri Aurobindo's arrival there. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee had already written his novel *Ananda Math* in which the lyrics of the revolutionary song *Bande Mataram* are contained; and Rabindranath Tagore was very active in cultural politics. There were many others, less known today, but all engaged in their own ways in the transvaluation of Bengali culture through

hermeneutic engagement with the west. Behind this surface activity we find strong regional traditions of yoga. This is an aspect of the Indian struggle for freedom which is glossed over by secular historians of modern India.

These practices and teachings took their inspiration mainly from two regional traditions, Tantra and Vaishnavism. Shakta Tantra practices around the worship of Mother Goddess Kali and Bhakti traditions based on love for Krishna and amplified by Sri Chaitanya in the 16th century, were very alive in Bengal and available for mobilization in the freedom movement. We see, for example, how Bankim's writings drew heavily on both the Shakta as well as Vaishnav regional traditions of Bengal. The Shakta tradition contained mythic elements which fed the nationalistic eidos. Shakta traditions include the idea of sacralization of the Indian sub-continent through the myth of the dismemberment of the corpse of Sati (Eck, 2012, p. 27). This mythos was undoubtedly a fertile influence on the idea of the nation as Mother (*Bharata Mata*) that arose at this point in Bengal, though it had a more regional significance at this time.

These regional traditions were trans-religious and trans-cultural, forming the legacy of both subaltern and *bhadralok* classes in Bengal. Here, though it is true that the nation has been identified as a Mother by many emerging nationalities, the Indian image of nation as mother has not only a cultural history, but traditions of yoga—or in other words, spiritual experience and transformative practice—behind it. These ideas had already powerfully impacted Aurobindo in his last years in Baroda, since he was in close contact with a fledgling revolutionary movement in Bengal, which he was guiding. If one is to believe K. M. Munshi, Sri Aurobindo had already developed the idea of Bharat Mata and taught a method of practice aimed at making the nation alive in the consciousness as the Divine Mother (Heehs, 2008, p. 95). Around the same time, he concretized this perception in a letter to his wife, where he said that the land of India was not just a physical territory but the body of the Mother to him (pp. 88-90).

One may see this as a mythic politicization of Indian yoga traditions. The use of myth to territorialize a nation racially, ethnically or ideologically, has been seen as a rhetorical trope in the formation of fascist subjects in modern times. However, the shared regional cultural traditions transcending religions and opening new forms of collective numinous experience need to be acknowledged here, as a prelude to Sri Aurobindo's later invocation of the Divine Mother as a spiritual power (*Shakti*) uniting diverse human beings. The formation of a national archetype should also be seen as a critical stage in a process of popular identity formation, important as a form of what Gayatri Spivak has called "strategic essentialism" (Chakravorty-Spivak, 1988, pp. 1-32), though this needs to cede to processes of universalization once its purpose is served. Indeed, this is what we find in Sri Aurobindo, for whom this phase led to a more species-wide consideration of human consciousness and its possibilities.

The Tantric traditions, with their archaic roots in human and animal sacrifice, could also be utilized to inspire the sacrifice of one's life to the cause of national emancipation, something Sri Aurobindo drew on to some extent. Already in Baroda, he wrote up an impassioned program celebrating Shakti as the spirit of modernity needing a temple home in the mountains and men ready to sacrifice themselves to her (Heehs, 2008, pp. 81-82); and later in Calcutta, he stimulated the conversion of the regional Durga Puja festival into a political ritual. Sri Aurobindo and his fellow revolutionaries also drew heavily on the idea of sacrifice and desireless works contained

in the Bhagavad Gita. As part of the initiation rites of the revolutionary Anushilan Samiti, members had to take an oath on the Gita to sacrifice their lives to the nation as a divine work, a sworn loyalty sealed by blood. Such practices show the braiding of the spiritual traditions of the Gita and the Tantra, a precursor to his worship of the dual forms of Krishna and Kali.

Beginnings of Personal Yoga

As mentioned above, along with these mental and symbolic attitudes drawn from yoga traditions, Sri Aurobindo, towards the end of his stay in Baroda, turned towards the practice of *pranayama* (breathing method) and some *asanas* (hatha yoga postures), and had a number of encounters of a spiritual and occult kind (including that with a *naga sannyasin* who demonstrated occult healing powers) (Heehs, 2008 pp. 84-87). This aspect of developing sources of inner power, the field of what have been called *siddhis* (yogic powers), through yoga, no doubt had an impact on Sri Aurobindo as a political activist. One may read this as a consequence of dispossession. Those lacking material or political power, often look to personal sources such as enhanced mental, vital, subliminal, psychic, physical or spiritual power, to wage their battles for rights. Sri Aurobindo's serious turn towards the practice of yoga, did not arise, then, from a seeking for freedom from the bondage of existence (*moksha*) but from a seeking for spiritual power (*shakti*) that could help to free the nation (Heehs, 2008, p. 87). We may see this as a more properly Tantric goal.

The teachings of the Vedanta, particularly as they have been interpreted later by the *bhashyakars* or commentators, emphasize *moksha* or liberation. Undoubtedly, there are world affirming teachings to the Upanishads (*jivanmukti*) and these are what interested Sri Aurobindo more than a world-negating transcendentalism. These life-positive teachings of Vedanta are reiterated in the Bhagavad Gita, which shows the way to desireless enjoyment of dedicated action from a vantage of freedom. But the Vedanta and Gita concerned themselves, even when world affirming, with *dharma* (right action), *karma* (right attitude in works), *jnana* (knowledge), *bhakti* (devotion) and *moksha* (liberation). The schools of Tantra, on the other hand, made a maximization of worldly power and enjoyment their purpose. The project of the Tantras became a development of the latent and paranormal powers of experience and activity with the body and the earth as their field of fulfillment. Thus, it is to develop inner power and explore its possibilities that Sri Aurobindo turned to hathayogic and pranayama practices meant to open up the occult doors separating us from cosmic and divine sources of Power (*Shakti*).

Sri Aurobindo claims that his practice of pranayama did not result in much except for an enhanced flow of poetic inspiration and some physical changes including the development of a faculty of subtle vision, the ability to see forms and movements in astral space, eyes closed or open (Heehs, 2008, P. 87). Later in 1906, he stopped the pranayama and fell very sick. Recovering from this illness, he sought spiritual help from a master. A number of yogis and sannyasins, who concerned themselves with India's freedom, were in contact with the circles of the Indian struggle for independence, and several of the leaders of this struggle had become disciples of yogis. Sri Aurobindo's brother, Barindra Ghosh, knew a Maharashtran yogi, Vishnu Bhaskar Lele who lived in Baroda, and he put Sri Aurobindo in contact with this teacher. Sri Aurobindo met Lele in 1907 when he traveled to Gujarat and Maharashtra to participate in the fateful Surat Congress and in political rallies in Bombay and Pune (Heehs, 2008, P. 142).

The Nirvana

In Baroda, Sri Aurobindo sat with Lele in the house of a friend and sought instruction in yoga. Lele was a Vaishnav, though it isn't clear what denomination (*sampradaya*) of Vaishnavism he belonged to. He was also a follower of the Dattareya cult, popular in Maharashtra, and was versed in Theosophy. From the Pancharatra underpinnings of Sri Aurobindo's diary of yoga, *The Record of Yoga* (Sri Aurobindo, 2001), it seems to me that Lele may have been a follower of the ancient form of Tantric Vaishnavism known as Pancharatra. What Lele wished to convey to Sri Aurobindo was an opening to divine guidance. This could be thought of as a form of intuition. To arrive at this contact with the Divine Will, Lele sought to help Sri Aurobindo to quiet the activity of his mind (Heehs, 2008, pp. 143-144). Lele instructed Sri Aurobindo in a form of *rajayoga* meditation meant to rid the mind of thoughts. Unexpectedly, within three hours Sri Aurobindo experienced a silent mind and with three days of practice, this complete silence established itself in his being, as a result of which he saw the world as illusory and as having no sense of self. Sri Aurobindo has referred to this experience as nirvana (Heehs, 2008, pp. 144-146).

As with the experience at the Kali temple at Chandod, Sri Aurobindo has poetized this experience, titling it Nirvana:

*All is abolished but the mute Alone
The mind from thought released, the heart from grief,
Grow inexistent now beyond belief;
There is no I, no Nature, known-unknown.
The city, a shadow picture without tone,
Floats, quivers unreal; forms without relief
Flow, a cinema's vacant shapes; like a reef
Foundering in shoreless gulfs the world is done.*

*Only the illimitable Permanent
Is here. A Peace stupendous, featureless, still.
Replaces all, - what once was I, in It
A silent unnamed emptiness content
Either to fade in the Unknowable
Or thrill with the luminous seas of the Infinite.
(Sri Aurobindo, 2009, p. 561)*

Neither Sri Aurobindo nor Lele were expecting such an experience. It was of some inconvenience, since Sri Aurobindo was expected to deliver political speeches in Pune and Bombay, but couldn't find the motivation to do so. Lele, on his part, told Sri Aurobindo that "the devil had got hold of him," since the schools of Vaishnavism are theistic and not world-negating. However, he was impelled by a voice within him to ask Sri Aurobindo to trust his own inner guidance from now (Heehs, 2008, p. 148).

In essence, Sri Aurobindo did achieve what Lele had hoped for him, access to a divine guidance of his own, but this came via an unexpected experience. In using the term nirvana to

describe this experience, Sri Aurobindo clearly relates the experience to Buddhism, though the term "brahmanirvana" (The Bhagavad Gita V:26) also occurs in the Gita. From his descriptions of the event (as in the above poem), it is clear that the experience included a radical unreality and an extinction of the ego and any sense of self (including the Vedantic Atman), which separate it from an Advaitic moksha. However, he was later to refer to the ontology of this experience as the passive Brahman, which relates it to the lexicon of Vedanta and the Gita. Considering the Tantric tradition, this experience could be equated with *laya*, the dissolution of the self in Superconscience.

Vaishnava, Tantra, Pancharatra

In Bombay, Lele, who accompanied Sri Aurobindo on his journey, asked him to fold his hands to Narayana (Supreme Being) and open himself to the Divine to speak through him. The reference to Narayana reinforces our understanding of Lele as a Vaishnav, most possibly of the Vishishtadvaita school of Vedanta, for which Narayana takes the highest place. This is also related to the Pancharatra sect, supported by Vishishtadvaita, which believes in a cosmology of emanationism from Narayana and/or Vasudeva, both names and forms of Vishnu that played a central part in Sri Aurobindo's sadhana. This, indeed, would have been an instance of listening to the "inner voice" of the Divine, but Sri Aurobindo had lost the will to works, due to the radical unreality experienced by him. Eventually, Lele folded his hands to Narayana and Sri Aurobindo witnessed a political speech being delivered, using his vocal instrumentation as a medium (Heehs, 2008, pp. 146-147). This, on its part, would hardly be a typical Buddhist experience, but could be more closely related to the Gita, where Arjuna is asked by Krishna to lose the sense of doership and, seated in brahmanirvana, enjoy the activity of prakriti in and through him, under the guidance of the Divine.

Following this experience, Sri Aurobindo continued in this state of unreality, obeying the directives of a divine voice (*adesh*) or other forms of communication and action through his instrumentation. At some time, during this period, the identification of this Divine Source with Krishna occurred in Sri Aurobindo's consciousness, though one of the first times we hear mention of this is during the famous Uttarpara Speech, delivered after his acquittal from the Alipore Jail in 1909.

This incarceration took place in May 1908, for allegedly directing terrorist activity in the case of the attempted bombing of a magistrate and the killing of two British ladies. Sri Aurobindo was in the jail for one year, facing a most likely death sentence. During this time, his yoga flourished. He has written about this: "I have spoken of a year's imprisonment. It would have been more appropriate to speak of a year's living in an ashram or a hermitage. The only result of the wrath of the British Government was that I found God" (Sri Aurobindo, 1991, pp. 261-262)

In the jail, Sri Aurobindo, who was settled in "the passive Brahman," now discovered "the active Brahman" (Heehs, 2008, pp. 177-178). This again is a combination of Tantric and Vaishnav regional traditions hearkening back either to an even earlier Pancharatra or to an evolution of Pancharatra. Krishna and Kali are Ishwara and Shakti. Kali is the universal Energy whose becomings are all things and Krishna is the Person at the heart of each becoming.

But Sri Aurobindo was a pure witness at one level, the level of the modern scientist. From the Uttarpara Speech and other records of that time, we know that it was an intense period of trials, of the overcoming of fear and aversion, of the practice of the mantra, *sarvam khaluvidam brahma, vasudevah sarvam iti* (Heehs, 2008, p. 165). This mantra demonstrated the link between Pancharatra Vishnavism (Vasudeva) and the Upanishads (Brahman), and in Sri Aurobindo's description, we see how the constant meditation on the idea moved from an impersonal Presence pervading and in all things in the cosmos, to an impersonal Person, wearing all the names and faces of the cosmos, and from that, to the Person than whom there is no other as Lover in all things. This, the *Record of Yoga* shows us, is the Krishna-Kali (Sri Aurobindo, 2001, pp. 77, 230, 571, 711, 734, 735, 760, 830, 831, 833, 845, 851, 869, 876, 922) and Krishnakali (2001, pp. 96-97, 247, 275, 277, 750, 767, 770, 780-783, 810, 813, 851, 854, 859, 863, 875, 883, 912, 923, 931) realizations; where Kali is the universal Energy whose becomings are all things, and Krishna is the Mysterious Being at love play (*lila*) with his own active mirror which is also himself, infinite, but Other— since radical Infinity means always an infinite Remainder. This is the Other of the Same, a dialectical polarity, positive and negative, *linga* and *yonī*², that is necessary to the birthing of infinite becomings.

Of course, “nothing too, is himself unguessed” as Sri Aurobindo (2009, p. 216) writes in his poem “Parabrahman”. This poem, dated as being between 1900 and 1909, is a precise philosophical statement, using poetry just like the ancient Indian philosopher-poets of the Upanishads. It seems to me to be written after the Parabrahman experience, which is most likely to have visited him in the Alipore Jail. The entire poem is worth quoting, but I will restrict myself to the last verses:

*He is, we cannot say; for Nothing too
Is His conception of Himself unguessed.
He dawns upon us and we would pursue,
But who has found Him or what arms possessed?*

*He is not anything, yet all is He;
He is not all but far exceeds that scope.
Both Time and Timelessness sink in that sea:
Time is a wave and Space a wandering drop.*

*Within Himself He shadowed Being forth,
Which is a younger birth, a veil He chose
To half-conceal Him, Knowledge, nothing worth
Save to have glimpses of its mighty cause,*

*And high Delight, a spirit infinite,
That is the fountain of this glorious world,
Delight that labours in its opposite,
Faints in the rose and on the rack is curled.*

² Literally phallus and vagina, anthropomorphic signifiers in Indic and specially Shaiva and Tantric discourse, standing for a cosmic polarity.

*This was the triune playground that He made
And One there sports awhile. He plucks His flowers
And by His bees is stung; He is dismayed,
Flees from Himself or has His sullen hours.*

*The Almighty One knew labour, failure, strife;
Knowledge forgot divined itself again:
He made an eager death and called it life,
He stung himself with bliss and called it pain.*

The Alipore Jail descriptions are famous, of course, for Sri Aurobindo's experiences of Krishna—the Lover embracing him in all things (Sri Aurobindo, 1997a, p. 6), and finally revealing Himself in all beings at a court hearing (Sri Aurobindo, 1997a, p. 7). We don't get many mentions of Kali. There are a few interesting ones from his *Thoughts and Aphorisms* (Sri Aurobindo, 1997b). These, for example: "519. Kali is Krishna revealed as dreadful Power & wrathful Love. She slays with her furious blows the self in body, life & mind in order to liberate it as spirit eternal" (p. 496). But in one he spells out his relation to both of these:

427. I did not know for some time whether I loved Krishna best or Kali; when I loved Kali, it was loving myself, but when I loved Krishna, I loved another, and still it was my Self with whom I was in love. Therefore I came to love Krishna better even than Kali. (p. 483)

This "thought" shows Sri Aurobindo's identity with Kali, a condition he later described also in his book *The Mother* (Sri Aurobindo, 2012, p. 13). Here Kali is seen not just as the cosmic Nature Force, but as the transcendental Shakti, one of whose appearances is the cosmos. The laws of the cosmos therefore do not bind either Kali or the sadhak who has surrendered him/herself to Kali. But bearing this transcendental Mother Force, he experiences it as himself ("when I loved Kali it was loving myself"). It is out of this identity with Kali that he experiences Her play with Krishna, the Other, the Mysterious, the Infinite Continent. According to the editor's note at the end of the volume, *The Thoughts and Aphorisms* were written in or around 1913, at a time when the diary entries of the *Record of Yoga* were also being written.

The Four Realizations

Sri Aurobindo has described his yoga as resting on four "realizations." By the time he departed from the jail, he had realized two of these four realizations and was on the way to the other two realizations. In his words:

The first [realization] he had gained while meditating with the Maharashtrian Yogi Vishnu Bhaskar Lele at Baroda in January 1908; it was the realization of the silent, spaceless and timeless Brahman[;] his second realization ... was that of the cosmic consciousness and of the Divine as all beings and all that is, which happened in the Alipore jail To the other two realizations, that of the supreme Reality with the static and dynamic Brahman as its two aspects and that of the higher planes of consciousness leading to the Supermind, he was already on his way in his meditations at the Alipore jail. (Sri Aurobindo, 2006, p. 94)

In the above account, we have seen three of the four realizations he speaks about here – the realization of the passive Brahman, the realization of the active Brahman and the realization of the Two-in-One in the guise of Krishna-Kali. However, in this description of four realizations, some key steps are missed out: (1) the realization of the active (and *saguna*) Brahman includes a containing and forming aspect and an aspect of immanence. These impersonal functions can be seen personally as Kali and Krishna respectively. Evidently, this is a transition that occurred in Sri Aurobindo's consciousness—the move from the *nirguna* (formless/static) to the *saguna* (immanent/dynamic) Brahman, with its qualities of dynamic manifestation and evolution and of individual creativity, and then to the Krishna-Kali, Krishnakali and ultimately Krishna personalism; (2) the realization of “the supreme Reality with the static and dynamic Brahman as its two aspects” also reflects the above transition and is ultimately dramatized in the reduction from plural to dual (Krishna-Kali) to two-in-one (Krishnakali) and finally to the sole existence of Krishna.

We can see in these four realizations again, the weaving of the Vedantic, Tantric and Vaishnav traditions. The first realization, as we have discussed, is Buddhistic and close to Advaitic (i.e. non-dualistic); the second realization includes the Tantric and Vishishtadvaitic at first, then the Gaudiya Vaishnav. The Tantric traditions aim for the experience of an impersonal all pervading and shaping Consciousness but this is seen and experienced as the Player in all forms, Kali. The Vishishtadvaitic realization of Ramanuja is an ontology of the One Person as the Many at play. Here if we combine Tantra and Vishishtadvaita, the Presence in the Substance and Energy of nature is seen as Kali, while its purpose can be seen as the relational delight of Vishnu-Narayana (Person form of Parabrahman) (according to the Gita and Gaudiya Vaishnavism, Krishna) with his prakriti (what the Tantrics would call Shakti). “The Parabrahman with the static and dynamic Brahman as its two aspects” could be seen again as related to a synthesis of Tantric and Vishishtadvaitic ideas, particularly if we consider all three Parabrahman, passive Brahman and active Brahman to have Personal forms. Parabrahman would then be the transcendental form of Vishnu-Narayana, while the passive Brahman would be more like Shiva of the Tantric traditions and the active Brahman would be Kali with Krishna immanent within all her becomings.

Among the yoga traditions of India, the one tradition that is known to pair Krishna and Kali is the Tantric Ten Mahavidya tradition, where Kali's consort is Krishna. There may be other esoteric traditions that have the same coupling, but if so, this is not commonly known. The ontology of the third realization also derives from the Gita, where the Parabrahman would be Purushottama (Supreme Being) and the passive and active Brahman, akshara and kshara Purusha respectively. Translating the Vishishtadvaitic and Tantric schemes into Pancharatra (five manifestations), each of the entities involved would be an Ishwara-Shakti pair, Parabrahman as Purushottama-Paraprakriti of the Gita or Narayana-Sri Lakshmi of Pancharatra which could have morphed in Sri Aurobindo's case to Krishna-Kali. The passive Brahman would retain the neutrality of the Nameless, while the active Brahman would assume the emanationism of Pancharatra, based on the quartering of the Vedic Purusha in the Purusha Sukta.³ These

³ The Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda describes the self-sacrifice of Purusha by “quartering” Himself into the four varnas – Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras. The Pancharatra emanationism follows this in seeing a Supreme Narayana emanate Himself into four descendants, the Vrishni heroes who can be identified as lords of the the four varnas – Vasudeva or Mahavira for the Brahmin, Sankarshana or

emanations would also exist in Ishwara-Shakti pairs. This, indeed, is what we find in *The Record of Yoga*; and in a modified form, in *The Mother*.

Topography of Evolution

Moreover, though the first three realizations could be spoken of in terms of existing regional schools of traditional practice, the fourth realization—that of “the higher planes of consciousness leading to the Supermind,”—is not as easy to find in traditional discourse of the modern period. This may be because the cartographer's interest required for this had been largely lost in the Indian spiritual traditions, perhaps because the Vedantic division between Vidya (knowledge) and Avidya (ignorance) was considered permanent. If, however, this division is probed, it yields a topography that provides a pathway for conscious human evolution towards a being of Knowledge. This entire aspect may be thought of as modern, not only in terms of its historicity but in terms of its ideology and telos. It is interesting that Sri Aurobindo claims initiation into this line of consideration from Vivekananda, ten years his senior, who went to sow the seeds of a Vedantic ideology and telos in America at the time when Sri Aurobindo returned to India from England.⁴

Brought up in English ways, Sri Aurobindo integrated British (and with it, French) modernity into his situated regional practices of traditional yoga. One may question his adherence to any existing sect or cult, but leeway and originality have always been encouraged in the most of the regional traditions of India, resulting in a rich evolving discourse. But to think a global and more, species-wide telos, defining in its own way thereby, the human, is quintessentially modern.

Heidegger's “Europeanization of the world” is the globalization and planetarization of the telos of technicity, humanity as *techne*. Against this, Heidegger had proposed humanity as *poiesis* instead, and even *techne* as *poiesis*. But once the dye has been cast, the modern born with the humanization of the cosmos as its goal, the definition of the human as a universal species-being goes up for grabs and there is no escape from the struggle for human self-definition. The Vedantic alternative proposed by Vivekananda was a science of Consciousness. Pushing these borders further, Sri Aurobindo (acknowledging Vivekananda as his occult teacher), began probing the phenomenology of mystic and cosmic experiences, and came up with a topography of consciousness ranges intervening between the human and the Knowledge consciousness (Vidya). Defining the human in these terms provides a telos of embodied and active self-exceeding renewing Nietzsche's dream of the Overman: “Man is a rope stretched between the beast and the overman” (Nietzsche 1982, p. 126). Hence, one may say that this traditionally novel line of yoga subsumed the traditional lineages of practice in Sri Aurobindo, giving a modern meaning to them—the *lila* as the evolutionary play of Krishna and Kali, leading to an unveiling of cosmic Maya and the Knowledge of Creative Agency as Oneness and Love. Such an unveiling would mean a materialization of the Symbolic Truth (taking the Symbol to be the archetypal Real), made plural through an embodied gift of tongues, the slippage and splintering

Balarama for the Kshatriya, Pradyumna for the Vaishya and Aniruddha for the Sudra. For further details on Pancharatra, see Matsubara (Matsubara, 1994).

⁴ 1893, the year of the Columbian Exposition and the Parliament of World Religions, held in Chicago, for which Vivekananda set sail for the US, was also the year of Sri Aurobindo's return to India from England.

of the Word into its infinity, making possible a Love relationship of Wonder between all beings, stemming from the experienced simultaneity of (radical) oneness (i.e. identity) and (radical) difference (i.e. singularity).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Sri Aurobindo came into contact with a number of situated Indian traditions of yoga and seems to have absorbed symbologies, goals, practices and lexicons from all of these. The Vedanta and the Gita seem to have remained, as per the tradition, Sri Aurobindo's textual touchstone, the *Sruti* (sacred texts), from which all else must seek validation. Of course, cosmic and transcendental experience exceeded these, but the Vedanta and Gita, were accepted by the tradition and by the early Sri Aurobindo, evidently following his own faith, to be in consonance with the highest experiences. Later, Sri Aurobindo was to discover unexplained obscurities in the Vedanta and the Veda Samhita was to become the original source of the goal of a divine life that he had arrived at. In Bengal, he entered an immersive environment saturated with Krishna and Kali, and had already received his mystic introduction to both of these at Baroda, Kali in her temple at Chandod and Krishna through the Gita. But neither of these seems to have become very spiritually important to him until after the nirvana experience of Baroda in 1907. By the time (1908) he was in the Alipore Jail, Krishna had become the personal form of the Divine with whom he was principally in relation. Sri Aurobindo does not mention the name of Kali with respect to the Alipore Jail, but after his departure to Pondicherry in 1910, we begin seeing references to his identity with Her, particularly in his *Thoughts and Aphorisms* (Sri Aurobindo, 1997b) and *The Record of Yoga* (Sri Aurobindo, 2001). He also signed his letters of advice to his revolutionary friends, Kali. Yet, the Alipore Jail was also an initiation to a new and non-traditional line of yoga practice, one which gradually subsumed all the others and which he termed the formation of an intuitive mentality, seen not as an individual occult power (siddhi) but as a necessary step towards an alternate telos of modernity—the evolution of human consciousness out of its ignorance into the Knowledge or Integral Consciousness, which, in his opinion, could result in a divine life on earth.

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The Metaphysical Instincts & Spiritual Bypassing in Integral Psychology

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Abstract: Instincts are innate, unconscious means by which Nature operates in all forms of life including animals and human beings. In humans however, with progressive evolution of consciousness, instincts become increasingly conscious and regulated by egoic functions. Biological instincts associated with the *lower-unconscious* such as survival, aggressive, and reproductive instincts are well known in general psychology. The *higher-unconscious*, which is unique to human beings, may be said to have its own instinctual processes referred to here as the ‘metaphysical instincts’. In traditional spiritual practices awakening the metaphysical instincts has often been done at the expense of suppressing the biological instincts—a process referred to as spiritual bypassing. This essay discusses how the metaphysical instincts initially expressed as the religious impulse with associated beliefs and behaviors may be transformed and made fully conscious, and integrated with the biological instincts in integral yoga and psychology in order to achieve wholeness of personality.

Key Words: Carl Jung, higher-unconscious, instincts, integral psychology, integral yoga, lower-unconscious, psychosynthesis, Roberto Assagioli, spiritual bypassing, Sri Aurobindo.

Introduction

A key aim of integral yoga and psychology is to reach wholeness of personality. In practical terms, achieving wholeness necessitates harmonization of the various dimensions of personality through the organizing principle of the psyche—the Self, or in Sri Aurobindo’s terms, the Psychic Being (Sri Aurobindo, 1989). Among western transpersonal psychologists, Carl Jung and Roberto Assagioli have developed some of the most comprehensive personality frameworks that include a similar psychocentric principle—referred to as the Self or the Higher/Transpersonal Self respectively—to represent this integrating and harmonizing fulcrum of personality.

Roberto Assagioli, an Italian psychiatrist who was an early associate of Freud and Jung, is not as well known as these pioneers of depth psychology. However, his framework called Psychosynthesis, which combines empirical, depth, humanistic and transpersonal psychologies at once, is in this author’s view the most comprehensive western integrative psychological and

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psychotherapeutic system compatible with integral psychology. Assagioli's conceptual model of human personality is complemented with a rich array of practical techniques and processes for growth, development and integration of personality. In his major work titled *Psychosynthesis*, Assagioli (1971) proposed a model of human personality with many practical implications for healing and transformation of consciousness including techniques for catharsis, critical analysis, self-identification, dis-identification, development for the will, training and use of imagination, visualization and many more, all as part of the psychosynthesis work aimed at integration of personality.

Assagioli's personality framework includes three intrapsychic dimensions: the *lower-unconscious*, the *middle-unconscious*, and the *higher-unconscious*. Depicted as hierarchal strata within an upright oval diagram, these are nested within the larger collective realm in the background which is similar to Jung's notion of the *collective unconscious*, representing the transpersonal and cosmic dimensions of the psyche. The region that includes the conscious mind is at the center of the oval diagram and is referred to as the middle-unconscious region. This region is primarily subconscious with the field of ordinary waking consciousness represented by a circle at its center.

Assagioli (1971), who incorporated in his model some of the key features of Freud's and Jung's contributions, added the idea of the higher-unconscious and called its organizing principle the Higher or Transpersonal Self. While his concept of the lower-unconscious is essentially comparable to Freud's concept of the *Unconscious*, and Jung's personal unconscious (the *Shadow*), as the storehouse of dynamically repressed materials, his middle-unconscious was added to account for what is not in the immediate conscious awareness, and yet not dynamically repressed and available for recollection at will without any resistance or defense mechanisms.

Assagioli's higher-unconscious explicitly represents the human spiritual realm which could be made conscious and integrated into the conscious personality, just as the lower-unconscious would be made conscious and integrated to achieve complete integration and wholeness of human personality. The Higher Self (also called the Transpersonal Self) would be crucial as a catalyst to make this integration possible. Beginning in the 1920s, Assagioli developed pioneering insights into the nature of the relationship between psychological and spiritual development and pointed out a number of psychological issues arising before, during and after spiritual awakening (Assagioli, 1971).

Although a two-dimensional depiction of the oval diagram is rather linear with the abovementioned regions appearing as hierarchal strata with the higher-unconscious at the top, in day-to-day experience both the higher and the lower unconscious are hidden below the surface of mental awareness and are ordinarily mixed-up and confounded. This inner fusion may eventually become clarified as more and more unconscious contents are integrated into the middle-unconscious and enter the field of conscious experience.

The use of the term 'unconscious' is of pivotal interest to our discussion here: all regions in Assagioli's scheme are outside of the conscious realm depicted as a circle in the center of the middle-unconscious. The lower-unconscious region is associated with the biological functions as well as dynamically repressed emotional and mental content. The lower-unconscious is mainly

regulated through biological instincts. Instincts are innate, unconscious means by which Nature operates in all forms of life including animals and human beings. Biological instincts associated with the lower-unconscious such as survival, aggressive, and reproductive instincts, are well known and well researched in general Western psychology.

The higher-unconscious, which is unique to human beings, may be said to also have its own instinctual processes referred to here as the *metaphysical instincts*. These include transpersonal intuitions, visions, illuminations and spiritual aspirations which are initially unconscious relative to ordinary mental functions. Here we can apply the idea of instincts to the realm of the higher-unconscious because they too initially reside outside of the realm of conscious experience and exert powerful influences on the human psyche. "...[A]ll psychic processes whose energies are not under conscious control are instinctive" (Jung, 1971, p. 451).

Metaphysical instincts are as powerful as the biological instincts and become more relevant and empowered in the course of psychospiritual growth and transformation. Whereas biological instincts are responsible for our embodiment processes, the metaphysical instincts tend to propel us toward our spiritual destiny. They influence our religious impulses, beliefs and behaviors as well as our philosophical ideations.

Integral Psychology

Sri Aurobindo's key phrase: "all life is yoga", suggests that integral yoga—which is an integration of the yogas of love (*bhakti* yoga), knowledge (*jnana* yoga), and action (*karma* yoga)—is not only understood as an individual spiritual practice, it is also accomplished by Nature in a collective manner. A simple observation of animal life reveals that even though the mental life of an animal is not as elaborate and complex as that of a human being, the essence of their being is nevertheless expressed through instinctual love and knowledge in action. Animals simply know how to go about their daily life, care for their young and live their lives according to the dictates of their biological instinctual processes.

The animal instinctual core structures also operate in human beings as part of our evolutionary heritage. Whereas animals are primarily driven by the biological drives, the human beings are, in addition, pulled by the gravitation of the forces of the metaphysical instincts. In other words, in humans the evolutionary instincts of the lower-unconscious and the involutory instincts of the higher-unconscious—the metaphysical instincts—create an existential dialectical process in the psyche. This dialectical tension typically manifests in terms of diametrically opposing forces that act upon and within the psyche on all levels from physical, to emotional and mental, which must eventually be harmonized in the course of integration of personality.

Jung made a similar distinction between biological and metaphysical instincts as pairs of opposites, inextricably linked and often difficult to distinguish. He wrote:

...psychic processes seem to be balances of energy flowing between spirit and instinct, though the question of whether a process is to be described as spiritual or as instinctual remains shrouded in darkness. Such evaluation or interpretation depends entirely upon the standpoint or state of the conscious mind. (Jung, 1960, p. 207).

Before spiritual awakening—the first step in the psychospiritual transformation processes—a typical individual is primarily governed by conscious mental, emotional, and physical processes, as well as relatively unconscious instincts. The interplay between consciousness and unconsciousness is at the core of the phenomenal and psychic existence and some sort of balance among, or the reconciliation of, these is a common goal of western schools of depth psychology, notably Freud's Psychoanalysis, Jung's Analytical Psychology, and Assagioli's Psychosynthesis. A similar, yet more comprehensive, aim is also at the core of integral psychology and yoga.

In integral yoga and psychology,

...consciousness is not synonymous with mentality but indicates a self aware force of existence of which mentality is a middle term; below mentality it sinks into vital and material movements which are for us subconscient; above, it rises into the supramental which is for us the superconscient. But in all it is one and the same thing organizing itself differently. (Sri Aurobindo, 1997, p. 88)

The human being is then an embodiment of various spheres of consciousness ranging in density from the densest to potentially most luminous strata. The ultimate aim of integral yoga is to eradicate the unconscious dimension of the human psyche and thus achieve a fully integrated conscious psyche.

According to Sri Aurobindo (1992):

In the right view both of life and of Yoga all life is either consciously or subconsciously a Yoga. For we mean by this term a methodised effort towards self perfection by the expression of the secret potentialities latent in the being and highest condition of victory in that effort a union of the human individual with the universal and transcendent Existence we see partially expressed in man and in the Cosmos. But all life, when we look behind its appearances, is a vast Yoga of Nature who attempts in the conscious and the subconscious to realise her perfection in an ever-increasing expression of her yet unrealised potentialities and to unite herself with her own divine reality. In man, her thinker, she for the first time upon this Earth devises self-conscious means and willed arrangements of activity by which this great purpose may be more swiftly and puissantly attained. (p.2)

According to integral psychology pioneer Indra Sen (n.d.):

...to Sri Aurobindo the teleological or forward moving character is the central fact of our consciousness. It is the evolutionary urge of life generally, which unfolds in the ascending scale of the animal species a progressive growth in consciousness. Therefore, the unconscious is the large evolutionary base from which consciousness emerges. However, if the past is any indication, then it can be definitely affirmed that the goal of this long evolutionary march must be the attainment of a consciousness fully come to its own. That is to say when the unconscious has been reduced to the vanishing point and the human individual becomes fully aware of himself and capable of acting out of such awareness. (p.6)

The Problem of Spiritual Bypassing

When a human being is primarily governed by his or her instinctual drives, various biological and metaphysical tendencies are at odds with one another and tend to compete to get the attention of the egoic will to utilize it toward their own purposes. The various levels of the unconscious (lower, middle, higher in Assagioli, or inconscient, subconscient, and superconscient in Sri Aurobindo) are in actuality not neatly divided and compartmentalized. They are in fact a 'mixed bag' of tendencies beyond the reach of the conscious, egoic will. In depth psychology it is understood that sexual and aggressive urges can easily get mixed up in the form of dominance or otherwise aggressive sexual behavior in animals and humans. This mixing up of the unconscious tendencies is not, however, limited to the biological instincts. The aggressive urges, for example, can get mixed up with religious fervor and, as history has witnessed over and over again, killing and other forms of aggression have been committed in the name of God or religion. In the same manner religious and sexual urges can manifest as either strongly segregated, or combined in certain sexual or religious rituals and spiritual practices.

Instinct is not an isolated thing, nor can it be isolated in practice. It always brings in its train archetypal contents of a spiritual nature, which are at once its foundation and its limitation. In other words, an instinct is always and inevitably coupled with something like a philosophy of life, however archaic, unclear, and hazy this may be. Instinct stimulates thought, and if a man does not think of his own free will, then you get compulsive thinking, for the two poles of the psyche, the physiological and the mental, are indissolubly connected. (Jung, 1954, p. 81)

In traditional spiritual practices, western or eastern, awakening the metaphysical instincts has often been done at the expense of suppressing the biological instincts—a process referred to as spiritual bypassing in transpersonal psychology. The body and its associated needs and desires are often regarded as impure and as an obstacle to spiritual attainment. This could be rooted in a belief that life on Earth and in the body is a form of banishment from heavenly realms. In other instances, this could be a result of an overly masculinized attitude which holds a fear of the body and the senses and privileges transcendent consciousness over embodied existence.

In such views the body is often deemed subject to pain, disease, decay and eventual death and thus ultimately unreliable and undesirable. This attitude is often extended out to the feminine principle and the Earth as manifestation of this principle. This tendency, explained in a number of different ways (Welwood, 1984 ; Cortright, 1997; Masters, 2010), has been called spiritual bypassing, which implies bypassing of embodied physical and related vital and emotional challenges through suppression of them in order to attain higher or transcendent spiritual consciousness—i.e. suppression of biological instincts by metaphysical instincts.

In a paper titled: 'The Unconscious in Sri Aurobindo,' Indra Sen (n.d.) who coined the term 'integral psychology', stated that in the Indian approach "yoga has been a necessary concomitant discipline for each system of philosophy for the realization of its truths and, therefore, the growth of personality is an indispensable issue for each system" (p. 2). Sen points out that most forms of yoga strive to incorporate the higher unconscious into the conscious personality but only touch the surface of the unconscious for the purpose of purification of the topmost level of the

unconscious from which contents surge up. Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga, however, requires a complete investigation and integration of both the higher-unconscious (Superconscious) and the lower-unconscious (Subconscious) realms.

By the Subconscious Sri Aurobindo means the submerged part of the being in which there is no waking consciousness and coherent thought processes, will or feeling or organized reaction. Subconscious materials rise up into our waking consciousness as repetition of old thoughts and vital and mental habits and *samskaras* (impressions) formed by our past. There are three types of differentiation in the subconscious: the mental, the vital, and the physical subconscious, each one of which is distinguishable by the virtue of their contents and action on the waking personality.

These subconscious processes are generally disorganized and chaotic. In other words, there is no execution of a unified will in the subconscious as the various impulses therein act chaotically and without any organization and thus various conflicts and struggles arise within the subconscious mind in addition to conflicts with the elements of our conscious personality related to the external environment. Using methods such as hypnosis, free association, and dream analysis, Freud's therapeutic aim was to help the patient make conscious certain amount of the unconscious materials in order to create a balance between the conscious and unconscious mind. While many forms of psychological work attempt to help human beings become healthier by creating a harmonious balance between the unconscious and the conscious dimensions of personality, integral yoga and psychology aim at complete transformation of personality by making conscious the entire content of the unconscious. This would necessitate making the instinctual processes of both the higher and the lower unconscious fully conscious.

Sri Aurobindo was interested in much more than making the unconscious, passively conscious. Rather he was interested in the transformation of personality from the ordinary egoistic state to a fully conscious and integrated state. Sri Aurobindo was careful, however, not to recommend plunging into the subconscious without first mobilizing the higher-unconscious. Without this preparation there is a risk of losing oneself in the obscurity and the chaos of the Subconscious world. Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga is unique in that it starts with the opening of the higher centers of consciousness first. This is to avoid the trappings of the lower unconscious realms and intensification of attachments, as well as a myriad of other problems associated with premature opening of the *kundalini* energy—as in the case of spiritual emergencies—without first establishing the Psychic will or even possibly Supramental will to guide the process of transformation of the unconscious.

Integration of Personality

For Sri Aurobindo merely making the unconscious mind conscious is not sufficient for transformation and we need the assistance of the conscious will to help organize and transform the content of the Subconscious mind. Another point of difference is that unlike depth and ego psychologies, for Sri Aurobindo the therapeutic aim is not to strengthen the ego. This is because ultimately the ego is self-centered, even though it is better adjusted to reality. Therefore, access to a higher integrating center is needed which in integral yoga is the Psychic Being, or the evolving soul in the human being.

Jung was also aware of the need for such a higher integrating principle which he termed the archetype of the Self—i.e. the soul or psychocentric consciousness. Depth psychologists first discovered the unconscious through their encounter with the pathological manifestations of the unconscious. Both Jung and Assagioli realized the importance of the role of the Self or Transpersonal Self as the catalyst for integration of personality, a task not possible through ordinary therapeutic techniques which often emphasize the importance of ego-strengthening which is necessary for those who suffer various forms and intensities of neuroses and psychotic dissociation, or even unmanageable phobias, depression or anxiety etc. Certainly for the initial healing phase strengthening the ego up to the point of basic health and stability is unavoidable and desirable. But when it comes to the complete transformation of personality as required in integral yoga and psychology, a mere balancing of the conscious and unconscious elements of personality through a healthy and strong ego will be insufficient.

Traditional depth psychology often focuses on expanding the sphere of human consciousness by incorporating materials from the lower unconscious regions to the conscious regions, while traditional yoga attempts to engage with the higher realms of the unconscious and is not necessarily interested in transforming the lower unconscious psyche as much as it is interested in developing the higher unconscious. This could result in disinterest in ordinary consciousness and evolution of embodied consciousness. In integral yoga the goal is no less than the complete illumination, transformation and integration of the psyche and evolution of embodied consciousness.

To summarize, the goal of yoga is to accelerate the rate of conscious evolution. Integral yoga aims at total transformation of the unconscious as well as ordinary consciousness. Culmination of conscious evolution, therefore, requires a total transformation of human personality and consciousness. The high level of integration of personality required in this process supersedes the establishment of basic wholeness of personality which is possible by balancing the egocentric and psychocentric spheres of consciousness. This level of integration known as Psychic Transformation in integral yoga and psychology, which is similar to Jung's process of Individuation or integration of ego and Self, is a necessary foundation. The complete transformations of the unconscious—including the inconscient physical base of consciousness and the subconscious—however, would necessitate the activation of Supramental consciousness.

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