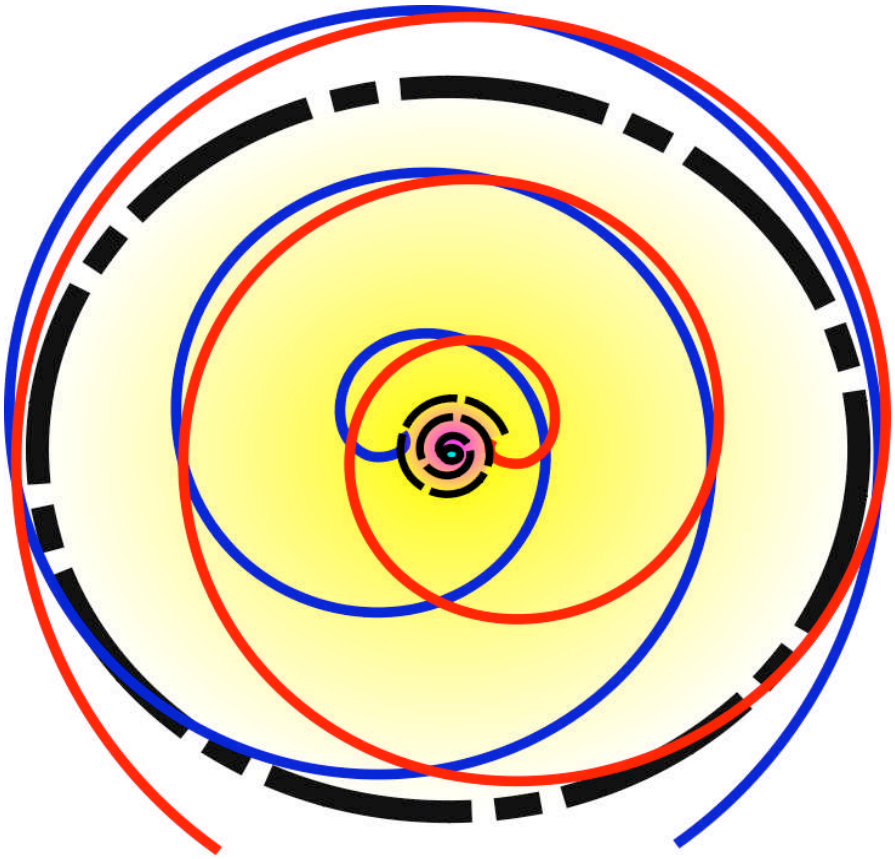

RIGHT ON

SELECTED SHORT WRITINGS

OF

THOMAS A. BURNS

To My Son

Derek

Whose Interests and Concerns are as Wide Ranging as My Own

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By the Author

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PREFACE

As a social scientist, I know my professional domain lies betwixt and between. To the left are the "hard" physical scientists and to the right are the "soft" practitioners of religion and the arts. And between these two outer pulls are the somewhat less hard natural sciences and the somewhat less "soft" humanities. The social sciences are square in the middle of it all. We are the human center of study and for direction we look both ways – hard to the left and sharp to the right, as well as less hard and less sharp. All social scientists seek to understand behavior at the fork in the "ology" road. And it is exciting to be energized by the paradigmatic traffic moving simultaneously in both directions. Some of us lean left and orient to experimental procedure in the simplified, controlled laboratory setting and rely on statistical analysis in the search for causal relationships in the results. Others of us lean right and orient to case study work in the field setting looking for consistent findings that we can interpret as making sense in the complex network of behaviors across events and over time. I am one of those who lean right and conduct case study, field oriented research.

To further place me among social scientists who lean right and employ a case study type of research methodology, there are those who look back to the left in the direction of objective, observable experience. These social scientists examine external behavior and search for relations to social and/or psychological variables [e.g. dietary choices as a function of ranking in the social group or degree of occupational stress]. Then there are those who lean right and look right toward the creative, artistic, insightful, visionary and spiritual realm of human experience. These researchers explore internal, mental states and seek to relate these states to different perspectives on reality, to the behaviors that promote these states, or to the consequences that follow from mental positioning or operation in these states [e.g. fear intensity and its relation to elevated sensory awareness, level of threat, and fight or flight responses]. I am one of these latter explorers.

In sum, to locate me in the vast mix of researchers, find the center among the "ologies," grab a full set of well honed left hand capabilities and keep them with you as you travel down the sharp right hand path in the direction of the spiritual and artistic realm. Then continue to bear right to explore the significance of the internal experiences, states of awareness, and intuitive and emotional mental operations. Right On. If you follow my lead, you are interested in understanding both the formative and consequent behaviors and effects of these internal experiences, operations and states.

What we are pursuing are the internal states of mind and mental operations that artistic, spiritual, psychic, and visionary practitioners identify as essential to both their awareness and their "products." Importantly, these are also the internal experiences and mental operations that most great theoreticians and inventors identify as instrumental in their creative process of "arriving" at their major "insights." It is as if for these outstanding theoreticians and inventors the hard work of the left handed intellect sets the stage through rigorous analytical thought. At that point, the underlying question gets released to be processed in a totally different way at the intuitive level. And without what we would call conscious effort, the solution or answer "appears," often in the form of a visualization. So, we are looking at the root of human creativity in all of its manifestations. This is important stuff. And while it may seem "soft" and challenging to the empirical and objectivist assumptions of western culture, proper evaluation of this realm is crucial to a full understanding of humankind and human capability. This is my research Home. Welcome.

In late 2007, I completed Dynamic Humanism, which is a summary statement of the results of my research into traditional art and ritual, and their grounding in human intuitive competence. This work proposes a worldview that respects both human intellect and intuition while it seeks to resolve the conflict between science and spirituality. Since finishing Dynamic Humanism, I have been working on completing reports on the research that was formative in bringing me to the conclusions that I reached in that overview offering. 2010 is the watershed year in seeing these reports come to fruition in three works: A Little Bit of Heaven Here (2010), the study of the intuitive basis of the deliverance faith of an urban Black church community; The I Within Me (2010), the study of the life history and intuitive development of a psychic healer; and Right On: Selected Short Writings of Thomas A. Burns (2010), the present work – composed of mostly essays written since 2000 on various topics of American and Western cultural interest, and most reflecting the dynamic humanism point of view. For those interested in the larger picture into which the contents of Right On and the other 2010 offerings fit, Dynamic Humanism provides this context in detail. All four of these related and copyrighted works, which I have produced since 2007, are available for free electronic download from the website: www.dynamic-humanism.com

I have arranged the shorter writings included in this work in three sections. Section I is the Personal section. Here the reader has a chance to get to know who I am and where I came from and how I got to where I am now. In addition, the two pieces on death and dying suggest how I approach the mystery of the end of life, which in my 68th year I am inevitably approaching. Most personal is my relationship with Inger, my wife and lover for 46 years, and I include two offerings that celebrate Inger and the quality of our "nesting" relationship. A Bibliography of my published writing concludes this Personal section.

Once the reader knows who I am, I move to Section II, Social and Cultural Commentary, which begins with a subsection on Big Picture Issues containing seven essays dealing with: the dilemma of human consciousness, the tension of individualism vs. communalism in all cultures, major collective challenges for the survival of modern humankind as a civilized species, the need for effective leadership in current cultural context, the basis of human happiness, how science and religion both get it wrong, the need for the wisdom of real elders to address our societal needs, and the perils of commitment to the expansion model of economy. I then offer several different reflections on American, Western and Native Culture: the reason liberal and conservative labels are so "squishy," my responses to the events of 9/11 – at the time, the effect of romantic marriage on the stability of child rearing, two essays confronting the challenge of money, political speech and spin in American politics, the societal challenge of weakened family and community institutions in the modern setting, two essays highlighting the consequences of allowing a separate adolescent subculture to run wild, the problem of excessively negative news in the modern context, Media as a tool for good or ill, extracting the positive core of religion from the dogmatic chaff, the remarkable strength of a single 700 year tradition in western Norway, and finally my analytical journal reporting on the results I encountered of the two most recent efforts to settle the "Native" question in Alaska and Canada. Two reviews compose a subsection on Food and Nutrition. And this section concludes with three pieces on what I see as the role of Art in human culture and in the American Art Complex in particular.

Section III contains two articles, which are professional in nature, one on the creative consequences of play and one on card games as played by children of different ages.

Both of these articles were submitted for publication, but neither was in fact published in its time. These two articles may suggest to the reader the more traditional academic stance that I am trained to adopt where circumstances are appropriate. But at root, I am a Big Picture explorer, more interested in pursing the threads of major human challenges across time and space than in becoming the world authority on the minutiae of human behavior by digging a deep hole in a confined space. I have always taken my doctoral degree, a Doctor of Philosophy, literally, and while my doctorate is in the subject area of Folklore [or the traditional arts], I see it as my obligation to connect my subject to the greater task of understanding humankind and the world that we all share and that supports us as a very modern species. Thus, I am given to the essay rather than the academic article. I am more interested in where my mind takes me than documenting where my mind has been and all the contextual influences on my thought. I am an explorer, not a tracker! Humankind needs both sorts – the visionaries and the miners, the theoreticians and the experimenters, and I am unabashedly the former.

SECTION I

PERSONAL

Thomas Anthony Burns: Autobiography, Outline of a Privileged Life

1) My birth in 1941 as a Caucasian Protestant in New Orleans, LA in the United States with its theoretical commitment to equality, and its boundless resources, open opportunities, and support for individual achievement was sure a nice opening move!

2) My birth to parents, Ed and Eloise, who were totally encouraging and supportive of any constructive effort on my part in any direction at any time was outstanding in determining both how I saw myself and where I could imagine myself going. My parents exemplified accomplishment so they did not need to exert pressure, just encourage me to get going! Amazing how patient they were before I took root.

3) My birth and rearing in a stable marriage and family greatly assisted my path toward success. Sure, there were the little disturbances, but nothing to threaten the integrity of the family pot. I needed both parents, and I got the full treatment, much to my benefit.

4) My birth into sustained upper middle class professional status – the social elite – was a spectacular privilege. My parents treasured education for their children, and I had no concerns at any time for my economic needs all the way through graduate school! I turned down fellowship opportunities because, unlike others, I was blessed with my "familyship!" And education was much more affordable at that time – the 1960's.

5) Growing up from age 4 in the exclusive upper middle class suburb of Toledo, Ohio – Ottawa Hills – was equivalent to living a dream for most children of the world: total security in a clear sense of space and place; high expectations for success; professionally oriented education; and many athletic, educational and social opportunities in a small class environment. It would be hard to map a better situation, unless you want the "enrichment" of other groups and economic classes and the alternative life style choices they display, which can be broadening, confusing, or tragically disrupting – depending. Fortunately I learned early and subsequently throughout my career as a social scientist that while there are clear advantages to being "isolated" at the <u>top</u> of the heap, I had to appreciate that I was born on third base and compared to others really only hit a single to achieve success and "score" in life. I will never forget attending the college graduation party for a young Black woman from a struggling single parent, welfare household who was surrounded by an extended family in which no one had a high school diploma. And even her achievement was only a triple since she had a lot of encouragement from that same family to soar beyond their limitations. It is so tempting to forget the distance to the bottom of the human ladder and to credit ourselves with hitting "home runs" while "floating" in luxury at the top and appeasing our underlying guilt by making charitable monetary contributions and keeping ourselves cloistered and unsoiled by personal and active involvement in assisting the less fortunate. Nothing like at least "being there" long enough to experience the miles others walk in their tattered shoes to keep real perspective and true appreciation alive. Starting out circumscribed by the extraordinary privilege of the Ottawa Hills life, it is so easy to lapse into complacency and the convenient assertions of, "That's just how that kind of people are; trash will be trash." It is this kind of mindset that makes the welfare mother the abuser of the system and not the victim of circumstance.

6) Close friends K through 12. I was never a loner, always on my bike cruising to locate the "action." I always had a variety of good friends – from mucking about in the pond beyond Patneau's on Manchester, to pulling smudge pots behind our bikes in the Fall, to breaking into the elementary school gym to shoot buckets, to crashing

toboggans on the big hill in Ottawa Park, to escaping Rip at construction sites, to scratching out a rink on the creek for pick up hockey games – in our figure skates, to Rasmussen diagnosing my amplifier problem as I built the family's first Hi-Fi system in J.R. Bogan's electronics class, to big band dancing at Centennial, to "hard ball" golf at Par 3. No attachment challenges here! In addition, many of these friends remained an active part of my life into my 30's as a result of frequent visits to my parents' home – later in nearby Sylvania. And in recent years - especially via email, some of these core friends remain an active part of my electronically connected life today! Ottawa Hills friends are a privileged memory and an important pulse of continuity through my life.

7) Kids roamed free in my childhood from age 6 promoting independence and encouraging exploration and self-reliance. No adult smothering and toting and supervising! I was most often gone from home all day as a youngster, and often forgot to call at lunchtime to let the home front know where I was. The prevailing fear that seems to drive so much parental over-involvement today was not present for me. I benefited in my time from required respect for parents, nominal input from or involvement in media, regular family dinners, a culture of adolescence that had not become so separatist and protest in orientation, and alcohol as the only drug – accessible in 3.2 beer at age 16, with a minimally doctored draft card! More secure times – a HUGE privilege!

8) Age 9 and the family summer vacation to Nine Quarter Circle Ranch in Montana was an eye opener: I spent all my time with the ranch hands until I totally identified with country music, cowboy dress, and "twang" speech, to the point when coming home on the airplane in my western outfit I felt the increasing pressure of reentry into mid-western life where my presentation of self was no longer acceptable or appropriate – self out of place. I early on experienced first hand the cultural conversion experience of "going native" – very valuable for a future social scientist.

9) From age 10, I had regular access to the 2,000 acre family farm in Missouri, 50 miles west of St. Louis. There I learned the value of extended family and real people working the land – waiting for rain, the integrity and cooperation of neighbors in a small rural community, the wonder of the oak woods, and the threat of hiding copperheads. And I grew to appreciate swinging an axe properly and the protective value of calluses. I learned early to feel comfortable in and to develop a deep attachment for a very non-Ottawa Hills social and physical environment – the beginning of a fascination with alternative ecological settings and life styles and of learning how to operate respectfully within them without losing one's identity.

10) Age 11, Leaning on Lena: Lena came with the family to Toledo from New Orleans when I was 3 years old. Lena was with the family for 16 years in the role of a domestic. But Lena never fit the billing and was always much more than a "maid." Lena was a second mother to me, always expecting at least as much from me as my parents, and always entrusted with my care far beyond the responsibility of any domestic. She was at my side during my most serious childhood illness – scarlatina, when my parents were cruising about the eastern shore of South America. I was one sick puppy, and Lena was THE ONE with me – day and night while I attempted to turn myself inside out in all night dry vomiting episodes. Lena was a class act as a fully competent human being – who happened to be Black, and she laid the lie during my entire upbringing to my father's racial prejudice. Lena's holiness songs must have been at my back when for years in the turbulent 70's I was traipsing around the Black community of the inner city at night doing field research. Lena was later an activist in the civil rights movement in Toledo, and I largely attribute my ease in operating in the

Black community to my fundamental comfort level with Lena – for sure a real privilege to have had her in my life.

11) Junior and Senior Years at OHHS: After most of elementary school and reading very poorly, I had to get serious about acquiring the reading skill and applying myself academically. My family gave me the time and encouragement to do this, and my SAT scores soared. Karen was my first love, and in that relationship I learned how it felt to dwell in the zone of commitment and majestic connection, and from mistakes that I made I learned the importance of being responsible and communicating respectfully. It was a treasured privilege to discover early what constituted the "baseline" for love, a key point of reference for assessing all that would follow.

12) What a terrific privilege it was to go to a top-notch private college – Carleton. Although socially repressed, academically Carleton demanded excellence and encouraged focused commitment. New Criticism in my English major allowed for independent critical thinking – self-reliance, what do YOU think, not reciting what the "experts" think. No right answers, just interpretation that you could defend with the facts as you discovered and presented them. This was the beginning of thinking critically and expansively, even if, ironically, it was Art that was the subject! Carleton was my jump-start in the maturing of the intellect.

13) Discovering Inger early in my senior year at Carleton: We were together 24 solid hours on our second date and were very reluctant to part – that was the concentrated exposure test, which virtually all failed before Inger. The rest is a lifetime love affair and absolutely the best thing that ever happened for me. Quality relationships are all there really is of value in life. The significance of power, fame, and wealth pale by comparison, and among relations, nothing beats a great marriage, including children and professional accolades, which come and go. All before Inger was preparation, and all following has been in its shadow. Way beyond privilege, finding Inger has to have been pure luck, and I won the most important lottery of them all. Inger is the other side of life – the emotive and intuitive in its unfettered, uncomplicated form, and it is with Inger that my adventure began into really appreciating this other side of self, experience and life. From my intellectual perch, I am still reaching for what she has – naturally.

14) English Literature Masters at Indiana University: The challenge of converting complex thought to writing, the uncomfortable confinement of studying and being responsible to scholastic history and the views of the experts. This was the beginning of appreciating the need to contextualize my independent thought and learn scholastic responsibility. I still resist this; but I can do the bibliographic thing in the extreme, if I have to. As I moved to graduate study in the humanities, there never arose any pragmatic questions from my parents about how I was going to "earn a living," just continuous support in all ways. I cannot count how many unhappy students I have encountered during my academic career who had the pursuit of their core interest squashed by "pragmatic" parents. I will never forget the brilliant but sad 3.8 GPA Marketing major in Wharton whose parents would not support her passion for modern dance. She was tragically headed for New York City with a great job for which she had no enthusiasm.

15) Teaching English Literature at Central Missouri State College: At age 25, this was the first time out on my own after marrying Inger. Teaching composition helped me penetrate the writing process and achieve needed simplification, if not brevity! Mostly I learned the contribution the writing process makes to the mastery of complex thought and the need for revision, revision, revision to achieve clarity. In teaching, I fought

regurgitation and encouraged and rewarded creative and logical thought, to the delight of some and the dismay of others. And I discovered the range of talent and preparedness among the students at state colleges – from brilliant locals who could qualify for any Ivy League school to strictly remedial candidates. And I encountered many students who were invited to fail because colleges refused to offer remedial training in basic skills. In working with students to identify their own topics for their compositions, I was impressed with the richness of each student's personal experience – this was the beginning of breaking the academic book and library mold and of discovering the value of the case study and of life history interviewing. And in teaching, I learned the difference between preparing for class as the teacher and preparing as a student. I vowed to give myself the time to prepare thereafter as if I was going to teach the class, whether I was a teacher or a student! Wow, did that make a difference when I returned for the final degree – a lot of power packed class discussions, often one on one with the instructor!

16) The Doctorate: Folklore at Indiana University was the best way for me to get to cultural anthropology from a background in literature. The eclectic theoretical bent of a young discipline allowed for utilizing any theory or method within the humanities or social sciences – huge latitude for exploring and thinking Large. Personality theory and artistic expression vied with the grammatical competence of artistic performance as I approached my dissertation, and personality theory won out. Collecting life histories revealed the rich tapestry of individual experience and the complex of effects this experience has on different basic temperaments. Life history and psychological theory started the process of tapping into the "soft" side of understanding human behavior and competence – the emotive and the unconscious. Clearly, intellect was not the whole story! This "soft" side would get greatly expanded, but it got a significant lift here for the rationalist and positivist I had become. Throughout it all, my family made it possible for my only concern to be academic success – no other work or long range financial debt to be repaid – Privilege! [Imagine at that time a full semester, in-state graduate course load at IU for a total of $265 tuition and all fees!]

17) 20 years teaching in the Ivy League at the University of Pennsylvania: After losing out to affirmative action on two academic teaching positions, I landed THE plum appointment – from completing my Ph.D. at IU directly to a job teaching Folklore graduate students in an all Ph.D. program at Penn – the first semester teaching a 700 level seminar in theory! I got the equivalent of at least three additional Ph.D.s teaching 15 different courses in my first 5 years at Penn. That was hectic and the beginning of a lifetime of hair loss – trying to catch up with my Dad, but it was explosively expanding professionally, especially for one interested in the big scheme of cultural issues. Adequately representing the significance of psychological theory for understanding traditional art took me from personality theory, to developmental psychology, to evolutionary psychology, and then to parapsychology – with necessary excursions into cosmology, theoretical physics, comparative religion, creativity, and mysticism. The value and importance of the "soft" side of the human being loomed large in this overall setting, and it became necessary to recognize the Intuitive as a basic human mental function – the soft side EQUAL of the hard side Intellect. In the privileged academic setting of Penn, I traveled a very long way in a very short time in understanding the intuitive basis of the artistic and religious experiences. As it turned out, all this exploration in behalf of teaching was a set up for my subsequent ten years of work in a Black church community attempting to understand a Pentecostal Deliverance church. Fortuitously, the church I was privileged to study and that ended up adopting me proved

to be an extraordinary find. Both the pastor and the assistant pastor were completely aware intellectually of what they were doing in drawing on the literal belief of their members to arouse and develop the members' intuitive competence so these members could enlist this competence to practical effect in improving their lives. There was a total match between the theory I was evolving about human capability and competence and the central ideas that were guiding the church leadership – no need to "impose" theory in the interpretation of this community at all!! This is the ideal field experience – the "natives" possess the theory to explicate their own symbolic behavior. Again, what an incredible professional privilege.

18) Children: As ill prepared and isolated as couples tend to be in this culture regarding child rearing, we nevertheless glibly reproduce, and it is a wonder kids survive their parents' well intentioned ignorance. We got lucky. My daughter, Kia, is an expansive thinker like her father, poor soul. In fact, during her senior year in high school, Kia attended a set of worldview presentations that I gave in a course at Rutgers, subsequently wrote a senior thesis relating the gist of it, and has been pursuing the holism that was suggested by it ever since in her combined field of family and nutritional counseling. Kia has had the same quizzical response from her field that I got from mine – the curse of those whose ideas span established paradigms and challenge major cultural assumptions. Most importantly, Kia is a whole, quality person who, as a social service professional in Ashland, Oregon, knows the weaknesses of her surrounding culture and knows how to navigate around consumerism and all the cheap, subsidized, highly processed corn and soy products that are making us and the animals we eat sick and fat. My son, Derek, navigates away from consumption and as a home renovator in Portland, Oregon buys most of what he needs at the recycle store in his neighborhood. Anything that takes him either into the wilds of the West or into the contemporary music scene in Portland is his passion. Normal, adventuresome, and enlightened kids, what a privilege! No grandchildren – by default and choice respectively! Hey, there are already far too many of us humans on the planet, and for sure the gene pool already has all the elements that the Burns line has to offer.

19) Oregon for 20 years – the final phase: Even teaching and researching in a field-oriented discipline is cloistered. So, after 20 years at Penn and children who had journeyed West, Inger and I moved to the Upper Klamath Lake area of south central Oregon in 1991. With resources that came to us after the deaths of my parents, we bought a dilapidated 100-acre irrigated farm and began a native plant oriented nursery while we cleaned up and improved the property. Wetland restoration, aquaculture, comprehensive tree and shrub planting, and renovation of three old structures and the building of three new additions finally came to a close in 2008. What a privilege it has been to live in such a beautiful, varied and available natural landscape among close friends who appreciate the majesty of that space and who take responsibility for its care as well as that of the people who live in it.

Throughout our time in Oregon, Inger and I have been involved in watershed and ecological planning and education as well as community improvement projects in our area, still 35% native American. When we sold our part of the Missouri farm in 1998, I didn't believe the high flying stock market could possibly hold up, so we entered into a real estate exchange and purchased land in the Klamath Falls area and began a 59 unit residential development. We got out in 2000 with our resources intact while the market had gone bananas! Of course, we then invested in the stock market in 2000 – 02 to enjoy the final surge before the 07 crash and have just retrieved our investment as of a couple of months ago in what now [2009] passes for a "recovery." Nice timing, but

thank goodness for the privilege of family resources to continue to make life tolerable for us dim-witted academic and social service professionals.

Apart from building and real estate investment and development, my pursuits in Oregon have been those of an applied social scientist – concerned with the practical relationships between the water limited ecology of the inland West, meeting our commitments to native people, and accommodating responsible socio-economic development. Fascinating and infuriating. We Americans are oriented to short-term gains and are really poor at large scale, long term planning. This in the face of all the challenges of climate change which require exactly these abilities – in spades. There may well be only one more generation during which the constantly expanding economic model [new since the industrial revolution] will hold up. If we do not prepare for an alternative before that system collapses [think multiples of the Great Depression], our children and grandchildren may come to view the survival skills of the Klamath and Modoc Indians who remain around me with the utmost admiration.

20) What a privilege to have lived a life at a time when my awareness of human potential has expanded at a rate equal to the expanding knowledge of our essentially infinite surrounding universe, and in this context to be able to contemplate and debate the alternative futures for our species. This is BIG picture stuff, and I thrive on it – sometimes immersed in the virtually limitless possibilities for humans as they reach the point of determining their own biological and social evolution and other times impressed with the totally myopic and self-serving behavior of humans – even of those in "advanced" societies – as they conduct their everyday affairs. The future for the human species will emerge out of the dynamic interchange between the visionaries and the spin masters of greed, if we can afford the time outs to indulge our devotion to the myopic before we so alter our biosphere that we can no longer survive in a civilized state.

21) Majority - finally!! After the dust settled following my 2003 major heart attack [not a privilege!], I decided it was time to stop living as if the infinite lay before me. It was time to complete the unfinished business of my professional research and writing, which I had set aside in favor of practical and applied pursuits since coming to Oregon. In what passes for "retirement," I have continued to be involved in ecological and community planning and improvement, but in the last six years [through 2010], I have carved out time to complete four works which reflect my professional interest in human intuitive development and how it can fit productively into the cultural dynamic of western culture. Dynamic Humanism: Balancing Complementary Human Perspectives and Mental Faculties; Science and Spirituality, Intellect and Intuition [2007] is an overview presentation of this proposal. A Little Bit of Heaven Here: The Challenge of the Deliverance Faith Within Urban Black Culture and Mainstream American Culture [2010] is a study, centered on six life testimonies, of the applied intuitive basis of the belief system of a Christian evangelical Black church community. The I Within Me: The Life History and Intuitive Development of a Psychic Healer [2010] is a detailed look at the way one person emerges into intuitive competence and application in a culture [American] where such competence is neither understood nor supported. Selected Short Writings of Thomas A. Burns [2010] contains a number of essays written on American Culture topics in the time since coming to Oregon that relate to my concern with the spiritual perspective and the development and utilization of intuitive competence. This present biographical statement, along with some poetry and a complete bibliography of my works are also part of that volume. All four of these works

are now available on my website for free electronic download: www.dynamic-humanism.com

Following this academic "cleanup," my plan is to focus my remaining time and creative energy in a related but very different direction: sculpture. In the mid 1980's I spent three years at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and completed all the course work for a major in metal smithing. The experience matured into a senior project, which utilized stainless steel cable of different sizes to create jewelry and sculpture. I have prepared the way for a return to sculpting with this material by investing in reels of stainless cable, and the target is to depart headwork and writing and devote myself to large scale sculpting. As I view my life, being able to engage this "new" interest [aroused earlier] would really round out the privileged life I have led. As a child, my world was all visual and kinetic with the "word" in repose. Having spent my adult life exploring what the word has to offer me, I can return to my foundation, and if I am fortunate enough to have Inger, our friends, and my spectacular Oregon at my side, I can replace the play of childhood with the pursuit of art and BE the artist that someone ELSE can abuse in words. The sculpting adventure is the privilege before me.

To be alive is to change, and death is the only event that I can really see ahead of me that fulfills my idea of "retirement." I do not believe in the slow decline by inches into death. In Oregon I can be sure that is not my future, and that can be my final privilege!

Of course, there is the other side of my story – all the qualifiers and a few real negatives. But in spite of the accumulating chronic physical annoyances as I reach for 70, no question, mine has been decisively a privileged life. If standard notions of reincarnation are real, I hate to think, on balance, what may be warranted on the return trip. I better apply for early admission to another galaxy, or maybe some other "verse" in the multiverse! It has been SOOOOO GOOOOOOD here!!

Journey to Magic and Beyond

2003

As we Begin life, decisions are not Ours to make.
We enter in a strained passage and a Cry for Breath.

If we are privileged, attentive others offer us long and careful nurture.
If we pay attention, we discover our separate self in positive pathways.

For the lucky among us, most of our self-guided, adult life
Becomes a sequence of largely predictable chapters in our life journal.
There is just enough edge of uncertainty in these pulsing adventures
To keep us alert and make the outcomes stimulating.

At a few junctures, we elect a turn that destines our overall route.
These are times filled sometimes with confidence and exhilaration,
Other times charged with fear and anxiety.
Either way, our only option is to adjust our course creatively
And make the best of the consequences.

If our twists and turns are enlightened enough,
We dignify both ourselves and the lives around us.
And in our example, we point the way for those to follow
In the endless cycle of before and after.

At the end of life our decision is not what direction to take,
But how to take the direction given.
Absent the illusion of absolute faith,
We fall back on belief in ourselves
And strive to proceed to an unknowable destination
With grace and dignity.

If we have conducted our journey well,
All along the trail, we have shared the only thing of value –
Loving connections to others and our world.
We are the fortunate ones who have led lives
Whose wake itself is sustaining.

If we are blessed as well as fortunate,
We have lived a life of settled affairs without loose ends
As we prepare for our final departure.
It is our privilege to make an exit
Having honored the bond of family and friends,
While our loved ones confirm us
And project Serenity for Our Future.

We depart giving back the breath we first took
While accepting the offer of Peace others bestow.

At the threshold,
Our life lacks only a Magical last Step.

Each in our own Way,
We discover the Magic
…..And Move On
…..Into the ALL we have Always Been;
…..No White Light Tunnels, No Overseer Fathers, No Entry Gates, No **Judgment**;

>> Just Dissolving into the Ever Reforming River of Re-Creation.

Roll On Jordan, Roll On.

Musings on Planned Obsolescence

2008

In the Christmas season of low light and "hibernating" nature, we seek many ways to affirm the persistence of light and life. We do this with frequent social and communal gatherings, by surrounding ourselves with the symbols and bright colors and lights of life, by gastronomic and material events of excessive intake and gifting, and through the beliefs and rituals of our religions, which proclaim eternal life.

Of course, for many modern people in developed countries with their work and home environments defined by 24/7 air conditioning and constant artificial light, the sense of the dark and cold of the winter season together with the long tradition associating it with decay and death may seem remote. And certainly these modern humans are not familiar with the lives of their ancestors who lived in tribes in the temperate zone over many thousands of years when the traditions and rituals surrounding the winter solstice came into being and flourished. Moderns have not experienced either starvation when winter stores ran out, rotted, or were raided by animals or other humans or death from disease that arose and spread rather rapidly when during the winter months most human groups gathered together in close quarters. For most humans, over 99% of their history, the time of low light and cold was a time of significant uncertainty and risk, and the rituals of the solstice period arose to symbolically confirm life in the face of the threat of death. In this regard, in the fourth century, the Roman Christians set the birth of Jesus to correspond to the winter solstice as calculated in the Julian calendar – December 25 – providing a Christian overlay for important solar based "pagan" rituals, in particular the Roman Saturnalia [the birth of Jesus being interpreted as the bringing of light and life and salvation into a dark and decadent world].

Most modern, temperate zone humans live in the much more secure living conditions afforded by our civilizations and do not experience the risks and threats of winter as our ancestors did [though deaths due to heart attacks and the association of flu with pneumonia among the old continue to cluster in the winter months]. As such there has been a weakening of the connection for modern humans of the winter solstice with the threat of death and dying and a tendency to view the Christmas/New Year rituals surrounding the solstice as simply a time for celebrating light and life at the secular, social level and the birth of Jesus, or Mohammed, or some other death defying figure at the religious level.

While the explicit tie of our Christmas/New Year solstice celebration to the underlying death and dying motive has been weakened in modern times, I suggest that it remains looming in the unstated background. Instead of this issue being focused on and dealt with at a traditional cyclical point in the year, it can be argued that concern with death and dying has remained at least as important as it ever was and that in its prominence in the products of our media it is now a concern that pervades the entire year. The information media's continuous and ever more visually graphic offerings highlight on a worldwide basis every major death threat, first from natural disasters [flood, fire, draught, earthquake, volcanic eruption, hurricane, tornado, epidemic, etc.], and second from the most depraved and violent of human actions [genocide, war, murder, torture, rape, robbery, kidnapping, etc.]. In addition, so much of our major media based entertainments – especially film, television and computer games, all with their

extraordinary special effects – are consumed with portraying the events of everyday life as infused with danger, horror, terror, crime, violence, fear and death and with the need to confront and overcome the forces of darkness and evil and the shadowy events of the night with the most violent responses. It seems very likely that this constant barrage of media based information and entertainment with violence, death, and human degradation as its core elements is at least partly responsible for infusing modern life with such an undercurrent of anxiety that people are inclined to adopt an ever more protective/defensive approach to the world around them. This is most clear in the much more cautious stance modern parents are taking with their children – not allowing them to play and roam freely as was the case up until the 1960's when media began its real take over. And all of this is occurring in spite of the fact that modern life at the local level and in most places is in reality ever less risky and more secure. A significant overall effect of our media has been to transform this real security into a pervasive sense of uncertainty and insecurity – and to highlight the death and dying theme 24/7.

So, regardless of our seeming effort to avoid the death and dying theme in our winter solstice rituals at Christmas/New Year, the issue remains and may even have gained as a concern in our modern lives. As such, I suggest that the holiday winter solstice season remains an appropriate time to reflect on the primal underlying issue – the fact of decay and death for all things – from rocks to whales to solar systems and galaxies.

As I stir in my senior years, I am more and more impressed with the significance of the phrase "Planned Obsolescence." I think of this phrase as applying in the domain of durable goods, but as I age, I find it encompassing more and more of my surroundings and, uninvited, intruding into my person. It seems that my genes program me [and all others] for my own deterioration and demise – to assure that the species will be "refreshed" on a regular schedule. This, just in case there is a change in external conditions that some new genetic mix can better accommodate – "guaranteeing" continued survival of the species through evolution. All well and good for the species, but at the personal level the results are more and more ominous as the years pile up. This "demising" process can be nasty. Of course it can occur all at once; bang you are gone. That is not nasty; that is just IT. I came close to that version of demise with my major heart attack in 2003 – revived trice over with those explosive paddles, "Clear!"

Having emerged from "Clear," now I am on the alternative course, the gradual accumulation of irritating chronic "conditions." This year of 2008 brings on first continued hearing loss with its solution – dual "aids," then sleep apnea together with its "answer" – the air compressor and mask to beat up my face and otherwise "enrich" the quality of my nighttime experience, and finally erectile dysfunction with its concomitant search for the magic drug to straighten me out – just wait an hour or so. Yes, I want to be alive, and yes, the ever-enlarging bundle of these chronic irritations has so far not slowed me down much, but it is the direction the bundle is going that is "troubling." It is one thing to be aware of my "theoretical" participation in our genetic "planned obsolescence," but it quite a different thing to experience it personally in dribs and drabs. All of which brings me to the following expanded musing.

I can observe, along with many others before me, that my Consciousness is ageless – existing without reference to any timeline. Timeless as it is, my Consciousness is the source for my continuing to see myself in terms of my physical appearance and

capabilities when I was much younger and in my physical prime – still climbing and swinging from trees and having to add a meal to my diet to barely retain my slim condition. In this regard, my Consciousness of myself is always surprised by any signs of my depleted stamina or what that god-awful mirror reveals. By contrast, my Memory contains all the good and bad experiences of my entire lifetime carefully ordered in Time. It is grounded in the specifics of the reality of where I have been and where I am now. My Consciousness extracts only the value of this experience and distills it as an abstracted collective without reference to time – always just presentistic. Because of its timelessness, my Consciousness may be cumulatively wise in general but entertains expectations of me that do not match with the limitations imposed by my current reality. On the other hand my Memory is bound tightly to my experience and is so tied down to a timed reality that when I am tracking on its course, I bounce up and down from joy to despair as current conditions dictate. My Memory may be accurate, but it is rarely wise. My Consciousness may be wise, but is unconcerned by reality checks or the challenging questions my Memory suggests in my final DEMISE. All of this is without considering the complication that arises from the input of my Conscience, which writes the superscript of feeling tone and judgment over my Memory. My Conscience is the outside moderator that comments on the content of my Memory and whose assessments infuse it with positive or negative feelings.

So, what does all this have to do with "demising?" My Consciousness does not attend to demising because the perception of demising is time-bound, and beyond the fact alone does not contribute to my presentistic collective wisdom. But my Memory accurately records in detail this demising process while my Conscience usually charges it with the negative emotions of anger and fear and judges it as more and more disappointing. Paradoxically, if I were not conscious of my demising, my Conscience could not do its dirty work and leave me in despair over the memory of the clear direction of the process.

So, what do I DO? "Ah, there's the rub!!" I want an answer to where this disappointing demising that Memory brings to me ultimately leads me. And as the chronic bundle of the gradual demising process becomes more emphatic with age, I am more and more keen for this answer. There are but two answers as I see it, neither very satisfactory. The existential answer, which allows my reality based Memory to take the lead, is, "That's all there is Boy; What you See is what you Get. Demise is just the prelude to, 'YOU DEAD and GONE.' So, seek the greatest quality you can out of the life that is granted to you, and then take your Lumps." The other answer proceeds from my Consciousness and is the spiritual answer. It says, "Your Consciousness is not bound by time and physical existence and so, survives death and may even recycle to be housed in other forms in and of the universe. So, seek the greatest quality you can out of the life that is granted to you – so you can dissolve into the ether of the ever reformulating ALL.

A subset of the spiritual answer drawn from my Consciousness is the Religious answer. It transforms timeless Consciousness into some version of the surviving, eternal Soul. In this frame I have a terrific set of choices: I can continue as an obnoxious, interfering ancestor periodically demanding to either to have my bones cleaned or be served with ritual food fragrances; I can return as a mole and repeat this return cycle as more or less elevated entities until I "get it right" at which point I can finally enter Nirvana as one

of the enlightened; or I can proceed to the waiting room of all waiting rooms, waiting to be judged, based – in one case – on a set of rules from a fickle "Almighty" God passed to Mankind on a mountain top in a lightening storm.

Now, there are a couple of really special privileges if I commit to many of these religious answers. First, I may live a life of total degradation, depravity and debauchery, but if I repent at the last moment and BELIEVE strongly enough, I can see the judgment scales ascend and have my reward in an eternal afterlife of milk and honey, 99 virgins, or streets paved with gold – my choice. And, better yet, as an enthusiast for this religious answer, during my life I can, in the name of my god and his/her "holy" strictures: torture, enslave, or kill all those humans who do not believe exactly as I do and who therefore cannot possibly qualify for everlasting bliss [unless they have been baptized post-mortem by an authorized Mormon].

So, as it turns out, I must either dwell in the zone of perpetual uncertainty suggested by my realistic Memory, or choose one of the above alternatives within the Consciousness option. I admit it; at this point I am on the fence: there are two possibilities that appeal to me: the ever reformulating ether, or the much simpler – and much more likely – DEAD and GONE option. Neither of these choices require me to worry about the mole return, getting in that last minute absolution, or answering why I have failed to commit to crusade or jihad. And neither of these choices necessitates my answering why my god waited 14 billion years before HE/SHE was interested enough in his/her creation to send an emissary to the tiny planet Earth to offer the option of everlasting life to an exclusive group of humans. Or why my god keeps a constant tally on every little action I take while being so nonchalant about assigning strictures and souls and judgment and salvation options to ants and algae and snow flakes on Earth, much less to the structures and likely life forms of the billions of other star systems of the universe.

Musing. This is how it is possible for me to start with the death and dying theme of low light in winter and proceed to the modern media barrage reiterating this theme - constantly, thence to this year's contributions to my personal "demise" bundle, and finally to the outstanding list of "solutions." Maybe at the last minute and at the point where I could repent and "save my soul," I will instead just flip a coin: heads – dead and gone; tails – atomic dissolution and ethereal reformulation. Secretly, I'll admit it; I really like the latter, "star dust" destiny, but it almost seems too good to be true.

Now, some will say my above musing is not appropriate for our celebratory season of light and life at mid-winter. But I say as important as celebrating light and life is, it is in fact just the warm gloss covering a fundamental human concern – demise and death, which, like it or not, still constitute the root motive or primary cause for the celebratory season itself. However much we moderns seek to avoid the fact, this is the season of cold and dark when our bright smiles and raucous laughter mask our fears and tears, while, ironically, our media hypes the issue in general and disproportionately escalates our concern. If we are honest, we have to acknowledge the centrality of demise and death in the season, deal with it directly, and try to be Happy in the "Answer" we choose. For myself, I can only enthusiastically ride the cultural carpet of celebration when I have contemplated all of the territory "below."

Religious Conceptions of Life After Death - No Thanks!!

2009

Humans are by evolutionary nature omnivorous multi-taskers. Not multi as in "at the same time," but multi in the sense of many varied tasks over time – in the daily and seasonal and yearly rounds. Always on the move and ready to take on what appears to advantage, humans do not sit well – for long. Leisure, rest, relaxation, and respite are momentary pulses in a schedule of moving and doing. We are not happy with static dwelling in any one state or activity; we thrive on variety and seek it out; or we make it for ourselves if our situations become too constant, consistent or predictable. Constant states, even of the most delightful kind quickly become BORING, and we leave them behind, even if it means taking substantial risks in doing so. Human life is grounded in the discovery of the next challenge. The need for diversity of activity is reflected in our saying, "All work and no play make Jack a dull boy." We break down formal education into 10, 20, 40 minute pulses of different activities, and our play and game are all about downs, and innings, and sets, and hands, and rounds; and varied kinds of involvement and strategies of interaction in each of these units. We have discovered that the assembly line, when designed for repetitious acts, does not work, even in industry. Productivity and quality soar when work is varied and human teamwork is invoked. We are social animals, and we thrive on variety so long as it is not threatening.

So, if we are by nature in need of variety and challenge, why do we map out a life after death that is so placid, so static, so just dwelling in a constant state of being, knowing, bliss? It is as if death is just a time out, a moment of relaxation – that is eternal. It is as if we conceive of life as work, and death as perpetual time off with nothing we have to DO. But what our life tells us is that we could not tolerate a state of nothing to do for very long. As humans, we do not dwell well in idleness, even blissful idleness. So, while it SEEMS desirable to pose blissful idleness as our ideal perpetual state after death, in fact we would find ourselves "climbing the walls" to get out of it after a very short stay. Or is this blissful idleness we so gloriously prepare for as our reward for a life well led really Hell in disguise? Without realizing it, have we envisioned an ideal Heaven that in fact is our worst nightmare, Hell? To be idle is to invite trouble since we WILL find something to do, and when we can do anything we want, what we want to do can be totally ego driven, destructive and hellish. Ironically, the conditions our major religions suggest for heaven in the afterlife for the worthy are in fact quite hellacious.

All of this just exposes the foolishness of religious conceptions of life after death. It takes almost no reflection at all to recognize that these conceptions deny our very nature as exploratory humans and are entirely unsatisfactory and actually degrading. What seems an ideal alternative in the context of the travails of everyday life is in fact a form of torture for the ever after. We have to offer ourselves something better than this because any God worthy of the concept would not "reward" us with perpetual torture.

A little thought suggests that a milk and honey eternity is little more than a horror show constructed for humans who are unhappy and exhausted in life and who recognize neither their basic nature nor what would be really fulfilling. Personally, I do not want to have anything to do with the way these versions of life everlasting are envisioned in our major religions. If I have to "go on" in any sense of my separate self, I would rather continue to be stimulated by many challenges and much to DO! My ideal life after death

is a “forever” of discovery that is unencumbered by physical limitations, that is surrounded by creative and respectful relations, and that participates productively in our expanding universe.

Come to think about it, maybe there is no better way to accomplish this state of infinite continued participation at death than to release all notions of a separate self and dissolve into the ever Re-creative ALL, especially since this is the same “ether” out of which we emerge at conception! Forget the worm return until I get it “Right;” merging with the ALL is a form of “reincarnation” I can go with, a version of dissolving to become some of every thing – Again!

Start…..To….Finish, Beginning…To…End, Alpha…To…Omega
The Beginning and the End are Identical.

I Revel in Recycling!!

INGER

The Ripening Breeze
Descends the Lighted Dew,
Brushes the Golding Grass,
Sails the Halcyon Hills,
And Whispers Wishes
To the Wind

The Curving Breeze
Clings to Cloud Drifts,
Hides Beside Feathered Fragrances
Moves To Musical Seasons,
And Whispers Wishes
To the Wind

The Rolling Breeze
Rises with Me,
Awakens the Frosted Waves,
Rides the Melting Rapids,
Releases the Salty Ripples,
And Whispers Wishes
To the Wind.

[1997]

Inger and Tom / Tom and Inger

Basics – at Our 40 Year Anniversary – June 13, 2004

Mile Stone

I recall my mother commenting that her 40th anniversary was missed by a couple of months with Dad's fatal heart attack intervening. Odd that my major heart attack six months ago, which involved three fibrillation events of the kind that no doubt killed my father, occurred so close to the time of our 40th. All of this reminds me that such occasions invite reflection, and, happily, I am alive to see this event and to share, feel, and reflect upon it.

Put It in Writing

Some things that we take for granted deserve to be housed in " formal" statement. So, here is what you know, but may never have seen "in writing." Above all else: "I love you." Yes, muchly, deeply, fully, utterly, and however else one can commit beyond the fact itself. You are simply put, the most important thing in my life, and an essential part of my joy in life. Over the years you have moved into the core of who I am to become a fundamental part of my self-identity. In essence, I do not think of myself without you, not just you at my side, but you as an essential part of me. You are the great lifetime gift that the stars have placed in my path and that I had the great good fortune to feel the grace of at our first meeting and to pursue and "win" for the all-time portion in sharing. It has been a tremendous privilege to share OUR love with you. Simply "finstipular," our unique composite of all the superlatives. That is the way it has been from the Beginning, is into the NOW, and, hopefully, will be through our Future.

Feeling/Emotion

The depth of feeling I have for you and that we share cannot be carried by language, even language of the most poetic/metaphoric variety. The best language can do is offer a superficial gloss of the fundamental mystery that is present Below. The Below that I know for you curls in on itself so tightly that it gathers all else to it and becomes one thing and everything at the same time. It is truly as if our love is the start of existence itself, the beginning and end of all else. Everything of any significance only emerges and has meaning from this incredibly dense center. If there is an IT, you are IT for Me.

Reflection

Love is the way we talk about commitment and connection in a relationship when we want to emphasize its strength. Love is what I have for you and what we share as your love for me matches and returns my own. To live for 40 years plus in this state of loving one another is a stupendous privilege. Many live together for this length of time, but the love between the partners wanes and is replaced by companionship – at best. No Thanks! I'll take what comes of sustaining the real thing! I celebrate you for helping us to maintain such a high standard of love between us.

Why? Why this privilege of sustained Love for US? Love is always a mystery, just as the source of the vibration of feeling on our first meeting – utterly confirmed in our second – is unknown. Why is it RIGHT to begin with, and why is one couple able to sustain it and another NOT? We just do not know; we have only "reasonable" suggestions: realistic expectations; lack of intervening catastrophic events – whether social, psychological, physical, or economic; good communication; growing together;

sufficient self-esteem to support confidence; honesty and integrity in dealing with one another; respect; sharing fundamental values; flexibility, etc. Certainly, in the main we have enjoyed all of these qualities and conditions throughout our marriage. But these, and however many more we might list, are not really sufficient. Other options are FATE and GOD, neither of which I accept as basic causes in our personal lives. To attribute good fortune to these agencies, is just to raise the immediately following question: why does FATE or GOD select to benefit some and hinder others? Since there is no way to answer this follow up question, I take it that that alone is an indication that the FATE/GOD assumption is not a valid answer to the first question.

Existentially, we have to accept responsibility for what happens in our lives, but we do this with the recognition that we only control our surrounding conditions to a point; beyond that, anything can happen. At best, we actively guide our mutual ship along the course of its journey, easing through the dips and jolts that outside existence brings to us, and hopefully not encountering storms that cast us overboard or sink our vessel entirely. We have been lucky in our lives and in our marriage that we have not experienced these storms, and we must freely admit that we have no good explanation for why our path has not taken us into their center. Certainly others, who are at least equally deserving, have had to face these torrents and struggle to survive, frequently emerging as tattered shadows of their former selves. In the end, I give 50% to the contribution WE have made to our success, and 50% to circumstances: even odds. And we have been inexplicably on the 90% side of favorable circumstances: our country, culture, race, genetics, parents, siblings, friends, historical events, etc. Luck of the draw has been decidedly in our favor!!

Still, millions of couples in our same “super favorable” circumstances, do not make it, or make it to 40 years under a faded flag of LOVE. So, we can take substantial credit, if with the proper humility. Here is where the nature of our relationship dynamic enters the picture. Most couples are complementary in talents and personalities, and in a sense they make up a whole between the two partners. The nature of our dynamic and how we have managed it has WORKED. Why? No doubt many reasons, only some of which we may be aware. Two stand out to me: Respect and Sharing/Caring.

Respect has been my short suit, but fortunately my experience and research have trimmed my arrogance and forced me to give proper credit to your more intuitive and emotive mode of being. And you have persisted through my shortcomings in this regard, showing the greater strength of character. We might not have sustained without the restraint you have shown in response to my limitations in this regard. In this you certainly wear the crown.

Sharing and caring are at root about empathy, and empathy is all about getting beyond one’s self to appreciate and adopt, in part, the perspective of others. This we both have from family, personality, and experience. The professional paths of community service and community benefit that we have both followed signal the centrality of sharing and caring in our lives. And my profession formalizes the importance of understanding how the world is viewed from the perspective of very different others. Sharing and caring brought into marriage supports communication and keeps us from venturing too far on our own without bringing the other up to speed and getting a read on where we are and where we are headed. Without caring and sharing and the communication it

engenders, there can be no growing together. And, the more lines along which a couple permit themselves to grow apart into "separate" lives, the less common ground exists for them and the more likely it is that a modern marriage will not survive. So, caring/sharing is at the root of a successful marriage, and we have had this, start to finish.

Circumstances in our lives have curtailed the development of separate paths and encouraged sharing and respect across the zones of our different interests. Career never fully developed for me, halting what could have tempted me into celebrating and pursuing my own self-importance. I was humbled by this situation, and that likely for the good. We shifted positions, and you became the major breadwinner and I the primary caretaker in the home. We shared across our reversed roles, you gained in self-confidence, and you deserved my respect, professionally as well as personally. Respect grew to a position of equity, and caring and sharing remained central. Love dwelled in the midst of this fertile condition, while fortunately our surrounding circumstances remained consistently favorable.

I treasure our mutual caring and sharing – for one another and the social and natural world around us! I believe it is at the center of who we are and why our love sustains. I still struggle to display the respect that I DO have for you. Maybe I am just that much the alpha male, or maybe I am that much more insecure as compared to you, or maybe it is my inability to properly separate myself from the greater value our culture places on the talents I find so ready at hand, and the lesser value it lodges with your capabilities. Maybe, it is all of these, fused with my embarrassment over my temperamental outbursts and my tendency to condescension. This is my bundle of continuing weakness, the challenge I bring to sustaining our love. I know of only much lesser weaknesses that you pose in this regard. Here again, you wear the crown.

Finale'

So, as I reflect on our 42 year love affair at the time of our 40th anniversary, I see our spectacular success as a matter of inexplicably and mysteriously deep feeling, extraordinary good fortune, constancy in caring and sharing, and events in our lives that have fostered equality of respect. And, truth be known, in everything that counts, you have always been ahead of me, even while offering me the lead and overlooking my limitations.

Ours is a spectacular past. I look forward to exploring the yet deeper love that is hopefully before us.

In Love with YOU,

Tom

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SECTION II

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COMMENTARY

BIG PICTURE ISSUES

[The following three short pieces are somewhat different ways to think about some of the worldview variables that I address in my more extensive essay, Dynamic Humanism, 2007.]

Human Consciousness/Self-Awareness – Blessing or Curse?

2006

Individual human existence is but a blip on the screen of life in the universe, yet we place so much emphasis on the meaning of this life – mostly because we are "blessed" with consciousness of our existence and therefore have the ability to promote the idea that we are special and somehow important as both individuals and as a species. But our awareness may well be but an artifact – an accident – of our species development and even a sidelight distraction in overall evolution. We make so much of consciousness and self-awareness, assuming it is very significance when in fact we do not know this is the case at all! With this ability to critically consider ourselves and our position in the world, we seem to have the option to systematically retain the past and anticipate the future, and so to plan and evaluate. This seems an ability that sets humans apart from other species and distinguishes us in terms of species "progress." We elect to make a great deal of this difference; yet this difference also allows us to avoid living in the present and to make ourselves miserable with carrying the baggage of the past and living only for the future. It is so easy to miss the opportunity of where we are in the bottleneck between our encumbered past and overblown future.

In this context of our self-awareness in what appears to be a time continuum, we appear to have free will and to be able to make choices that influence our future. But free will may be but another illusion created by our limited perceptual and conceptual ability. Because we cannot discern all of the connections that make up the web of our existence, it is entirely possible that even our most minuet actions are in fact entirely predictable, and the notion that our "planning" results in activities that alter the flow of events is entirely false.

It is not at all clear just how useful consciousness is to us individually or as a species. Self-awareness/consciousness easily carries us to the extremes first, of literal religious dogmatism and fundamentalism [out of our intuitive capability] and second, of scientific materialism and positivism [out of our rational or intellectual capability]. Modern humankind dwells in the midst of the ragging debate between the camps that represent the extremes of our capabilities, just because we are aware of these capabilities, because we can seek to understand what the existence they reveal "means," and because we get so wrapped up in one side or the other of this debate over meaning. We spend so much effort in this debate that we miss most of our opportunities to really use these two abilities in a balanced way to be creative in meeting our individual and species needs. So, if we have free will, we make precious little constructive use of it. Mostly we seem to be an experiment that may have great possibilities that has weighed itself down in the process and taken us only to the gateway to our full potential. To date, our minimal use of our consciousness suggests that the tail is wagging the dog rather than acting as the light illuminating existence before us.

Perhaps modern humankind is just immature in its development of its polar capabilities within consciousness. This would be the optimistic view – that at some point we humans will “get it” and move beyond the current childish debate. Or equally possible, our experiment as a species will continue to spin in the dark-age circles of our present childish conflict until we spin “out” as a species. Or, consciousness itself may be an illusion and irrelevant and whatever our capabilities as a species may be, we are just “fussing” within this illusion.

As an existentialist and a humanist, I am finally an optimist; but I have to keep the bigger potential range of possibilities in mind. Such a view can serve to keep us appropriately humble, and maybe help us to crawl out of the immature spin we are in.

Two Major Trends – Seemingly In Tension in Modern Culture

2009

Two seemingly opposite trends prevail in American culture, and to a significant extent in the rest of the developed cultures of the world. The first is the trend toward ever-greater emphasis on individual freedom, achievement, independence and self-reliance with the individual being held more and more responsible for both his/her well-being and security. A correlate of this tend toward individualism is a reduction in the value attached to social community and social values as the source of identity and security. The second trend is the globalization/internationalization of information/communication and economic/market relations. The first trend tends to isolate the individual with less support to and from communal values and the surrounding community, while the second economic/information trend ties all individuals and groups at all levels more and more together rendering them necessarily more and more integrated, interdependent, and cooperative.

It is no small irony that the competitive economic forces of capitalism – which are associated with the biological and individualistic perspective of self-interest, protection and survival of the fittest, are driving the move to tighter and tighter social connectedness and interdependency, while the cooperative/collaborative forces, usually associated with the communal/social perspective, are waning in the face of the emphasis on individualism.

Looking at the overall development of humankind, it is clear that the species' progress is one with its subscribing to ever larger and larger social units of organization [from clans, to bands, to tribes, to states, to nations, to united nations]. Increased integration and cooperation are the hallmarks of this 150,000 year development trend, with the period since the advent of agriculture and the rise of civilization in the Neolithic Era some 10,000 years ago accounting for most of this development.

If this trend toward increasing integration is the greater in the larger view, how do we account for the opposite current trend within this overall development toward an ever-increasing focus on the value and importance of the individual and individual rights, privileges and achievements? One read would suggest that this internal trend toward individuation is the last gasp of a prior condition for the species before final and full social consolidation – the point at which the species becomes more like a termite mound or aspen grove and less like a wolverine or solitary oak. This read sees full social integration and the identity of the whole of the human community as essential, first to overcome the sources for destructive conflict and second to achieve further species development. And this view regards the separate individual with his or her inclination to pursue his or her own personal desires and benefits as an impediment to consolidated species progress.

Another read is that while the overall integration trend is very real, continued progress for the species can not occur in the condition of stasis like that of the termite mound. Progress requires that the consolidated social pot be constantly stirred by the creative input of those who think and operate outside the conceptual and social confines of the "establishment." In short, the individual and his or her pursuit of his or her own independent vision is what keeps the group flexible, adaptive, and oriented to the option

for change. Lose the recognized importance of the individual and his or her "freedom" to determine his or her own direction and you lose the creative force in human development. In this view, competition engenders the change that leads to progress for the species.

Can we bridge these two "reads?" It is not easy, as they seem to be contradictory.

Clearly the future for humankind needs the benefits of both the increased cooperation that further social integration provides and the stimulation that individual creativity in the face of competition provokes. Perhaps, as it is presently conceived and promoted, the dichotomy itself is false. After all, cooperation is not necessarily monolithic; it occurs across individuals and groups at different social scales, and at each scale there is the option to retain a competitive element across social divisions. Our mistake may be to assume that we lose creativity when we lose "freedom" at the strictly individual and personal levels. Teams of cooperative individuals can compete fiercely against one another while they remain collectively creative in spite of the individual members giving up the pursuit of strictly individual gain. This is true at all social levels to the very top, international level of cooperation and integration. So long as integration is not total, competition across divisions remains viable and the creative input of individualistic values can be retained, even as individuals commit more and more to cooperate as "teams" at increased social scales. In this view, it is not necessary to focus on the exclusive rights of <u>each</u> individual in order to retain the essential benefits of individualism.

As humankind travels the road to ever-greater social integration, the mistake we may be making is to think that in de-emphasizing individualism at the personal level, we necessarily lose individualistic values or benefits. It seems more likely the case that these individualistic values and benefits merely ascend to be expressed at more encompassing levels in competition across teams, groups, corporations, states and nations.

Especially in recent times, we have come to recognize the creative efficiency of teams of individuals operating more of less simultaneously to address problems as compared to efforts made sequentially by separate individuals. It turns out that solutions to all kinds of human challenges are achieved much more rapidly in a cooperative team framework where a diversity of minds and inputs magnifies the creativity, scope and the pace of problem solving. And, interestingly, the individual satisfaction of team members tends to be greater in the team setting than is the case for individuals working on their own. Humans are social animals, and while individual values are important, it is entirely possible that we have missed the mark in assuming that the values and benefits of this individualistic perspective are best achieved by supporting cultural positions that would locate virtually all importance at the level of lone wolfs. It may be time to temper our tendency to excessive celebration of the individual and move to highlight the creativity and satisfaction [happiness] that can be achieved in the cooperative setting of teams at all levels. We need not fear that the individual or the benefits of the individualistic perspective will necessarily be lost in the more cooperative social setting, so long as competition remains among these "teams."!!

If we could resolve this seeming dilemma in the direction suggested here, we might alleviate the fear among many of the continued integration process, as expressed most dramatically by the “One World Order” conspiricists. We might even overcome the knee jerk response of having to see “government” and government “programs” as the enemy of the individual. Cooperating to address human challenges at all levels may enhance the individual’s sense of identity and quality of life much more than it diminishes it. We merely have to retain the individualistic perspective of competition across the cooperating groups – at some level.

The Challenging Future of Civilization and the Human Species: Three Major Zones Requiring Attention

2009

We are bombarded regularly about the daunting and very expensive challenges of adequately addressing any one of the major global challenges that confront us as humans living in our complex societies in our developed civilized state: energy, food, water, air, climate change/global warming, disease/epidemics, and essential mineral resources to support manufacturing and building, etc. For any one of these matters the numbers are always many trillions of dollars that must be committed over the next generation [30 years] if we are to stave off dire shortages and/or devastating health or environmental consequences. It would take a Marshall Plan at worldwide scale to address each of these challenges, with the cost for the combination totaling nearly the entire GNP of the world.

On several of these challenge fronts the world human community is rapidly heading for collapse. And we are not just talking depression; we are talking the degree of demise that can threaten the civilized, industrialized condition of humankind itself. Considering that the developed, and supposedly "advanced" countries of the world cannot even seriously commit to addressing one of these challenges – energy, the prognosis for humankind making progress on these combined fronts is dire indeed. This is the first major Zone that Requires Attention, but there is another Zone of related and equal importance.

There are three underlying drivers which, if left unchecked over the next generation, will vastly complicate and aggravate each of the individual major challenges: human population increase [to over nine billion] and continued commitment to both an expanding worldwide economy and an ever increasing standard of living across 85% of the world population. Each of these drivers [population, economy, standard of living] puts significant additional pressure and demand on available resources and compounds the potential negative effects to human health and the ecology of the planet. Among these drivers, only population receives any attention, but with no consequential planning or serious implementation. The world economy continuing to expand and the standard of living increasing across a broad spectrum of the population are both applauded for their assumed positive consequences rather than being questioned for their sustainability and potentially negative impacts. These last two major drivers are not even on the potential planning horizon to be addressed. These three drivers constitute the second major Zone that Requires Attention, and it is mostly off the radar of consideration.

The Third Zone of Attention is the fundamental state of worldwide social relations. Humankind can no longer afford the negative effects of all the variables that are allowed to promote conflict among different groups – at all levels. Whether these conflicts are over control of territory or resources, or over differences of race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, politics or economy, the opportunity for continued development of the human species is under threat from these sources of conflict – individually and in any combination. Humans in all of these categories of distinction are on the verge of possessing weapons of mass destruction, and some, with their apocalyptic views of

human destiny, are unrestrained in their potential use of such weapons. We are no longer just having to put up with the effects of competing groups throwing spears at one another!! The use of nuclear weapons at moderate scale between any two groups can so poison the world environment that the house of all humans collapses.

What can we do in this world where our advancement in technology has so far outpaced our progress in our social relations? We can make at least three moves. First, we can put women in the decision making lead of society at all levels. At one time, testosterone driven men with their knee jerk tendency to react and strike out in defense of their "clan" were essential to human survival. No longer is this the case; instead, these are the very tendencies that now put civilized humanity at risk. The argument can be made that both biologically and culturally, women – on average – incline to nurture and to compromise, the very basic tendencies needed by the present human community. Now, there will be those who claim this is a sexist statement and that there are women who are as aggressive as men. Yes, there are aggressive women, but on average, women do not resort to violence to resolve conflicts at anything like the rate of men, even in the very few cultures where women adopt an aggressive and leading role. So, I say, put the talent of women to cooperate and compromise at the head of decision making in our societies as the first move to assist our social relations to catch up with our technological capabilities. With the successful example provided of women, maybe men can "get it" and play catch up. Second, the nations of the world have to commit to a truly authoritative and empowered United Nations, not just a "let's try to work together" organization. An empowered United Nations can require arbitration in all situations of significant conflict where violence threatens and resolve these conflicts through a truly Supreme court. As the human community moves ever more toward a worldwide integrated economy, it must also move to a more integrated polity and justice system. The golden age of competing independent nations is at an end, if we expect to be able to advance to the next level of potential for the human species. Third, humans of all persuasions need to release the strangle hold of religion, and rediscover, reactivate, and reorient their intuitive/spiritual dimension. In so doing, all people can find meaning and sustenance in a sacred understanding of self and reality that is socially inclusive rather than exclusive. Religion is a divider and a very significant source of conflict among human groups; spirituality is a uniter and is a base level source of respect, responsibility and cooperation among all humans. Spirituality offers humanity the core value of religion without its problematic dogma. For those who are not familiar with the case for spirituality in this regard, I have made an effort to outline this case in Dynamic Humanism (2007).

Yes, what I have suggested as necessary above is idealistic at the present time. But, progress begins by identifying goals, and, in this case, critically important goals. Something has to give in our worldwide, current societal situation if we are to avoid putting the developed, civilized state of our species at risk of collapse with the potential consequence that humans see their numbers decline precipitously [as in the boom and bust cycles of rodents] and their societal state return to tribal conditions. It is my view that only the emergence among the developed nations of both an enlightened citizenry and leadership, which are both committed to seriously address all three of the above Zones of Attention can forestall the potential collapse that is on the horizon for the human species.

Currently there is little evidence for a commitment of any kind in any of the three “Zones of Attention” that I have identified. It is the awesome fact of our overwhelming “failure to attend” [avoidance and denial] that is truly alarming. As we fly ever faster toward the edge of the cliff for the potential development of humankind, we are mostly electing to ignore the consequences of the course we are traveling.

How Both Science and Religion Get "It" Wrong
2010

How Science Goes Wrong

If science follows its declared principles, it can get it right. "It" being understanding the nature of human consciousness and humankind's participation in both the objective and subjective dimensions of reality. Science recognizes that its understanding of any phenomena at any one point in time is incomplete. It never has THE answer; it is always on the hunt for the better, more accurate, more complete solution. Theory is not law; it is just the best statement of system understanding that we have at the time. In this context, it is always the case that there are phenomena that are anomalous, that are not adequately accounted for by theory. It is these anomalies that force the search for a more complete theory. This is the principle within science that requires scientists to always be open-minded, open to change, open to the better explanation.

Theories in science are housed within paradigms, larger frameworks that contain the similar underlying assumptions of many theories. Theories nest within these larger paradigm frameworks more and less comfortably depending on the extent of the anomalies that pertain and how challenging these anomalies seem to be to the assumptions of the paradigm. This is basic philosophy of science stuff, and all scientists and the research they conduct are supposed to subscribe to this policy perspective.

Now comes the reality. Scientists get attached to their theories and especially to the paradigms within which their theories reside, and if their theories and paradigms are challenged, the research they generate from within these theories and paradigms can be diminished and come under threat for its adequacy. So, scientists, who are supposed to be open-minded and to expect change, in fact often deny the challenge of anomalies and resist change. Caution in science is a virtue, but it can be a fine line between appropriate caution and self-serving obstinance. Science can go wrong if it entertains obstinance, and it is unfortunately the case that the human factor of self-serving denial not infrequently carries caution to obstinance. And very often it is opinions offered by scientists on matters very much outside of their own research domains where obstinance rears its ugly head. The history of the theory of human evolution is the poster child for this problem since it is the place where religious beliefs about the origin of humankind meet the conclusions of science head on. Once the utterly confirming results of DNA evidence appeared, the field of evolutionary biology solidified in its unanimous support of the theory of evolution. The specialists who know the most about the subject are convinced, but scientists in other fields, some of whom are religious believers, permit themselves to do what they would never allow in their own fields of study – to deny the overwhelming conclusions of the experts. This is to put "faith" in belief above the evidence of science, something no scientist can permit in himself or others. And yet it happens all the time, because scientists are humans and humans are inconsistent – sometimes rigorous observational scientists and sometimes believers "on faith."

Of course an entire scientific field can get it wrong, but if debate on the issue is not significantly present in the field of study itself, we need to be especially circumspect about what amount to the "opinions" of outside scientists. Opinions are not science

since there is no requirement that opinions accord with either scientific theory or the preponderance of the factual evidence. And there are a lot of scientists who are allowed to get away with offering what amount to opinions about results in domains of study where they have little experience or expertise. And because they are scientists with Ph.D.s and because the media often does not make proper distinction as to what scientists are qualified in relation to the issue under discussion, the views of these outside scientists are often accorded equal status with the true experts.

Now for the case in point in this discussion. Study of the Paranormal [Psi – telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and psychokinesis] has a long history beginning in most ascetic traditions where these phenomena are encountered with regularity during individual spiritual development. The nineteenth century saw the spirtualist movement in Western countries, which attracted a lot of charlatans and professional illusionists who, when exposed, tarnished the view of the legitimacy of paranormal phenomena more generally. Psychical Science and modern Parapsychology in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries struggled to return the study of the paranormal to scientific respectability. In the latter part of the 20th century, after much debate and review of the research evidence, the major professional organization in the area of psychology in America [the American Psychological Association] recognized Parapsychology as a legitimate subdivision of consciousness and psychology study and research. The association essentially determined that the evidence for the existence of psi phenomena was sufficient to acknowledge the scientific study of the phenomena as worthy of both recognition and pursuit. The association was doing what science requires: recognizing the anomalies [human behavior and capability lying outside the standard theory, and in this case, outside of a major paradigm] when the evidence for this behavior becomes substantial, even when the implications for existing theories and paradigms within the field are made uncomfortable by this recognition.

The study of paranormal phenomena still lies at the margins of psychology and consciousness research, and the nay-sayers and skeptics are many, but importantly, most of these deniers are amateurs or professionals in fields other than psychology, consciousness study and parapsychology. In short, it is those who have less knowledge and expertise in the relevant field of study and who have conducted no research on paranormal phenomena who are the loudest critics. These skeptics take the usual tack of pointing to weaknesses in individual scientific studies and reports without considering the evidence as a whole. These deniers set up a straw man condition of perfection that no scientific study or report is able to meet since no study is without data limitations and potential methodological flaws. What these skeptics will not respect is both the collective research evidence and these two facts: 1) that paranormal phenomena are reported in every culture worldwide throughout history and 2) that a great many of these cultures have created special roles for the more skilled practitioners of these abilities [shamans, mystics, seers, artists, sorcerers, healers, inventors, etc.].

Paranormal experience is universal in humans, and like any other ability, different cultures foster it and different individuals have access to it to varying degrees. Looking at paranormal phenomena in the big picture, while scientific caution is appropriate in investigating it, overall denial of the existence of the phenomena carries caution to the point of obstinance. Unfortunately, the predispositions of individual cultures can encourage the tendency to obstinance, and when it comes to the paranormal, western

culture can be almost an obstinance cheerleader. And this is the case despite this same culture's tolerance of fundamentalist forms of religion where the paranormal is applauded in the miracles of "saviors" and commonplace among many ministers and practitioners.

Why is the paranormal important? Put simply, because it is the evidence in the everyday world for the existence of intuitive competence in humans when they engage the subjective dimension of reality. It is the confirmation that while the objective, rational view of the world is of great value, it does not reveal the extent of human ability or provide the exclusive window on what constitutes reality. The paranormal is the bridge between the objective and the subjective, between the material and the spiritual perspectives. It brings the fruits of subjective awareness to objective reality where the option exists for its practical use. For empiricists, it is the TEST zone for proof of the subjective, for proof that human experience and awareness can transcend the objective limitations of time and space and that material translocation and transformation are possible under certain conditions.

Study of the paranormal, and the intuitive human competence that underlies it, represents the opportunity to reincorporate the subjective [the human spirit] into the modern concept of reality without needing to credit any accompanying religious baggage – no religious dogma or institution. It is the evidentiary zone for one of the greatest potential paradigm shifts of modern time. Given the opportunity, one would think that scientists would be flocking to parapsychology instead of just tolerating it. It is not true science that stands in way. It is the objectivist bias of our culture that obscures the path and that lends support to those whose opinions sustain obstinance.

This is how science foregoes its ideals and its informing policy and how it largely fails to investigate one critically important area of human capability and behavior.

Human Capability and the Objective – Subjective Reality Continuum

Like objective reality, subjective reality is a constant presence, an essential part of the unbroken continuum of the reality that humans are built to perceive and engage. Inherent limitations of humans as a species mean that the full extent of reality is far beyond human perception or conception. Utilizing all of their capabilities, humans still only perceive and engage a small part of the full reality continuum. Within the portion of reality that humans can access, different states of mind open different access ports. Everyday mind is characterized by objective and subjective ports both being open but to different degrees depending on the task. The empirical tasks of biological survival, technical manipulation, and scientific inquiry require dominance by the objective, rational mind, while the leisure activities of play and social celebration open more to the subjective and enlist the intuitive and the rational operating in tandem, while the artistic and spiritual activities rely more exclusively on the intuitive and allow the individual to engage more completely the subjective dimension of reality. Science pursues understanding and manipulating objective reality relying on the mental faculty of intellect, while Religion pursues understanding and utilizing subjective reality relying on the mental faculty of intuition. When humans regard either intellect or intuition or the portion of reality that one or the other accesses as exclusive, they are biased and myopic. And such claims only limit human potential. Humans need to recognize, utilize and develop every reality access mode they have since even with all capabilities

enlisted, developed and engaged, it is a narrow band of reality that humans can experience.

At a fundamental level, Science and Religion both go wrong when either denies the significance of the dimension of reality to which the other is associated and claims primacy for its mental modes, perspective and utility in addressing human need and meaning in life.

The Many Ways Religion Goes Wrong

As we have seen, Science can go wrong within its own domain when its practitioners fail to live up to its declared ideals and informing policy, a failing that is especially important when it comes to exploring the human behavioral interface or bridge between objective and subjective reality. Likewise, Religion can go wrong in many ways, due to both internal and external factors. Unfortunately the combination of these failings result in most religions being so far off base that I find it useful to distinguish at the outset between Religion and Spirituality. I posit Spirituality as the essential perspective that emerges when human intuitive competence engages subjective reality. It is from this essential base that all religions derive and from which nearly all go astray. I will use this distinction between Religion and Spirituality in the remarks that follow.

Human intuitive competence provides access to the spiritual perspective, the subjective dimension of reality, the human experience of this reality, and the awareness and practical consequences that result from this experience. And certain states of mind accommodate intuitive competence and its development and utilization. The meditative state is one of these mental states in which the rational mind is held in suspension allowing the intuitive to manifest in a purer form, which accommodates the spiritual perspective and access to the subjective dimension of reality. Meditation in its several forms – which can include prayer – is the practice that promotes this consequence. Meditation is a vehicle, and once the vehicle is mastered, access to a relatively pure form of the intuitive can be achieved directly without having to rely on this vehicle per se. Merely the "idea" of Meditation can become the trigger for shifting to emphasis on the intuitive channel in the individual. And in those fully mature in access to the intuitive, there is no need for a vehicle or a trigger at all because the intuitive channel is held open all the time. Meditation, like all forms of art and ritual – when properly understood and utilized, is a means, not an end. It is the awareness that can result when we use the tool to explore the subjective that is important once we get there, not the particular access tool that we use to open the door. There can be an infinite number of different access tools that take humans to the same place. Using a different metaphor, it is getting to the "party" and discovering and utilizing the fundamental connectedness of the world when we get there that counts, not the particular brand of automobile that brings us to the "dance."

The first major misstep that Religion makes is to focus central importance on the vehicle and so to diminish the core opportunity for the individual and society to achieve sophisticated spiritual awareness <u>at the dance</u>. All systems of religious beliefs and rituals are means, not ends, but most religions make commitment to their specific beliefs and rituals the primary concern of the devotee as well as the exclusive screen for interpreting the meaning of all experience that occurs when the devotee engages the subjective or spiritual realm. When religions interject priests and their ilk as necessary

human intermediaries into this focal belief and ritual framework, both contact with and interpretation of the experience of the subjective becomes essentially "fixed" and the potential liberating awareness of the spiritual perspective through the exercise of human intuitive competence is severely curtailed, if not entirely suppressed.

The spiritual is the core of all religions, and human intuitive competence is what makes access to the spiritual perspective possible, but nearly all religions fail both to sustain this core and to promote a liberated form of this human competence. These are huge failings. While these failings may be understandable in the framework of a 12th century worldview – the worldview in which earth is the center of the universe and humans the pinnacle among God's creations, to continue to tolerate these failings given our modern understanding of humankind's minuscule position in a virtually infinite universe is inexcusable. To persist in tolerating these failings, we are harboring the basis for large scale and potentially devastating societal conflict as a result of competition among absolutist religions. And we are simultaneously smothering spiritual awareness and intuitive competence under this erroneous religious umbrella at the same time that the obvious excesses of the religious representation of the spiritual encourage science to reject the legitimacy and value of the spiritual itself. This is a double whammy. When Religion goes wrong, it <u>really</u> goes wrong, creating the conditions that significantly limit humankind's opportunity to fulfill its potential and that can carry all of modern civilized humanity into the muck and the mire.

While Religion fails at the institutional and political levels for important reasons with critical consequences, it also fails at the fundamental level of interpreting the core religious experience of unification. Unification occurs when the individual discovers through access to the subjective realm the essential connectedness of all things and the identity he or she shares as a participant in this infinite condition of interconnectedness. At the extreme subjective level, all things, which seem separate in the objective reality, dissolve into one thing – the ALL where there is but one identity shared by everyone and everything across all time and space. To experience self as All is the unification experience, the core experience to which all religious ritual is supposed to lead. To be "Born Again in the Spirit" is one way within Christianity to describe some level of the individual having this unification experience. Ecstasy is the emotional and conceptual effect of having this experience of oneness since in experiencing the shared identity of total interconnectedness, the individual is entirely confirmed – filled with the Love of essential and infinite connection.

It is in the religious interpretation of this unification experience that Religion goes wrong and "loses it." Instead of encouraging and guiding the individual's independent development of his or her intuitive competence into sophisticated understanding and use of the subjective reality, virtually every religion captures this universal human experience in its dogma and interprets this positive experience as proof of the absolute and exclusive truth of its particular set of beliefs and rituals. The significance of subjective reality is thereby reduced to a narrow set of literal beliefs and their required rituals which totally circumscribe and define the "meaning" of the unification experience and all subsequent exploration of the subjective dimension of reality. Instead of being liberated to pursue and develop within subjective awareness for him or herself, Religion posits a whole horde of intermediaries between the individual and access to the subjective [gods, ancestors, saviors, spirits, saints, etc.]. Placating these intermediaries

becomes the focus of attention for Religion rather than assisting individuals to develop intuitive competence, to become more and more aware of the nature of the subjective realm, and to learn how to make use of being present within subjective connectedness. Instead of promoting free access to the subjective, Religion greatly restricts and confines this access and defines the function of the subjective as supporting the validity of the belief system itself. And through the introduction of both conceptual supernatural intermediaries [gods, saviors, ancestors] and social human intermediaries [divine kings, popes, priests, shaman, monks], most religions further restrict access to the subjective to the privileged few who benefit from the accreditation the belief system offers to their positions of social, economic and political power. In this way through religion as a social institution the subjective reality is made to conform to and support the objective economic and political reality. At this point the subjective has been all but converted in effect to the objective.

Each religion reduces the universal unification experience to support its belief and ritual system as defining the absolute truth regarding the nature of the subjective reality and humankind's relationship to it. Many different religions, all claiming to reveal absolute Truth invites competition and conflict across social groups of differing beliefs. This, in spite of the fact that all religious belief systems carry their devotees to exactly the same place with exactly the same core results. In this way the universal subjective experience of connection/unification – Love – becomes in Religion a competition among the claims for primacy by different religions. Through religion, the alternative interpretations of the experience of universal Love are transformed first into a competition and then into conflicts [crusades and jihads] of religious "cleansing" of the infidels. Unfortunately, this failing first in interpretation of the unification experience and then in the subsequent progression into institutionalized conflict is common to virtually all religions. And arguments by moderates calling for tolerance among religions never address the essential interpretive fallacy upon which the fundamentalist conflicts rest.

There is yet another way in which Religion fails conceptually. The spiritual experience of unification evokes an awareness of sharing in an all inclusive singular identity through infinite interconnection and the transcendence of time and space. In this setting, all entities participate in one another, belong to one another, are fundamentally in contact with one another, and can relate and influence one another. An individual in objective reality can shift his or her consciousness position and access this infinitely interconnected subjective reality where time and space no longer are barriers. Paranormal events, which exhibit consequences in objective reality for connections that can be realized in this subjective reality, are the bridges that bring the effects of the subjective into the objective in the form of pre and retro cognition, clairvoyance, telepathy, and psychokinesis. While from an exclusively objective, intellectual perspective, events like the mental moving of objects, multiplying materials, healing the sick, knowing the thoughts of others, "seeing" and telling of events of the past and the future all seem miraculous, from a subjective, spiritual perspective these are paranormal events that are to be expected.

Religions and cults form around individuals who exhibit these paranormal talents to a significant degree exactly because most modern humans are so minimally developed in intuitive competence and so unfamiliar with the subjective realm and the commonality of bridging paranormal phenomena. Intuitively developed individuals have always been

around in all human cultures, but in the time of complex, civilized communities, religions have transformed a few of these intuitively talented individuals into prophets and even saviors when the circumstances have been conducive. Religions celebrate and even worship these individuals at the same time the average person is encouraged to keep his or her intuitive abilities in check and to reduce the significance of any core spiritual experiences to proof of the authenticity of the religious belief system itself. In this way most religions capture rather than liberate the intuitive competence of their followers. Religions honor the devout followers who obey and accept all on faith, and they tend to be uncomfortable, if not downright belligerent, in dealing with independent spiritual seekers who look to their own internal resources to create their own path to enlightenment. Ironically, in spite of the core spiritual experience being the source of all religions, in practice most religions join with secular, objectivist culture to restrict the development of intuitive competence in the citizenry.

In addition to making prophets and saviors out of intuitively talented individuals who evidence paranormal abilities and discouraging intuitive development in the populace, Religion misinterprets the spiritual, subjective message regarding human physical death by either positing a separate soul or enlisting some form of reincarnation. Subjective reality is the reality of all things existing as one together – inseparable and unified as one, existing as one infinitely interconnected and interrelated identify. In this reality there is no separate identity, so there is no basis for either a separate soul or for one separate physical entity being reincarnated in another separate physical entity. From the spiritual perspective of the subjective reality, the individual as a separate entity is an illusion to begin with. As an integral and integrated part of it all already, there is no "other" place to go or entity to be or become. There is only change in an ever vibrating and flowing universe. All that is can never be lost; it only changes in and out of materiality and immateriality in the infinite flow. We come from everything being made up of the disparate matter particles and energy of the universe; we participate in everything being related to all other forms of matter and energy; and we become anything and everything as we emerge and dissolve as material things. We already have life everlasting; we just do not have it as some form of our current selves, whether as an immaterial soul or physical reincarnation. God as a father, Jesus as a savior, judgment, soul, heaven or hell are all projections from the objective, material world to interpret and try to provide meaning in the subjective world where for the spiritually enlightened these separate entities and actions have no credibility and are totally unnecessary. These materially based projections reflect the need of objectively focused humans in a spiritually immature condition who want answers to questions about life that they do not know how to frame and do not know where to go to get their answers. So, Religion creates these materialistically based projections to ease the uncertainty of material death caused by the very ignorance of which Religion is a major promoter.

Collectively, the failings of Religion with respect to revealing the nature, scope and significance of subjective reality are enormous. Religion becomes first a set of literal beliefs and rituals based on inappropriate projections from the objective into the subjective, and then as a social institution Religion becomes a supporter of objectively oriented secular society. Through this process, Religion, which ironically has its origins in the core unification experience of subjective spirituality, ultimately becomes a major roadblock to humanity maturing into sophisticated subjective awareness.

Re-creation and Spirits

Until the concept of Super Psi emerged in parapsychology studies, a resolution appeared impossible for the seeming dilemma between the two competing fundamental principles of "the only constant is change" and "all that ever was is and ever will be." Psi brings all paranormal phenomena together as different realizations of the same underlying intuitive human capability when operating in the subjective domain of reality. Super Psi resolves the seeming contradiction between constant change on the one hand and absolute permanence on the other by positing the phenomena of re-creation. Super Psi suggests that within constant change, human intuitive capability can utilize the infinite interconnectedness of all things and events across time and space and by connecting and sharing identity with them, rediscover what and who they are and what they know and were. Living humans can even re-create these persons, things and events in cognitive, and even material form because they are always "present" or "available" in the subjective domain of reality.

The mistake Religion makes is to view from an objective perspective this constant "presence" for all things and events in the subjective and then attribute continued causality for this subjective presence in the objective. It is through this very significant "mistake" that "spirits" or ancestors or gods are held to be causal agents in the everyday world. Continued presence or availability in the subjective does not imply continued causal agency in the objective. The ability of humans to manifest aspects of subjective presence cognitively or even materially in the objective does not mean that apart from the manifesting activity of humans these presences are independent agents causing events to occur in the objective or everyday reality. Always available in the subjective across time and space does not necessitate being always causal in the objective. Religion fails to make this distinction; making this distinction is fundamentally important for understanding the relationship of the objective and subjective dimensions of reality; and Super Psi is one theory that can clearly accommodate making this distinction.

Now comes the really tricky part. Humans can render the presences that are available through infinite connectedness and shared identity in the subjective "real" in the objective, and they can invest these objective presences from the subjective with activity that can be causal. But the source of this causal activity is not subjective presence itself but the re-creative investment of humans living in the objective, material domain. Living humans who utilize intuitive competence in the subjective can get anything they want that ever was and they can cause subjective presence to have objective effect if they have the requisite intuitive capability and elect to do so. These living humans can manifest subjective awareness in any way they like. They can do it themselves and attribute it to themselves or they can understand themselves to do it through the presences that are available to them in the subjective. And in some ways, attributing causality to other identities can facilitate humans being able to accomplish these manifestations by removing them from the constrained everyday ego of the living individual. But, the fact that this happens and that humans and religions often attribute causality to subjective presences themselves does not mean that primary causality actually lies where it is attributed.

Super Psi suggests that it is the living human that is responsible, that he or she is actually the causal source for all such "spirit" manifestations. By contrast, Religion allows for a separate reality and independent causality for the subjective presence

domain. What the Super Psi interpretation demonstrates is first that it is not necessary to go the Religion route and second that in going the Religion route Religion both diminishes the capability of living humans and creates the basis for human conflict over whose "gods" are the true subjective presences. Super Psi is a super humanistic view, and by fully crediting the subjective dimension of reality and human participation in it, it vastly exceeds secular humanism with its limited focus on the objective, material, intellectual realm of human experience and existence.

Conclusion

Science derives denial of the paranormal phenomena that bridge the objective and subjective realms of reality from its own bias for the objective reality and its failure to live up to its philosophical ideals and policies. The effect is to mostly overlook investigation of these bridging paranormal phenomena and the potential impact of a major paradigm shift, which their study could produce – including a very different view of human consciousness and the utility of subjective awareness. Spirituality focuses fully on the subjective but like Religion it often mistakenly attributes causality to supernatural, spirit entities. Religion in addition suffers from its very often being co-opted by and serving the power needs and pragmatic concerns of social, economic and political culture and from imposing objective reality constructs in the form of literal beliefs and rituals on the subjective in an effort to overcome the challenge posed by physical death. Super Psi offers a super humanistic solution to the failings of both Science and Religion. It credits both the objective and subjective dimensions of reality and human access to and use of both while it avoids the denial and obstinance of Science and the socio-political and conceptual miscues of Religion, all of which diminish the importance of human intuitive competence.

As a 20th and 21st century social scientist, I am very interested in seeing the failings of both Science and Religion overcome. In this regard, I suggest that the position that is most productive for the success of the emerging world civilization is one 1) where Religion in all of its iterations frees itself from its thick crust of objectivist projections [literal belief and frozen ritual] and its ties to secular society and returns to open vehicles to access and liberate Spirituality, 2) where world society commits to a super-humanistic view, like Super Psi, which encourages human responsibility for and realization of full human mental potential, 3) where world society promotes balanced intuitive and intellectual development in its citizenry respecting equally the objective and subjective dimensions of reality, and 4) where Science lives up to its open-minded philosophical ideals and pursues the in-depth investigation of the paranormal bridging phenomena between the objective and subjective dimensions of reality.

The Need for Progressive Elders
Balancing the Perspectives of Youth and Age
As America and Humankind Face a Challenging Future
2010

Youth is associated with: vitality, liberality, spontaneity, creativity, impulse, fecundity, physical prowess, possibilities, new ideas and ways, progressivism, independence, rebelliousness, a future perspective.

Age is associated with wisdom, conservatism, stability, solidity, established ideas and ways, history, habit, dependability, community, consistency, respect, a past perspective.

Cultures that look to the past for instruction in the present revere elders for their wisdom in bringing tried and true answers to apply to situations in the present and to prepare for what is mostly viewed as the "known" future. These are cultures informed by cyclical concepts of time where the present and future are mostly expected to repeat the challenges and solutions of the past.

Cultures that look to the future and expect change must rely on new answers for new challenges in what are expected to be new situations in a rapidly changing world. In this progressive setting, it is questionable whether the wisdom of elders drawn from past experience will be adequate to provide these new answers. As a result, these cultures tend to look to the emerging, provocative ideas of the young to identify the needed solutions.

America is a young culture that is oriented to youth. It is led by an economy that depends on new and better answers to both old and new challenges and that enlists the discoveries of science and technology to offer these new solutions. And America celebrates new opportunities as no other culture with the ever present invitation of the wide open spaces of the frontier, always the option to move – mobility: new job, new home, new location, even new spouse. For all of its supposed political conservatism, America is at root a very progressive culture – expecting change. And this fact is reflected in its fascination with youth and the opportunity to remake America with each generation, together with the expectation that this remaking will produce a better life than that of the previous generation. The past is passé. America is all about "What's happening Now?" The glory days are before us, not behind us. America seeks the newest idea, tool, fashion, speech, media, etc. In the current framework, think Twitter culture. Conservative in its reliance on the individual to find the new approach, theory, or invention, America is very liberal in its expectation for change and its orientation to the young to stimulate new thinking. So, there is little tolerance for age and elders in the American setting, and even parents are suspect for their guidance by the time their children reach adolescence. That is a half-generation perspective or fifteen years separating the "obsolete" old adults from the formative youth.

So, America celebrates and rests its vision in Youth – hot, new college graduates or professionals with their newly minted ideas on how the challenges in their fields should be conceived and pursued. Hollywood, always looking for the young bright star – rising. But, in its fascination with youth, America lays itself open to the danger of fads and the

empty promises of youth, the flash in the pan ideas that lead to bankruptcy, the risk taker “cowboy” with a simplistic vision, a too ready weapon, and impulsive reactions that ignore fundamentals and puts the ship of state in jeopardy.

Of course the real answer is to achieve balance between youth and age, between progressive and conservative, between the past and the future focus, between repetition and innovation, between individual and community. In fact, we invite failure at either extreme as individuals, as cultures, and as a species.

If only we could successfully marry the wisdom of elders and the vitality and inspiration of youth. In that marriage we could avoid foolish fads and yet welcome well-informed, well-developed new ideas. Perhaps that is what formal, higher education is intended to produce: under the guidance of elder scholars and professional practitioners, youth imbibes the past with its call for respect and restraint while at the point of “graduation” this “youth” is required to display “something new” and original in a thesis or dissertation. This is the appropriate balance: continuity of the new with the old, progression rather than either stagnation or revolution.

Our professionals are supposed to “get it” – the proper balance, at least as they participate in their fields of specialized training. But while they may be able to sustain this balance as professionals, many are not able to apply this same balanced perspective when evaluating the affairs of everyday life, where they often allow self-interest in the benefits of the status quo to undermine their commitment to progressive change. And, so far as the supposedly educated populace at large is concerned, its members dwell mostly in the arena of opinion blown by the wind of circumstances and impression, and they discover balance mostly by accident.

Maybe we achieve a balance between the forces of youth and age only in the overall evolution of human culture where in the midst of all our general lack of social enlightenment, we nevertheless have historically crept inch by inch into a socially progressive future. The present question for the species is: having crept socially for so long in this snail pace manner at the same time that technology and science have leapt ahead at an ever increasing rate, can we afford to continue at this minimal general rate of change given the magnitude of the challenges that now face us?

Of course, all of life is up for grabs; that is just the way it ever is, whether it is to be humans that accelerate through their window of opportunity and become true masters of their destiny, or whether this option comes to some other species somewhere else in the multiverse. Each species gets its chance. And chance itself can take out even the mightiest – one giant asteroid hit and the age of the great reptiles – gone! Within the realm of chance, we have our opportunity – but only for a time. And our time is under ever greater stress from economic inequality across classes and nations, cultural colonialism and ideological terrorism, the explosion of the human population, the accumulating and potentially catastrophic effects of climate change, limited natural resources of all kinds to meet the ever greater expectations of humans to share in a high standard of living, mass migration and political upheaval as seas rise and densely populated nations are inundated, and epidemic in a packed world where new and “improved” diseases can flash across continents. Are we ignoring the giant asteroid of our species’ own making that lies in our newly minting future?

We are a youthful culture, and Youth is good at ignoring the obvious and unwittingly entering the zone of peril. Wisdom anyone? Where are the Progressive Elders with the wisdom of foresight rather than hindsight when we need them, and is anyone listening to the few of these progressive elders that we do have, whose voices are struggling to be heard? Remember the enlightened elders that tried to expose the perils of Iraq and WMD and remember the elders who warned lawmakers and the regulators about WorldCom and the derivatives market – the source of the recent Wall Street debacle and the Great Recession? The progressive elders are out there with balanced advice to address our species' really important challenges, but our partisan politicians are mostly oblivious – consumed by meaningless bickering and senseless military and earmark adventures, while a youthful media is mired in an "every crisis of the moment" mentality and lacking the foresight to illuminate our real challenges. Is our species' civilized window of opportunity being frittered away?

For 99.9% of our history, humans have oriented to traditional, conservative elders to show the way into the future. But we live in the last one tenth of one percent of our history where the pace of change is exponential and where the severity of our major challenges is escalating geometrically. Are we up to the challenges now confronting us? Are we wise enough to really commit to the kind of youthful, progressive change that is appropriately tempered by sensitivity to the past? We need Progressive Elders because youth does not have the power or position to act rapidly enough. And traditional elders with their conservative orientation to the past lack the foresight to lead us in a timely manner. Instead of identifying and promoting the creative solutions we need, our traditional elders – mostly political, corporate and religious – in fact pose the greatest impediment to meeting our challenges expeditiously. Yes, they are just being typical conservative elders, the same old elders when unfortunately the "same old" invites a potential doomsday outcome for human civilization. We cannot afford all the Pope like elder figures in our world wide midst who would ignore the many elephants in the room and focus our attention on the contraception bogyman, or stoning adulterers, or banning gay marriage, or supporting trickle down justifications for deregulation, or promoting fear of shortage to gain additional subsidies for expanded oil and coal production, or building razor wire fences to answer the Palestinian or "illegal" immigrant challenges. So little time, so much of it spent bogged down in the muck and mire of the status quo! Progress inch by inch will not do when what is now required is wisdom moving us socially in leaps and bounds and maintaining pace with technology.

"United Elders for Responsible Change," that is the movement for progressive wisdom that we need in our current species' situation, a new synthesis that combines the youthful orientation to innovation and change with the elder sensitivity to the complex needs of the whole. We need to require maturity of our leaders, give up on all the silly posturing, and commit to cooperation in pursuit of real answers to the Big Issues. That is the vision that can sustain our species' window of opportunity in the present precarious context. At the ideal level, I am optimistic about the possibility that materializing this vision could occur, but I am not holding my pragmatic breath! There are just too many "Popes" or "Wahabi" Ayatollahs, and anti-government, one-world-order paranoids, and self-serving warlords, and self-righteous vigilantes, and corrupt dictators and bureaucrats, and offshore tax evaders, and avaricious Wall Street hedge fund operators and traders, and criminal gangs, and drug lords out there. And there are

far too many uneducated, gullible humans who believe that their “Pope/Imam/Tea Party Leader/ Warlord, etc.” is somehow in possession of the absolute, if mostly 12th century, Elder Truth. Given all of the conservative forces of restraint and the weakness of the commitment of the international community to true cooperation and enlightened, progressive change, it is entirely possible for humans to stumble worldwide into an Armageddon that has nothing to do with “God’s Will” and everything to do with the impressive human capacity for avoidance, stupidity and intransigence. For all of our supposed intelligence, are we humans really any better than the horde of lemmings gathering to run over the cliff edge and into the sea below?

Hope springs eternal. The question is: will we be privileged to continue our hoping from a platform of advanced civilization or will we be reduced to the condition of survivalist bands and tribes and once again looking to the sky and “knowing” the earth is the center of the universe and continuing to believe that each of our little bands with its exclusive, dogmatic beliefs is favored by a God who has jihad uppermost on His mind?

Youth and Age. Progressive Elders anyone?

Happiness
2010

Researching happiness has become a hot topic in recent years with some illuminating findings. One of the most important of these is the discovery that material well-being and wealth correlate with happiness only until a slight reserve is in place beyond what is required to support biological needs [food, warmth, shelter, health]. Thereafter increases in wealth and material possession result in only momentary joy. And after moderate levels of wealth are achieved, additional wealth actually correlates with a reduction in happiness. What is going on here?

Clearly there is no simple equation that relates happiness to amount of wealth. Happiness is a much more complicated phenomenon than that. Generally speaking, happiness is a direct consequence of a person's or group's momentary sense of pleasure or overall sense of security; and a concern for security arises throughout the natural world and at all social levels: personal, familial, communal, national, etc. In addition, many factors influence how pleasurable the moment is and how secure a person or group feels in the natural environment and as a member of different social collectives. For the most part, the greater the overall sense of pleasure in the moment and/or ease in the natural and social worlds, the higher the level of happiness.

Of course happiness is a response to a direct sense of pleasure or a perceived situation of ease, not necessarily a truly secure situation. A person or group can be in a state of exhilaration but unaware of a looming threat that is about to overturn that state – the tiger or terrorist in the bushes. So, duration of the happiness state is also an important feature defining happiness; it can be momentary or prolonged, and the more prolonged the expectation of pleasure and/or security is in all respects, the greater the sense of happiness. Uncertainty in any of the realms that influence the sense of pleasure or security reduces the strength of happiness. But, almost paradoxically, it is also the case that happiness does not sustain in a permanent state of secured leisure. We are pleasured by secure respite, but to sustain happiness we also need stimulation and action at an acceptable level of risk. Acceptable risk and leisure have to cycle in the right proportion and at the right pace and level of intensity in order to contribute to happiness. And few are happy beyond the moment without this balanced cycle being in place.

But happiness is more than pleasure and security and cycling leisure and stimulating risk taking. It also is a function of success and achievement, and these are culturally determined. Meeting culturally incorporated expectations for success and achievement in all the areas of life affects the level of both individual and group happiness. We may be secure in all other respects, but if we conceive of ourselves as failing to meet expectations, happiness can be hard to find. It follows that all the factors that influence self-esteem are part of the package that determines level of happiness.

So, happiness is a state of mind at the individual level, and the happiness quotient for a group is some composite of this state among the members, allowing for the fact that the sense of ease among some individuals has a greater impact on the group than others. Some may be very happy, others much less so, and it can take the unhappiness of only

a few influential people to severely reduce the quotient for other members and the group as a whole.

It turns out that Happiness is both a matter of momentary pleasure as well as a high order, cumulative barometer of the human condition at the individual and all social levels. It is a summation of the overall situation of ease, security, and success of the individual and of the collective at all levels of identity and participation in the natural and social world, and it is enhanced and promoted by the expectation that these conditions will sustain over time.

That sounds right; it covers the biological, physical, natural, social and cultural conditions that determine happiness over time. But since happiness is a state of mind, there is another very significant element that must be included in the happiness envelope. This is the spiritual variable in happiness, and it can render happiness as determined by the other variables almost irrelevant. Some of the highest happiness quotients are reported for monks living as hermits in biological conditions at the edge of survival and isolated from all other humans. How can this be? It turns out that the perceived expectation for a high level of security and ease and of their prolonged presence can be a function of an internal state of mind as much as it is of external circumstances. And sustaining certain states of mind can literally take a person to nirvana [way beyond happiness – all the way to complete fulfillment] almost regardless of external conditions.

So, there is happiness determined by an internal sense of security and ease as discovered through the development and exploration of the intuitive mental faculty, and there is happiness determined by a sense of pleasure, security and ease as created by the condition of all those external biological, physical, natural, social and cultural variables. And one does not necessarily correlate with the other; indeed the happiness consequences of internal and external variables are often complementary rather than supplementary.

When we appreciate the real complexity of what makes for human happiness, it is all the more astonishing that our western culture can continue to recognize only three sources for “approved” happiness: sex, wealth and religion, and one non-approved source: drugs. With regard to two of these external variables, we know from experience that sex and drugs are momentary sources of pleasure and happiness. And from research we know that the third external variable, wealth, is a rapidly diminishing source of happiness after rather minimal needs are met. So, none of these variables, alone or in combination, goes very far to promote a prolonged sense of happiness. What about religion?

Religion is the system of beliefs that we substitute for the internal spiritual source of happiness in the complex above, trying to convince ourselves that this substitution is one of equivalency. Although religion in all of its literalistic and dogmatic forms is an apparent fix, it is in fact not an adequate substitute for the spiritual source of internal happiness. Religion externalizes the spiritual in gods and saints and priests and saviors and allows for an internal source of happiness only secondarily – through faith and belief in these external agencies. Religion is an easy, quick fix – relying on other entities to do the work for us as a consequence of our acts of supplication and

appeasement. By contrast, in spirituality, the sacred is within us as well as a principle throughout existence, and we take personal and individual responsibility for discovering, developing and exploring its significance – with appropriate guidance from others. This is the spiritual search or quest, and it is very challenging and it demands far more from us at the personal and social levels than does religion, but the rewards of the spiritual pursuit are great and the implications for relations with others are far less problematic. By externalizing the spiritual in religious beings, by identifying the actions [rituals] that are required to interact productively with them, and by housing absolute TRUTH in these beings and actions – with as many different beings and actions as there are religions, we create gods and rituals to argue and fight over. In this way, religion converts internal spirituality into another source of external conflict, terror, and inhumanity. Religion is an easy fix – just get saved or born again, and again, and again; and for religion's select believers it seems to provide an avenue to the internal source of happiness, but it is a partial and a dangerous fix. And besides its terrible role in promoting massive human conflict, religion is like a drug, an external source of apparent internal self-confirmation [happiness] that can be addictive and detrimental to the development of real internal happiness.

So, we westerners have latched on to four sources for happiness in sex, wealth, drugs and religion that even in combination drastically reduce and misrepresent the happiness complex. Particularly interesting in this reductive happiness schema is the absence of all the social and communal variables that support happiness – quality relationships at all levels. Why are we dwelling in this reductive delusion? I suggest that a key element in explaining this seeming absurdity lies in the matter of Uncertainty. Prolonged uncertainty [and its companion, anxiety] concerning any one or combination of the variables affecting happiness can greatly reduce the happiness quotient for any individual or group. And the wider the societal spread of this prolonged uncertainty, the greater the reduction in happiness across greater stretches of humanity.

An argument can be made in this regard that since modern information and communication can report natural and human events planet-wide and almost instantaneously to most modern human groups, and since somewhere there are always very negative natural and social events to report with a full array of graphics to bring the message "home," more and more humans live in what they perceive to be an ever more uncertain natural and social condition. Uncertainty on any variable at any level is the enemy of happiness, and modern humans are daily exposed to the evidence for uncertainty on multiple variables [engendering at least low level anxiety or fear]. With so few who achieve happiness by discovering internal, spiritual enlightenment, it is no wonder that we moderns are tempted to grasp at what is in fact a nonsensical proposition that sex and wealth and drugs and religion will somehow provide happiness. Seeking immediate physical gratification, escaping into drug induced euphoria, pursuing material acquisition, and looking for a quick fix for internal happiness in religion are four things we can DO individually to stave off the constant barrage of uncertainty and seemingly provide internal and external satisfaction and security for ourselves. We cannot control the social and natural domains, so "doing" there does not bear immediate happiness fruit. Our reductive strategy does not work, but we keep trying and continuing to operate under the same simplistic happiness banner.

The solution is apparent: stop unnecessarily bombarding ourselves with sources of uncertainty, recognize and redefine ourselves in terms of the full happiness variable complex – especially those in the social and natural domains, address the conditions that promote the escape in drugs, and release the false substitution of religion for spirituality.

Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future (2007)
By Bill McKibben

Review

2007

McKibben argues that the ever expanding growth model of the economy that the world of nations has become committed to over the last 200 years is not sustainable into the future for the following reasons: 1) it is built upon and subsidized by fossil fuels, which will soon be depleted, 2) the burning of fossil fuels is a major cause of global warming, which threatens the entire ecology upon which human civilized society depends, 3) natural resources are not sufficient, even without these fossil fuel problems, to support a world-wide standard of living comparable to what America and the western world enjoy, and 4) the prevailing Adam Smith economic perspective, which underpins the expanding economic model, has resulted in "hyper-individualism" encouraging the endless pursuit of acquisition while diminishing the commitment to community – with the result that in spite of their voracious acquisitive behavior, these humans suffer from a reduced quality of life and level of happiness.

The answer for McKibben is a return to a local/regional economic model that seeks sustainability, not growth, and which is more energy efficient, more communal, less polluting, and more happy/healthy – if somewhat more expensive. McKibben provides a wealth of data to support his complex of contentions, and the book is valuable for this reason alone. McKibben recognizes that his data is more suggestive than decisive, but the breadth of the data over a worldwide scope is impressive to reveal both the problems associated with the expansion model and the potential advantages of the local, community oriented approach to economy.

McKibben's argument rests on the validity of his contention that there is no substitute for cheap fossil fuels and that, without fossil fuels, the hyper efficiency model built on the assumption of ever larger scale production and distribution is not sustainable. McKibben may be right – that there is no cheap energy source alternative, or that such a source cannot be developed and comprehensively distributed/substituted in time to curtail the collapse that is destined for the fossil fuel dependent expanding economy model. I am not so sure. As much as I appreciate McKibben's celebration of the need for a greater community sense in developed/media-computer-virtual oriented/hyper-individualistic/ energy inefficient America, I can still see a path to alternative cheap energy, if a few technical blocks can be addressed in the areas of 1) solar energy [photovoltaics], 2) energy storage [batteries and transmission], 3) hydrogen fuel cell technology, 4) geo-thermal technology, and 5) ultimately in fusion based nuclear energy. If the developed world were to collectively sponsor a Manhattan scale project to address these issues, it could well be possible to come up with cheap, universally available, non-polluting energy sources that can more than replace fossil fuels.

Of course, McKibben is correct that even with a cheap and comprehensively available energy alternative there still is no way to support a worldwide standard of living [with its associated level of overall resource use] comparable to that of the current western world. The need to scale back western excesses, and to conserve and to recycle resources is a critical part of any realistic view of the continued viability of the expansion model. But these efforts can be seriously addressed at the same time a cheap energy

source is pursued, and together they can support the contention that the economy can continue to expand to the point of achieving a reasonable world standard of living. We need to hear a critique of McKibben's work first from the expansion economists and then from those really knowledgeable about the energy technology and resource fields before we adopt the local economic model "out of necessity" that McKibben is proposing. After all, McKibben is neither a professional economist nor an energy expert, and he has selected his evidence to support his thesis.

The need to address the problems associated with the ever-expanding economic model [hyper-individualism, excessive wealth accumulation among the rich few – individuals and countries, and all the ills that come with loss of community at appropriate scales] is needed, whether there is a cheap energy source alternative for fossil fuels or not. And it is really this concern that is at the underlying motive of McKibben's work. We can respect McKibben's assessment of these problems without accepting his assumption that the expansion model is inherently unsustainable because there is no cheap energy source alternative for fossil fuels.

McKibben's arguments are short on considering the nutritional and health issues associated with the agribusiness food production system under the expansion model. He celebrates the local and organic food models for their lack of pesticide effects, and he mentions the micronutrient absence in most chemically based monoculture production, but nutritional and health issues related to food produced in the agribusiness model are much deeper than these matters. And of course, with a source of cheap energy, large-scale agribusiness can adopt an organic approach to food production; so going organic and addressing the nutritional and health issues does not preclude a continued commitment to an expansion based agribusiness model. Add the best aspects of the works of Michael Pollan [The Omnivore's Dilemma], Jonathan Foer [Eating Animals], and Allan and Lutz [Life Without Bread] to McKibben's work and the overall argument that McKibben wants to make is substantially bolstered.

McKibben also does not make any effort to include or assess the importance of the spiritual component [not necessarily a religious component!] in human relations and human communities. I would argue that this spiritual element is a key ingredient of human happiness and the basis for committing to community in the civilized state; so if McKibben wants to celebrate community, he had better find a way at some point to constructively address the spiritual aspect of the human experience. It is the spiritual perspective on reality that counters the material perspective and that provides the basis for alleviating the hyper-individualism and excessive materialism that McKibben deplores. This is the next deeper layer in the McKibben argument for community, a layer he has not yet addressed, whatever the situation may be with respect to the dependency of the expansionist economy on cheap energy and its effects on community.

In spite of what is not in Deep Economy, McKibben has offered us a valuable and challenging work and an important contribution in what should be a central discussion within the American and western world.

AMERICAN, WESTERN, AND NATIVE CULTURE

In this category the specific subjects are diverse. The essays reflect my more general concern with issues as they arise in specific events: liberal vs. conservative grid lock in politics, the sources of American's disaffection with their political process, a cautious response to terrorism, questioning the appropriateness of a separate adolescent culture, the effect of romance in determining marriage on the stability of childrearing, bias against mass media, coming of age customs in Norway, the role of religion in modern civilization, and curriculum choices within new settlement options for Native Americans. I bring the perspective of Dynamic Humanism to each of these topics.

Conservative Versus Liberal – What's the Difference?

2009

In America, a great deal of fuss is made over the attribution of the terms "liberal" and "conservative," especially as they apply in the policy making arena where these terms are often used to disparage the views of opponents. In light of the conflict that the use of these terms both indicates and engenders, many have tried to define what it means to be "a liberal" or "a conservative" but without much success. While I think it is possible to indicate what characterizes the difference between a liberal and a conservative perspective, I think it is mostly impossible to categorize people or groups as a whole using these terms. I explore this seeming paradox in what follows.

The terms "liberal" and "conservative" begin as adjectives which describe points of view relative to one another [the liberal position vs. the conservative stance]. Only secondarily are these terms pressed into service as nouns to generalize about individuals or groups - "a conservative" or "a liberal". It is these generalizations about individuals and groups that typically do not hold up, and for good reason. The fact is that the point of view of individuals and groups very often changes between a more liberal and a more conservative position as the issues change. And as the individual or group in the comparison changes, it frequently occurs that what was a liberal position in one comparative context becomes a conservative position in another. For clarification, let's consider some examples, using the current debate over immigration – especially on America's southern border with Mexico. Allowing for the range of more and less liberal and conservative positions on the immigration issue, an example liberal position might be one that emphasizes and sympathizes with the economic needs of both non-citizens [Hispanics] and the many American enterprises that employ them – helping to keep costs down and products and services competitive in a world economy. A conservative position might be one that emphasizes the negative effect of illegal workers and their families on wages for American workers or the costs to American taxpayers of providing health, education, and social services for these illegals. In this example comparison, the liberal position considers the needs of both Americans and Hispanics and accepts a more fluid and accommodating border, while a conservative position seeks to secure America's borders and to punish those who illegally attempt to enter or remain in the country.

While these kinds of liberal and conservative positions seem rather straight forward, the situation easily becomes more complex. For instance, within the liberal position on immigration there are those who favor general amnesty for existing illegals, those who favor amnesty for select categories of illegals, and those who reject amnesty all

together. Relative to support for general amnesty, each of the alternative positions is conservative, and the last is conservative relative to the middle position. So, as the issue changes, or in this case as the issue becomes more specified [amnesty within the immigration matter], it is entirely possible for an individual to hold a liberal position on the general issue and a conservative position on the more specific matter within it. Correspondingly, within the conservative position on immigration, there are those who favor the more liberal capture and deportation way to handle transgressors versus those who favor the more conservative imprisonment solution or even those vigilantes who favor shooting to maim or kill. Given these differences among liberals and among conservatives themselves, identifying who is "a liberal" and who is "a conservative," even on this single issue is not at all clear.

Across issues and domains the same complexity applies: those who favor a conservative approach to immigration may support a liberal view of the medical use of marihuana or of benefits for the handicapped. The fact is that individuals are not consistently liberal or conservative on all issues or in all spheres of life [social, religious, political, economic, etc.] And the same applies to groups, although there are some groups that are single issue and highly specified in orientation. Add in the fact that even on the same issue, individuals are not consistent and the matter becomes even more muddled. For example it is not uncommon to find people who favor increased taxes to support improving libraries [a more liberal position], while at the same time hiring accountants at the personal level to aggressively pursue reducing their individual tax liability. Liberal or conservative ideology is not necessarily matched by behavior when it comes to an individual's self interest. In this regard, the immigration conservative who even participates in private militia border patrols may conveniently "overlook" the illegal housekeeper or gardener that he or she employs on a regular basis.

The fact is that liberal and conservative labels can only be assigned under individual, comparative, and rather highly specified conditions. Alter the members [individuals or groups] in the comparison, or the issue, or the specificity within the issue, or consider the personal behavior in relation to the issue, and the labels can and often do flip. This is why it is so difficult to define in general "a conservative" or "a liberal." Individuals and most groups are very rarely consistently liberal or conservative relative to others in all cases. Only those who dwell at the extremes of the liberal – conservative continuum will occupy those positions when compared to others in nearly all situations. And, as we will see, these extremes invite a comparison to the pathological.

In most cases, if we change the positions of the parties in the comparison, one person's liberal becomes another person's conservative.

Allowing for the conditional and relativistic nature of the assignment of the terms "liberal" and "conservative," it is nevertheless possible to characterize the distinction between the liberal and conservative perspectives themselves. The key distinction is that the social scope of the reference group for the conservative perspective will always be more limited or circumscribed than that for the liberal perspective. And correspondingly, the liberal perspective will always reference a more expansive or inclusive social framework than the conservative perspective. Put another way, the liberal perspective will always identify to a greater extent with the party or entity that the conservative perspective would ignore or exclude. A liberal perspective is inclusive at whatever scope it applies

[our land, our resources, our community, our economy, our faith, our world], while a conservative perspective is exclusive at whatever scope it applies [my land, my money, my home, my family, my church, my race, my ethnic group, my business, my country]. The full scope of consideration ranges from ego only to all entities of the cosmos. Select any point of reference on this continuum and the conservative position orients in the exclusive direction while the liberal stance orients in the inclusive direction. Whatever the issue may be, this is the key to the distinction between liberal and conservative points of view.

To clarify this distinction, consider some representative, comparative examples on particular issues: 1) Capital punishment: From a conservative perspective, the crime of the perpetrator is serious enough for the citizen to be permanently excluded from society by ending his or her life. From the liberal perspective, whatever his or her crime, he or she retains his or her membership as a citizen and human being and should receive a significant but not terminal punishment. 2) Health Care: From the conservative perspective, each individual or family is responsible for providing for their own health care and should make their own arrangements for this provision. Those who cannot or do not provide for their own health care invite whatever negative consequences follow. From the liberal perspective, it is society that needs its citizens to be healthy, so it is society that should provide directly or indirectly for the health care for its citizens – no one should be excluded from the opportunity for good health. 3) Abortion: From the conservative perspective, it is each individual life that is of paramount value and life begins at its earliest moment – conception. From the liberal perspective, individual life is important but so is both the life of the mother and the ability and commitment of the parents to provide for the successful rearing of the child. From the liberal perspective, life begins when the child is in its last stages of development and nearing the time of entering the world, and excluding consideration of the interests of others beyond the “rights” of the fetus is too limited. 4) War on Terror: From the conservative perspective, national security is paramount and moving expeditiously to force in seeking retribution is necessary to address all who attack America, her institutions, or citizens. From the liberal perspective, national security is important, but so are respectful international relations; so it is as important to look beyond America and her interests at what motivates aggressive behavior toward America and Americans and to work to address these issues and to move to a military option only as a last resort. 5) Gun Control: From the conservative perspective, each individual has the right to defend him or her self in the face of serious threat to life, property, or well-being. And encouraging citizens to arm themselves with guns is the best way to assure that they will have this ability. From the liberal perspective, self-defense is legitimate, but easy access to hand guns and automatic firearms for all individuals also makes these weapons readily available to criminals, encourages their use in criminal acts, and increases the likelihood that innocent citizens and law enforcement personnel will be seriously injured or killed.

In each of the above examples, the liberal perspective in the comparison considers the issue from a more inclusive social position – allowing for a greater degree of acceptance, obligation or respect for those individuals or groups who have the potential to be affected. Conversely, the conservative perspective in the comparison sets more limited social boundaries and excludes from acceptance, obligation or respect those who lie outside those boundaries.

Within their respective social domains of reference, both conservative and liberal perspectives apply a principle of equality and fairness, but in the comparison, the domain of the liberal perspective is always more expansive than that of the conservative perspective. At the extreme, the hyper-conservative perspective is centered on the single individual and considers only his or her needs, wants and desires as legitimate. Even spouses and immediate family lie outside the domain of acceptance and respect in this extreme view. On the other hand, at the extreme, the hyper liberal perspective commits to a universal principle of fairness and equality across all of cosmic existence, including, of course, all humans and all "living" creatures on earth. The interest of all of existence is included and fully respected in this extreme and idyllic liberal viewpoint.

Virtually no one lives totally at these extremes; sociopaths and ascetic, vegetarian monks are about as close as humans get to commitment at these extreme positions of conservatism and liberalism. Most of us live in the middle zone, oscillating between the pull of these conservative and liberal extremes depending on our basic socio-philosophic view and our personal interests. The more we trend toward considering only our personal interests or those of our own limited and "exclusive" groups [whether these groups be family, business, ethnic community, tribe, department, organization, race, platoon, region, nation, etc.], the more conservative we are. As conservatives, the principles of equality and fairness apply only within our reference group. Outsiders and strangers [other gangs, families, corporations, ethnic groups, races, religious believers, etc.] are identified as easy to exclude from acceptance and respect. And once excluded, these "others" may be ignored, shunned, denigrated, preyed upon, enslaved, or even exterminated depending on the level of opportunity or threat they are seen to pose. On the other hand, the more we trend toward committing to a universal principle of fairness and equality at an ever increasing scope of social reference [from family, to humanity, to Gaia, etc.], the more liberal we are. As we approach the liberal extreme, we may denounce the needs and desires of individuals and curtail efforts by individuals and groups of more limited scope to gain an advantage in influence, wealth, power, or prestige. But to disallow gain and advantage for some is to deny competition and to threaten the motivation for human achievement, innovation, and progress – the biological imperative of the modern predatory human species. So, the ultimate liberal lives in an ideal state of total existential interconnectedness where equality and fairness prevail comprehensively, while the ultimate conservative lives in complete social isolation in competition with all that surrounds him or her. The ultimate liberal obeys only the social imperative, while the ultimate conservative obeys only the biological imperative. Alone, neither of these extremes is realistic or productive.

In the end, as in all things, the liberal and conservative debate is not a matter of right and wrong. It is just one of the ways we point to tendencies in thought and action, which as humans we must negotiate and balance. It is more important first, that we are aware of this ongoing challenge to us as individuals and as members of social groups at many different levels, and second, that we employ this awareness to decide in general and on specific issues where we want to locate ourselves and our membership groups in this dynamic equilibrium. The worst circumstance is to be inadvertently captured by labels and their associated fixed ideologies. We all dwell within the pull of liberal and conservative tendencies, and, in fact, the "labels" are always floating and relative. The vast majority of us are not simply liberal or conservative; we are both. At different times

or on different issues we are one or the other only in comparison to the position of some other person or group. We do ourselves a disservice to press ourselves or others into one general category or the other. The reality is more nuanced and subtle than that!

Yes, as we Americans negotiate the conservative – liberal center between our major political parties, Republicans trend generally in a more conservative direction while Democrats trend in a more liberal direction. And yes, in comparison to other developed nations, the American dynamic center is somewhat more conservative. But neither Republicans nor Democrats are anywhere near the conservative or liberal extremes, and both deserve the respect of the other.

It is the greatest shame of our current political situation that we have allowed ourselves to carve out such extreme, disrespectful, and disingenuous rhetoric to characterize what are in fact rather small differences in how our major parties envision balance in the center of the liberal – conservative dynamic. And unfortunately much of our news media, with its fascination with the sensational and its orientation more to entertainment than to education, stokes the fires of extreme rhetoric – whether liberal or conservative – by focusing attention on the claims of extremists and in the name of "impartiality" not exposing their glaring weaknesses. Real debate is not won with sound bites and cute or outrageous comments, or with salacious name calling by quick-mouthed media populists. It is won by reasoned argument that appeals to the facts and that reflects the best thought of experts on the subject. It is time for the media and the emerging blogosphere to start serving the public good, stop attending to celebrity "news" extremists, and expose the selective editing of the facts by these extremists to fit their undeclared biases. And it is time for liberals and conservatives alike to stop encouraging the media and blogosphere feeding frenzy by knowingly offering them disinformation, spin, and sensational sound bites. As citizens, who are in reality both liberal and conservative, we have to demand better of ourselves, our elected officials, and our information media.

Unfortunately, until we become as "liberal" as our developed brethren and exclude the unseemly influence of money in politics, close the revolving door between politicians and lobbyists, and create the conditions in which our elections are won by those offering the best ideas to preserve and advance the public good, it is very unlikely that we will escape the negative effects of the current perfect legislative storm that leaves us paralyzed by and in the throes of a phony, media enhanced, liberal – conservative debate, which ends up mainly serving the objectives of moneyed special interests.

Money, Speech and Spin in American Politics

2010

The frustration and disappointment of Americans with the way our political system presently operates is largely a function of two glaring weaknesses that have become endemic: 1) the negative influence of money in the political process, and 2) the prevalence of disingenuous and manipulative communication by politicians, political parties and the Media celebrity commentators and Internet rabble rousers. These systemic flaws in turn first, encourage partisan posturing and ideological gridlock, which greatly reduce the efficiency of the system [do nothing Congressional sessions], second, cause the public to question the legitimacy of the resulting products [laws that serve special interests rather than the public], and third, paint as corrupt the entire political system to the point where many Americans have lost faith in the integrity and utility of government as a whole.

In the last couple of decades, a majority of Americans have come to question whether their government can meaningfully address the range of pressing issues before the nation: curbing economic recession, developing sufficient alternative energy sources, providing and maintaining public infrastructure, supporting public health, improving public education, supervising military needs and expenditures, addressing local and planetary environmental challenges, assessing public welfare needs, deciding on appropriate responses to conflict and terrorism [warfare and/or diplomacy], supervising the appropriate use of natural resources, regulating business and financial institutions, providing local and national law enforcement and security, etc. Public apathy and anti-government movements alike are reflections of the public's sense of the political system as wasteful and bordering on being corrupt and unreliable. The excitement of the successful Obama presidential candidacy with its major drumbeat for Change demonstrated the thirst of the public for major reforms both to bring integrity to the nation's political process and to address major societal challenges. Unfortunately the first year of the Obama presidency has illustrated the pervasive continuance of all the old weaknesses in both process and communication in America's political sphere. The result is that many Americans have returned to disillusionment and retired to cynicism, apathy or anti-government protest [Tea Party].

Belief in the viability of the American political process is affected by the following two unfortunate and unnecessary equation sequences:

1) The Money Line: Money equated with free speech and thereby allowed mostly unrestrained use in the political process = Lobbyists hired to advocate for the special interests of particular groups = Contributions made selectively to the campaign coffers of "friendly" representatives seeking election and re-election to Congress = Get your "friends" elected to office = Subsequent "special" access for moneyed contributors and moneyed lobbyists to their "friends" to influence the legislative process = Legislation gets created and passed [including earmarks] that serves these moneyed special interests = Unfair advantage provided in support, in position of power granted, or in exclusion from taxation for these moneyed interests = The average citizen and public interest groups see themselves as second class = Cynicism becomes pervasive among the public regarding the integrity of the political process = Apathy and anti-government movements result.

2) The Communications Line: Issue for debate = Politicians and parties immediately adopt ideological positions = Politicians and parties determine talking points and calculate spin on the issue to maximally influence public opinion = Spokespersons reiterate the partisan ideological message ad nauseum to and through all Media = Political commentators/hacks/celebrities in the Media and on the Internet further select and manipulate the facts, introduce outright falsehoods, and interpret the selected and skewed facts to suggest extreme consequences = Extremists become the focus of attention and are allowed to characterize the choices in the debate in extreme terms = The debate becomes increasingly inflamed and the public and the parties progressively more polarized = The opposition employs procedural maneuvers to thwart and paralyze the legislative process = No action or only inconsequential action is taken on the issue = The public and politicians on all sides become more angry and frustrated = Politicians and parties seek retribution and fail to explore options for cooperation on subsequent issues = Polarization and paralysis becomes systemic = In the face of political divisiveness and ineptitude, the public becomes cynical, apathetic, or supports anti-government movements.

Note that both of these sequences lead to the same final effect – public disgust, apathy and protest, so this overall effect is greatly magnified. Now, let's look at each of these problems in more detail.

First the money line: Apologists for the existing flood of money in politics are fond of making two claims. First, they offer loud declarations to the effect that monetary contributions to the campaigns of politicians, the connection of lobbyists to these large money sources of contributions, and the highly remunerative revolving door from corporate offices and their Boards of Directors to Congress and back again has no influence on lawmakers and the legislation they support. But in spite of these protestations, the facts reveal otherwise. It only takes a brief excursion into bill sponsorship, actual voting records, and the identity of the lawmakers proposing special concessions, subsidies and earmarks to discover the overwhelming evidence for the FACT of this not very hidden quid pro quo.

The second argument that the apologists make in support of the current allowance for money in politics is that all special interests of all persuasions have an equal opportunity to influence the political process by raising money and buying the attention of politicians. While this may be theoretically the case, in reality no such parity comes close to existing.

Corporate entities and corporate consortiums [from Commercial Trade Associations to Chambers of Commerce] are in a continual state of being fully organized with huge capital resources to pursue their interests in shaping legislation. The private citizen has no such constantly active and available organizational or capital base. Instead, the public interest [the interest of the American people as a whole] must be aroused at the level of individuals, collected into an organizational structure, and monetary support generated from the grass roots level for each issue. And that takes expertise, time, and energy for which there is no one to pay the bill. Corporations and their consortiums support full time staffs of attorneys and public relations experts who are always ready with monetary resources to advocate for their interests, so they can get ahead of the

game and influence overall policy before the public even becomes aware of the way policy will affect it with regard to a particular issue or action. Moreover, corporations are positioned to execute elaborate disinformation and spin campaigns to influence public opinion so that much of this public fails to even properly discern its own interests.

It is a total sham to suggest that there is in reality a Level Playing Field in the political contest between the American Public/Unions /Public Benefit Non-Profits and Corporations [think instead a high school athletic team vs. a professional team]. And now that the Supreme Court in its decision in Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission [FEC] has authorized virtually unlimited corporate, moneyed influence in American politics, this situation is even more lopsided [think a little league team vs. a professional team].

Once powerful American trade unions, which for a brief period represented the interests of middle class, working Americans, and partially countered the corporations as a special interest, are now greatly reduced in their membership and influence. They have been depleted by legislation promoting anti-union policies and by the World Trade Organization [WTO], whose ratifying members [nations] agree to allow WTO trade rules to supercede their own national trade and tariff laws. The WTO, which is an international artifact of corporate interests, has opened the door for corporations to pursue their exclusive monetary interests without restraint in relocating their enterprises to the cheapest labor markets regardless of the social or environmental impacts. In the name of promoting competition, money rules, and corporations are the modern moneyed "class."

The contention that input from labor unions offsets that from corporations in the political contest is positively absurd in the current context. And since the demise of labor unions, nothing has arisen to replace them to represent the interests of average working Americans. Special interest non-profits and "Think Tanks" have emerged, but there are as many of these often euphemistically named non-profits and foundations supporting the cause of corporations as there are supporting the public benefit interests of average citizens. So, the effect of these entities cancel one another out, and the corporations are left unchallenged with their overwhelming advantage.

So, under scrutiny, neither of the apologist claims hold up in the effort to justify the excessive influence of money, and especially corporate money in the American political arena. As it now stands, corporations are positioned to rule politics and their rule is in the process of being consolidated. If Americans do not wake up and put a halt to this situation, America is very likely to become a corporate oligarchy masquerading as a representative democracy – in effect the best government corporations can buy.

Now, what about the apologists for the horrendous state of communication in politics. As in the case of money, it comes down to an interpretation of the scope of the First Amendment guaranteeing Free Speech to the individual versus the interest of the majority to pursue the public good. While most people recognize the sad state of affairs in the communications among our politicians and in the messages they disseminate to both party members and the public, many think the free speech guarantee makes it impossible to restrict speech in virtually any area, politics included. As in most matters,

the solution is to achieve a balance between individual rights and the public or communal good and not to allow the one to unnecessarily trump the other.

I would suggest that in the political arena "free speech" is being allowed to trample the public good. In the name of free speech, calculated misinformation, disinformation, spin, outright falsehood, and rumor and fear mongering are being allowed to overwhelm the effort to communicate accurate information. Indeed, these dissembling forms of communication have largely replaced reliable information based communications. The result is that the ability of the public to make political decisions based on valid information has been severely compromised. We do not allow free speech to extend to yelling "Fire" in a theater, but we are allowing the equivalent kinds of communications with the equivalent overall effect in politics. Under the cover of free speech, we permit dissembling of the worst kind in political speech to the point where a few wealthy people are able to sponsor largely unrestricted 527 organizations, which can disseminate outright falsehoods [Swiftboating] or irresponsible and manipulative half-truths [Hillary film] nationwide at critical points in the election process. These 527 organizations, of whatever political persuasion, with their strategically placed, unconscionable products are yelling "Fire" into the American political theater, and we are protecting them! The hurt to the public is not physical as in people dying in a theater, but our capitulation in the face of comparable "speech" behavior is coming close to killing effectiveness in our political institutions.

Arguing for an absolute free speech right to the point of protecting the mass distribution of products containing intentional falsehoods is excessively permissive, just as restricting the right of an individual to say what he or she thinks privately to anyone he or she wants would be excessively restrictive. We are talking about achieving balance, and in the current circumstance restrictions need to be instituted to control for excessive permissiveness in political speech. We have an obligation to not allow free speech to put the integrity of our political process and institutions in peril.

What to do? I propose five actions to address seven key areas of concern. There may well be disagreement on How I specifically recommend that these actions be implemented, but what is really important is that in some adequate manner they MUST be adequately addressed if Americans are to see substantial improvement in their political process.

1. <u>Create a New Legal Category [Legal Party of Limited Interest] and Eliminate the Confusion Caused by Corporations Being Viewed as Perpetual Legal Persons</u>. Corporations as currently defined in virtually all states are entities with a singular interest – to maximize financial benefits to their shareholders. For corporations to serve broader public interests is to invite a conflict with the law. By contrast, individual citizens – real persons – have many and varied interests, which they must consider in a balanced overall manner in making decisions. They have economic interests like corporations, but they also have concerns in the areas of family; education; religion, work/career/ profession; neighborhood/ community; health; local, state and national politics; environment; local and national security; international relations, etc. Corporations are not individuals because by law they are guided by a singular economic interest. In the U.S., corporations were extended full status as legal persons through the back door when a pre-trial comment by a Supreme Court Chief Justice was included

as part of a Supreme Court decision. Over time, this view of corporations as "legal persons" has been broadened, and it has now been expanded by the recent 2010 Supreme Court decision – in terms of the corporate right of free speech – giving corporations the right to use money in politics equal to that of citizens.

Corporations need to be redefined in the law as Legal Parties of Limited Interest with certain rights, but not with rights equal to those of citizens, as guaranteed in the Constitution. All other limited interest parties should be included in this new category of legal entity because it is not just corporations that may pose this same problem to the integrity of the political process. Corporations are just the current culprits that have been allowed to get out of control. If corporations, and all limited interest parties, are so defined, the confusion over whether they have rights the scope of individuals can be eliminated, and all limited interest parties can also be appropriately restricted in their input in the political process.

2. Institute Mandatory Publicly Financed Campaigns and Elections for All Federally Elected Offices. This must be a no nonsense, no loophole version of reform, and it must include restrictions that assure that all political communication surrounding campaigns and elections are factual, fair and balanced. To be effective, this reform package must accomplish at least the following:

a. Each official candidate must provide his or her platform including his or her governing philosophy and position on all relevant issues in a full and written statement with documentation and citation of the related voting record.
b. A central role must be created for a strong Non-Partisan Election Board to 1) arrange, schedule, and conduct all debates among the candidates, 2) determine the questions for these debates and their wording, 3) oversee the public financing process and guarantee the restrictions are met, 4) pass on the fairness and accuracy of all platform statements and all distributions of information to the public before a candidacy is made official or the information is disseminated, 5) identify the issues to be addressed in candidate platforms, 6) assure there are no negative or disinformation campaigns by any candidate or any other party, 7) make public report on the accuracy of all assertions by one candidate about an opposing candidate as to his or her positions or record on issues, 8) assure the publicly available Media and Internet sites and commentators abide by their restrictions, 9) make sure that PAC's, parties and independent groups abide by their restrictions, 10) approve the fairness and accuracy of all publicly disseminated PAC, party and independent groups' informational material, 11) make sure the candidates' oral statements during the campaign respect the fullness of their platform statements, and 12) assign penalties for violations.
c. All PACs, parties and independent groups – including 527s – must be restricted to assure that they only promote their platforms and positions on issues, that they do not promote individual candidates, and that they represent information fairly and accurately in the information they disseminate to the public.
d. Only the candidates, their official campaign staffs, and individuals speaking as individuals can speak in favor of a candidate or against an opposing candidate. Political contests are to be between the candidates, not between parties or PACs or independent, special interest groups.

e. Media and the Internet: All communication on campaigns and elections that is available to the public during the campaign and election periods is limited to distribution of the platforms of the candidates, reporting on the activities in campaigns and elections, reporting on the political activity of PACs, parties and independent groups, reporting on Election Board decisions in the campaign and election process, and seeking clarification from the candidates on any issues that are uncertain or challenged by the opposing candidates. Sources of publicly available information on candidates and campaigns can fairly compare the qualifications, platforms, records, and proposals of the candidates, but they must not be in the business of judging or endorsing individual candidates, their campaigns or their platforms. All Media and publicly available Internet sites, and all organizations and individuals offering materials through them have a responsibility to fact check what they make available to the public, and they must not knowingly participate in the dissemination of partial truths or misinformation, or employ rhetoric to inflame or promote fear in the public. Individuals can say whatever they want in the form of private communications, but speech that is intended to be publicly available must be held to a much higher standard.

The intent of all these limitations and restrictions in the election process is to provide the members of the voting public with reliable information on the candidates and to encourage the voting public to decide how they will cast their votes on the basis of the candidates' actual philosophy, positions and proposals, and not on emotional and fear based spin.

3. Regulate Lobbying and the Revolving Door to Congressional Office. Special interests have a right to be heard by national representatives. But the interests of all parties that represent a substantial part of the public have a right to be heard equally, irrespective of the amount of money supporting them. All persons executing the role of a Congressional lobbyists [whether individuals, PACs, or separate groups] must be registered, indicating the issues of their concern, their positions on these issues, and all public and private sources of their support [no flow-through entities protecting the identity of the real contributors]. All Congressional Representatives – including their senior staff members – must keep and make public each month a record of all contacts with registered lobbyists, the time spent, and the positions promoted. Three years must separate the time between being a registered lobbyist or a congressional representative – including senior staff members – and becoming a person executing the opposite role or creating or working for any organization, corporation or group in this capacity. The public good requires that citizens know who is trying to influence their representatives, in what ways, for how much time, and how often. And this public must know how a lobbyist or a representative or any of a representative's senior staff have been previously employed to know what biases they may bring to the exercise of their new role.

4. Close the Constant Search for Legal Loopholes. It is time to make the Spirit of the law the Law, not just the Letter of the Law. All federal legislation contains both its specific language and the Report that accompanies it. The Report identifies the issue[s] addressed, the motivation for action, and the intent of the law to address the issue. The Letter of the Law is intended to capture the intent of the law, but often it fails to do

so completely. The consequence is that there is a constant search by interested parties to interpret the letter of the law in such a way that they can circumvent the full intent of the law. The intent of the law may be clear in the Report, but courts only consider the letter of the law and so invite this loophole-seeking process. The remedy is obvious: Include the Report together with the Letter of the Law as the complete legislative action. Any effort to circumvent the legislation in both its letter and intent must be regarded as a violation to be met with severe punishments. We must eliminate the legal enterprise of loophole crawling.

5. Require National Level Political Representatives to Justify Their Legislative Decisions by Certifying That They are Respecting National Priorities. American democracy is supposed to be in Lincoln's words, "of the people, by the people and for the people." And "People" in both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution means the American people as a whole, not government to serve a particular region, or state, or congressional constituency, or particular ethnic, religious, racial, or economic group. It follows that national level political action must be primarily about national matters, not about carving out support for local museums and bridges or generating contracts or subsidies to support local weapons manufacturers or potato farmers. Americans must demand from all of their federal representatives that they demonstrate a clear order of priority in their decision making on all legislative matters by answering the following questions in order: First, is the proposed action [including any amendment or earmark] good for the country as a whole? Second, is it good for the representative's region as a whole? Third, is it good for the representative's state as a whole. Fourth, is it good for the representative's district as a whole? And Fifth, is it good for individual social entities within that district? The greatest weight must go to the answer to the first question and so on through the sequence with the least weight going to a "Yes" answer to the fifth question. The best proposed actions are ones that receive a convincing "Yes" determination for each of these five questions. Any proposal that does not legitimately get a "Yes" response to the first and/or second question[s] is probably not an action appropriate for national level consideration. It may be a reasonable action to take at the state, county or local level. Americans must require that all decisions by their representatives pass the "priorities" test. And in order to pass, representatives must offer proof in writing, which is available to the public at the time of their vote on the proposed action, that they have made this full assessment and have provided a clear rationale for their decision. It is time to stop politicians from servicing the needs and desires of just their own constituency and getting reelected and accumulating seniority and congressional power while largely ignoring the greater whole. We need to demand that our politicians become statespersons.

Do the above five proposed actions seem harsh? Maybe. But, the current political process in America is greatly lacking in efficiency, civility, and respect for the public good. And the combined ills that are endemic in the system legitimately cause the public to question the system's fundamental fairness and integrity. It will require strong measures to adequately address these lacks and ills and to restore public faith in American politics. If we take money away as a determinant of outcomes in the political process, then legislative proposals and decisions can be made for the right reasons – what is of the greatest benefit to the most Americans. And the debate can center on what constitute real solutions, not on where the most political points can be scored in the effort to get money, to acquire or retain power, and to serve the moneyed interests –

in a process spiraling upon itself and into the sewer. The current gridlock in Congress is ideological, but money is the underlying cancer that serves both to amplify and perpetuate differences in political philosophy and to undermine reasonable efforts to find the creative and cooperative center. If we 1) take money out of the political process as a determinant in campaigns, elections and legislation, 2) redefine corporations as parties of limited interest with limited rights of participation in the political process, 3) require that the distribution of political information to the public by all parties in campaigns and elections be accurate and responsible, 4) make the focus of campaigns and elections about candidates and their ideas and proposals, 5) restrict the undue influence of lobbyists in the legislative process, 6) close the revolving door between Congress, lobbyists and all types of special interest groups, and 7) require representatives to prove that their decisions are guided by appropriate national priorities, then I am convinced that a lot of the extreme ideology that is currently supported by the political spin machines [as sponsored by special interests] will crumble since it cannot survive the test of what supports "the greater good." We might even get all the way to CIVILITY, even COOPERATION! At that point we should have converted apathy, cynicism and anti-government protest into renewed Faith by Americans in the Integrity of their political system. Imagine an outcome where the American public participates in the nation's political process actively, eagerly, and constructively.

Marriage in America: Romance and Child Rearing

2009

A recent issue of Time Magazine has a cover article on Marriage by Caitlin Flanagan, "Why Marriage Matters." July 13, 2009, pp. 45-49. In this article Flanagan wails against the impermanence of modern marriage in America with its almost casual acceptance of divorce and the unfortunate effect this ease of exit has on the children. She cites several modern studies that reveal the negative impact of single parent families on the development of children, one of the more interesting being in the area of educational success where children of two parent families of lower economic class status do better than those of single parent families of middle class status.

Flanagan highlights the conflict between the expectations of romantic love and the social requirements of child rearing. Marriage based on romantic love creates the expectation that the romance will persist throughout the relationship - "Till death do us part." When this expectation is not fulfilled for either party, interest shifts elsewhere to achieve the benefits of romantic involvement, and divorce is often the result of the consequent infidelity. Child rearing to meet the stability and guidance needs of children and the surrounding society requires commitment for the long term, beyond the bounds of most commitments to romantic fidelity.

Flanagan has no answer for the dilemma except to suggest that greater attention and emphasis on the importance of child rearing needs to be part of the picture in committing to marriage in America. While Flanagan identifies the sociological basis of marriage in the need for society to assure the effective rearing of offspring, she does not take the next logical step. If she looked cross-culturally at the history of marriage and the family, she would discover that in most cultures marriage is not based on romantic love, at least not based on romantic love more or less exclusively. In most cultures, marriages are either arranged by families or highly influenced by factors other than the romantic attraction of the two prospective partners. Attraction may be a component, but it is most often not the most important consideration. As a result, the partners do not enter these marriages with expectations that romantic love will necessarily pervade, maybe not even be present. The primary commitment is to child rearing and the contribution the progeny make to the larger family unit, clan and community. Romantic attachment may arise or be present to some extent at the outset, but it does not drive expectations. In this setting, infidelity is often accepted or tolerated, at least for the male, and multiple wives may even be an option. Divorce is rare in this societal set up, the rearing of children is much more secure, and apart from modern western civilization, this set up has been the norm through most of human existence.

So, if Flanagan wants to offer a resolution for the conflict she identifies in the marriage culture of modern American, she can appeal to human history and recommend arranged marriage where the potential partners at least have some input as to the attraction factor, but where romantic love and all the expectations that accompany it are assigned to secondary status and located in the periphery.

Of course, marriages based on romantic love that survive long-term can be the most satisfying, but such marriages are usually dependent for their longevity as much on quality communication, honesty, and growing together as they are on sex and

“romance.” And effective communication, honesty and growing together may even be easier in the arranged marriage situation where romantic expectations do not necessarily “cloud” the relationship.

Family and Community Lite
2010

In behalf of specialization and opportunity, the populations of western countries, and especially their professional, leadership "class," have become more and more mobile over the last several generations. It is often the case that professionals move their home base seven to ten times over the course of their lifetimes. These moves begin with relocation by family during upbringing and continue with college, university, and career/work changes of situation. And over the generations, these moves have come to cover greater and greater distances – state to state, region to region, coast to coast, country to country, continent to continent.

Prior to the 19th century most individuals lived and worked throughout their lives within 20 miles of where they were born. Indeed, dialect differences can be notable across relatively short distances in Europe exactly because the members of families tended to "belong" to the communities and villages where they were born and reared and because natural geological features limited contact between groups. War, famine, disease, economic hardship and antisocial behavior were the major forces that drove individuals to seek distant locations, not merely the option to do so. By contrast, it is now the exception that a college educated individual lives in the community or immediate area of where he or she grew up. And fewer and fewer children even live in the same community among the same peers throughout their childhood and adolescence.

The great advantage of this vastly increased mobility is the freedom it brings. When opportunity arises elsewhere, there are no obligations that stand in the way of picking up the family and moving wholesale to an area where it is often the case that only the "breadwinner" knows anyone in the new local community. Career and economy drive most of this movement, and improved standard of living for the nuclear family is the most common consequence – better salary, larger home, better neighborhood, better schools. And with more resources available, the family can foster the needs of its children more fully with better education and enhancement options so the offspring can pursue their independent goals wherever they may lead. In this setting, professionals are not restricted in their choices and no one is obliged to remain to serve the needs or interests of others. In fact the expectation is that children will leave home and that career will take them far beyond local reach. And adult children can no longer expect their parents to remain in their homes or communities since parents may move due to career or retirement choices for relocation in entirely different areas of the country or world. Indeed, retirement has come to be associated with a significant move for a great many professionals.

Great Freedom - - - But! There are losses associated with this freedom. Family is reduced to the nuclear unit of parents and their children instead of the larger extended family of surrounding siblings, aunts and uncles and cousins and grandparents. The individual family is mostly on its own to face all challenges without being able to rely in any immediate way on the advice, input, assistance and resources of other extended family members. The security that extended family provides to buffer economic, health and child rearing problems is greatly reduced in this free and mobile social condition.

While family shrinks in the extent of its influence in the modern setting, community is weakened in the process as well. Mobility is the great mixer bringing people of all different ethnic, linguistic, racial and religious groups into immediate proximity of one another. Diversity and mixing may be a good thing at one level, but it is a very significant impediment when it comes to engendering community. When we add to this picture the fact that intensive agriculture and world commerce and industrialization based on cheap energy accommodate vastly increased human population density, most of this mixing occurs in urban centers where the huge scale of the diverse population is a challenge for humans to identify with as community. Suburbs suggest themselves as an answer to the community need within the urban situation, but they rarely in fact produce community, other than for some children who are brought together through their shared education experience. Adults in their separate homes on separate lots often barely know the names of their neighbors across the street, and they typically share little of their life experience with those around them. Instead they create their own little home-based fiefdom from which they interact with friends defined by limited interest criteria while they await the next career move of the breadwinner[s]. In the modern context, mobility, diversity and size all dictate against the formation of community at the scale that humans have identified with throughout 99.9% of their history.

With another move always looming and with all family responsibility resting on the parents, neither time nor inclination exists for most professional adults to invest in community membership beyond relatively superficial involvement. Families have great freedom, but they are also relatively isolated, and social commitments to mostly newly developed friends lack the detailed knowledge of the other person over time and are discretionary rather than obligatory. In this situation, there is little expectation of being able to depend on others for more than very modest and temporary support.

Freedom can be exhilarating, but it can also lead to isolation and loneliness! Family and community relieve isolation and provide social connection, assistance, and security, but they bring with them responsibility, obligation and commitment – all obstructions to the full exercise of individual freedom.

The answer for many professionals in the midst of the contrary draws of freedom and social commitment is to retain freedom and to pursue what I call family and community "lite." Family lite takes the form of occasional reunions and visits among parents and siblings a few times a year. These occasions are mostly celebratory in nature with shared outings for a day or two and opportunities to recall and assess common past experiences. The interaction is more intimate than among friends and opinions and advice may be offered, but there is little actual obligation involved. Mostly the family "catches up" on its disparate elements, a kind of gesture toward unified involvement without much actual consequence. Prolonged illness or deaths in the family bring more instrumental interaction, but these occasions are few and focused among the more immediate family members. Family lite is family "at a distance" where interaction is episodic and real commitment is for the most part not sought or tested.

Real family is extended family next door, down the block, across town. This is family where visits are frequent and regular and where members depend on one another for substantial assistance and advice. Many life experiences are shared within the real family network and this network usually exists in a stable sense of place. In the modern

setting this real family is on the wane, and family lite is as close as many come to the real family norm that was pervasive for 99.9% of human existence. In this earlier setting, family and clans were tightly knit groups that shared most everything on a daily basis including a recognized territory and a particular geographical home base. Family members were dependent upon one another for their very survival, and obligation, responsibility and commitment were mandatory and more or less absolute. The individual had a place and some freedom for individual expression and achievement, but this freedom was circumscribed by commitment to family and place. Family lite is mostly a modern ritual gesture in the direction of recognizing this human family heritage. From an individual freedom point of view, family lite is the way to go, but there is in fact little real family in it.

In the modern context, community is so weak for most professional couples during the early years of marriage and young family that it rarely achieves even community lite status. Usually, community lite arises once the children are headed for independence and when the expectation is that the parents will remain in their community for some time. Parents, often women before the couple enter retirement, become involved in social service organizations whether secular or religious in nature. Monetary contributions, which are often the extent of community involvement previously, are supplemented at this time with social benefit activity. These activities can become quite extensive in behalf of the whole range of local community needs – food banks, prison release programs, battered women's centers, United Way campaigns, adult literacy programs, adolescent mentoring programs, Habitat for Humanity projects, etc. There is great need for these activities and much social good in achieved through them. But neither individually nor collectively do they often result in real community. Mostly they are efforts to catch those who are most desperate and who are failing to make it in a world where the path to success is defined by the pursuit of individual freedom.

True community is realized in common commitment to work with all others to achieve a full range of shared goals for the duration, most often in a recognizable place or space. Social programs may help individuals recover to the point where they can make this commitment, but they do not themselves generate community. Community lite confuses social and economic assistance with community, and it almost never gets to a real community consequence. And community lite does not require a commitment to real community from those involved in these assistance programs. Community commitment means fundamentally identifying with the collective and its goals and both promoting and participating in activities to reach these goals and persisting for the long term because one regards this community as HOME. Community does not result from a temporary commitment to work with select others on achieving some goals in a place that is just currently where a person lives. Individual community members cannot walk away from real community, but community lite allows for exactly this walk because the person can support and participate in social benefit programs anywhere he or she lives. Community lite is a way to appear committed to community while still permitting the individual the freedom to walk away at any time without significant consequence.

Humans are social animals. Our success as a species is tied to our social orientation which allows for cooperation, which in turn accounts for our individual security. Without a surrounding, committed group of at least extended family size, we are vulnerable for our survival. A worldview that makes individual freedom paramount is aberrant and only

possible in the modern setting where community sponsored law and law enforcement support the safety of the individual as he or she moves among relative strangers in "foreign" places. Most individual freedom extremists forget that it is the community that provides the modern umbrella for the freedom they are so avid in promoting. Rightfully, the privilege of individual freedom only comes together with commitment to this supporting community, the very community these extremists love to hate.

In the traditional setting, extended families often combine in clans and bands, which frequently join together in a tribe that could occupy a territory over a considerable period of time. Sub areas of this tribal territory are more or less assigned to the families, clans and bands. Community is achieved at each level beyond the extended family, but the tribe is usually community in the largest traditional sense. These real human communities begin with real families as their foundations. They share language and common life ways, and their culture connects them to the land in origin legends which identify the source of family, band and tribe in the culture hero's or first ancestor's emergence in a particular local place. Tribal identity is fused to place, and cooperation among families, clans, and bands is essential to survival of the tribe. Real family and real community are the norm, and while individual achievement is recognized and celebrated, it always occurs within the greater commitment to band and tribal identity and community. In this context, personal identity is more a matter of tribal membership than of individual being, a fact reflected in naming where a person is known first by their tribal and family name and secondarily by their personal name – still common in many Asian cultures. Individual freedom does not trump community in the traditional context, and there is no family lite or community lite unless an individual wants to risk being banished.

In the modern context individual freedom reigns to the point where even the nuclear family is under threat with a 50% divorce rate. When the nuclear family is unstable and there is no real surrounding local community, individual identify is all that remains. We are on our own, living in large and diverse metropolises that are very hard for individuals to identify with except in the abstract. Professionals tend to jump from personal identities defined by their individual achievements through identity suggested by family lite, to identity defined by ethnic group or region or nation. All of these higher order notions of community require little direct activity beyond belonging to fraternal organizations, attending national holiday parades, paying taxes, perhaps voting, and "volunteering" for military service. As Americans, many professionals share an abstract, loosely defined social identity that impinges little on their individual freedom. The obligations of being an American or a southerner or a Texan are really minimal, but we often invest a lot of significance in these labels as if we want to claim the benefits of belonging to a real community. National patriotism is more an ideal than a reality, a fact reflected in community within national military service, which relies more on creating identity defined by the obligations of the extended family [platoon] than of the nation – exactly because "belonging" to the nation is such a dubious abstraction.

Americans are starved for real community, but for the most part they will not give up some of their freedom to actually participate in a real family or community. Instead they look to make it on their own, try to hold their nuclear family together, subscribe to family and community lite, and invest identity in mostly fictional large-scale "communities" that do not require more than a monetary obligation. If this approach does not work, they

may retreat to manufacture community in groupee cults, exclusive gangs or fundamentalist religious sects – the modern extreme versions of bands and tribes. Ironically in these extreme forms of retreat many give up virtually all of their cherished freedom and end up paralyzed and virtually enslaved. We invite these fictional and gang family and community extremes because we cannot compromise our freedom and commit to living in communities of traditional tribal scale – the real village or small town.

We need real community at all levels, and while we try, we cannot skip the fundamental level of community in local place and jump to the large scale abstractions and achieve the real experience of community. At some point as the world moves ever closer to unification, we will have to accommodate real community at all levels and relinquish most of what can be viewed as the "fiction" of our individual freedom. At the very least, we need to offer ourselves an opportunity as Americans for better balance in our lives between the forces for individual freedom and the forces obliging us to community. In our current state, we are mostly distracted and confused when it comes to this issue and much too inclined to fall for the anti-government populists with their extreme individual freedom rhetoric. There is no real family or community at any level that is sustainable following the individual freedom principles these advocates espouse. As our human numbers accumulate, our only real option is to embrace real family and real community and work hard to make it realizable first at the local level. We can then extend our grounded sense of local community up the social scale to eventually encompass all of humanity. But without the local level experience, with its very long human heritage, community at all higher levels is hollow. The modern condition of family lite and community lite leave us in an illusory limbo, which is no adequate answer to this challenge or need.

9/11 - Black Tuesday,
Response to Terrorism
2001

It is Saturday, four days after the terrorist "bombings" of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on "Black Tuesday," 2001. Even in Oregon it has been difficult to separate from the ongoing, media based information blitz which has followed these devastating events, events which nearly all people who are in touch with their humanity have deplored. Worldwide there is a sense that, somehow, everyone shares in the consequences. Over the past four days I have observed the following evolution in my own responses: 1) shock, 2) sorrow, 3) anger, 4) revenge – go get 'em, 5) opening strategic reflection – caution, we need the participation of the international community if we are to eliminate the terrorist threat on a broad scale, and finally 6) inward examination – what responsibility may we have in motivating these terrorist actions. Some might claim a final stage in the process: stage 7) seeking reconciliation, even forgiveness, but I have not reached that point, and I am not sure I could recommend it if it ended in passivity. There is simply too much crying out to be DONE. My fear is that the evolution for many in the Country, and especially for our leadership, will not reach stage 6) in this sequence before they develop and commit to a plan of action and proceed to implement it. The military hawks are predictably stuck in stage 4), but fortunately the cooler heads in our national leadership have reached stage 5) and seem to be prevailing. Unfortunately, I have only heard hints to date [9/15/01] of anyone in a position of authority or wide-scale commentary who has arrived at and is discussing stage 6). One or two have mentioned stage 7), but even they have not given the search for reconciliation much emphasis. My contention is that if, as a country and an international community, we do not reach stage 6) in our understanding, the responses that we plan and execute will be mostly futile to resolve the current terrorist challenge.

If there is to be a realistic chance of "defeating" terrorism of the kind we have just experienced, the United States and all the countries of western culture will have to recognize that they have as much to adjust and correct as do the other countries and groups with whom we are in conflict. If the underlying motivations for terrorism are not addressed, there will be no basis to believe or claim that systematic terrorism of the kind we are seeing can be successfully challenged and eliminated. At best it will be only somewhat suppressed. It is most likely that unenlightened efforts to suppress terrorism will just lead to ever greater and more fanatical forms of terrorism. If the proposed "war on terrorism" is not approached with the broadest consideration of the phenomena – in terms of stage 6) in our thinking, any War on Terrorism that we wage is likely to suffer limited cooperation and support from the world community of nations – especially those nations that are most crucial and that lie outside the inner circle of western nations. Such a war will look like the other misguided "Wars" we have waged – like the war on Drugs – a very expensive, never ending and doomed project from the start. Why? Because we lay the blame on producing countries and the drug lords and pushers and refuse to look at the weaknesses that lie within our own culture that make our citizens so susceptible to the escape drugs offer.

But before we can begin to "attack" terrorism, we have to understand what it is and what it is not. Otherwise we lack a defined sense of purpose and invite misadventures. "Terror" itself is an intense sense of fear engendering either the response of flight or

paralysis. “Terrorism” is intentional activity by one party to promote the condition of terror in targeted others. The events of 9/11 easily qualify as terrorism by this definition. But 9/11 terrorism was terrorism at a particular social scale: cross-national terrorism, or extreme acts of violence committed by non-citizens in the recognized nation of other citizens that are intended to instill fear of further such violence. The difference between these terrorist acts and acts of war is the fact that terrorist acts are not officially sponsored by another nation or state and their goal is not related to conflicts over territorial power and control.

Unfortunately, it is easy for the definition of terrorism to be stretched so as to include liberation and insurrection movements, and in the extreme, even internal protest movements. While liberation and insurrection movements, and even protests, can include acts of terror, the primary purpose of these movements is to change the authority that has power and control so as to benefit directly the movement’s supporters. If we allow terrorism to get lumped together with liberation and insurrection/rebellion, and even internal protest, terrorists become simply all those opposing the established order. This is a dangerous over-extension of the terrorist concept, and when it occurs, it allows cover for the suppression of legitimate liberation, insurrection and protest movements. In the international context, this over-extension of the terrorist label can be used to justify either supporting or suppressing these movements in other countries simply in the name of American self-interest. In the domestic context, this same over-extension can lead directly to infringing or negating our basic Constitutional rights of freedom of speech and assembly/protest. So, our first obligation in responding to 9/11 is to appropriately limit our targets to the actual terrorists allowing for very careful extension to those who knowingly harbor and support them.

As Americans, we are not familiar with the roots of the type of international terrorism that resulted in the “bombings” of New York and Washington. We do not understand the sources for it, perhaps because at some level it is too painful to acknowledge this source. In these cases, the cause is more broadly cultural – not just political or economic. And most astonishing is the fact that it is our culture – secular western culture – that is seen as the oppressor by these terrorists. Since we “won” the cold war and most communist countries collapsed and fragmented, we have become so accustomed to celebrating our culture as THE culture that we cannot imagine the very idea that western culture, built on its commitment to secularism, can be viewed as oppressive to anyone. After all we stand for freedom, opportunity and the ability to make something of one’s self. How can that set of principles be seen by anybody as oppressing them? We need to dig deeper for the answer. And one thing is for sure: the problem cannot be legitimately characterized by the simplistic view that it is a contest between the forces of “civilization” – freedom, democracy and free enterprise – and the “forces of evil” that would try to defeat “our” way of life. However comforting it may be to view the situation in these terms, it is just too convenient to allow ourselves to settle into and to commit to this illusion. The problem is not just “out there.”

Not until we humble ourselves just a bit and release the notion that all other cultures of the world should recognize our superiority and necessarily model themselves after us, can we begin to understand what motivated the “terrorists” to bomb the World Trade Center and the Pentagon [symbols of world capitalism and western military might] with

symbols of our own technological sophistication – our Boeing jumbo jets. We need to recognize that for the groups that conducted the terrorist actions of Black Tuesday, western culture – with America as its supreme representative – is the "evil" oppressor that has actively sought to impose its way of life on other countries around the world, many of whom do not share the western perspective or worldview. If we release our assumption that the western perspective is absolutely the only "right" and "true" way societies can shape themselves and be successful, a legitimate argument can be made for the fact that the way western commerce has conducted itself – aided by western politics, technology and military might – constitutes a form of economic/environmental/secular imperialism whose collective effect over time amounts to a kind of cultural "terrorism." When enough citizens of non-western cultures feel powerless to oppose the imposition of western secular culture on their non-western religious cultures for a long enough period of time, one predictable consequence is that some of the most sensitive people in these cultures will resort to violence. And if the groups these people form are not successful in blocking the encroachment of the West with protests and regional terrorist acts, their level and scope of violence will escalate. If these "terrorists" have access to sufficient resources, can find somewhere from which to stage their operations, are patient and deliberate in their planning, are persistent in their attempts, have a suicidal commitment from their members, and have an adversary whose society is so easy to access as our own, then they can address their violence in the most dramatic and effective ways to the heart of America. 9/11 is the climax of exactly this sequence of events.

To understand the mind of these "terrorists," we have to recognize that the rational, scientific, technological, materialistic, individualistic, and secular focus of western culture is fundamentally repugnant to them and to their cultures, which hold that some mix of intuitive, spiritual, environmental, and communal capabilities, values and principles are most important. Until Americans and all of western culture understands this, until we recognize the need to respect cultures whose worldviews are very different from our own, until we see the need to back off our "crusade" to impose our system and perspective on the non-western cultures of the world, terrorism of the type we saw on Black Tuesday will continue to rest on very fertile soil.

The people and groups that we perceive as "terrorists" are legitimate culture heroes for many non-western people and countries. These "heroes" are regarded as defending an alternative way of life that is under profound pressure, whether this alternative way of life is specifically informed by Islamic or Hindu or Buddhist, or some other spiritual/communal perspective. History clearly reveals that any religion, including Christianity [e.g. the Crusades], can be "used" to support and justify some of the most inhumane activities imaginable. Whether Christian or Muslim or Hindu, etc., when fundamentalism, with its absolutist and literal beliefs is taken far enough, it can easily serve to justify terrorist activities. The problem of 9/11 is not an Islamic problem; it is just the case that currently the broad-based Islamic fundamentalist movement in many countries around the world is the most fertile ground for systematic anti-western reaction.

We have to understand why America is so hated. Unfortunately, to date westerners, and Americans in particular, have made very little real effort in this direction, choosing instead to ignore the fact that this sentiment may have a legitimate basis.

To rid the world of this most recent form of terrorism, the countries of the West really have only two choices that can be successful. And neither of these alternatives invokes the military option. The first is intellectually driven and requires a major change in policy: to decide politically, economically and militarily to respect the cultures that are informed by a significantly different cultural perspective and stop the intentional and inadvertent pressure to remake these "underdeveloped" countries in our own image. Following this approach, the West can stop exporting so vigorously its secular, media based culture and stop "buying up" the resources of non-western countries and/or creating conditions where these countries become economically subservient to western countries in the process of their own "development." In short, we can decide to stop acting internationally from a western cultural, ethnocentric position and restrain the use of western power and secular commerce to insist that non-western cultures conform to our vision. We can cease the pronouncements – which have almost become underlying assumptions – that American culture embodies "the way, the truth, and the light" for all nations of the world to follow. The fact is that we do not have THE answer.

The second choice available to America and western culture as a whole is to reclaim its own spiritual/communal base and understand and discover the forces of restraint and respect for non-western countries from the inside. For a long time now, many have identified the need for a movement of spiritual renewal within the West, though not as a means to address the terrorism issue. Unfortunately, most of these calls have come from the purveyors of Christian fundamentalism, which contains within it the seeds of the same narrow and misguided perspective that justifies the current terrorist activities from which we are seeking sanctuary. The last thing we need is a Christian fundamentalist revival in the West that sets us on a course to make the world "safe for Christianity," a 21st century religious crusade which disrespects and demeans other cultures and their faiths due to misguided spiritual causes. This form of spiritual renewal just substitutes religious imperialism for secular imperialism and leads to total world terror, or Armageddon.

Should America and the West elect a spiritual/communal renewal, we must distinguish between religious revival and spiritual renewal. Spiritual renewal concerns the rediscovery and reintegration into culture of the awareness that a spiritual or sacred principle or thread, which ultimately connects all of existence at a non-material, but very real, level, pervades all of life. Promoting the experience of existence at this unified or sacred level is at the core of every religion. The problem is that each religion defines in literal terms the specific beliefs and rituals that are claimed to bring the individual or group to this awareness. When, subsequently, individual religions claim that theirs is the only or the superior path to spiritual awareness, religion itself can easily become the basis for aggressive behavior that is in direct conflict with the essential meaning which is at the core of spiritual awareness itself. This is the religious dilemma: how to bring people to the essential spiritual experience of the sacred, to the awareness of the unity, connected and oneness of all of existence – together with all it implies about the significance of self and the respect and responsibility which must be expressed for others – without losing the true meaning of the experience in the dogma and ritual of each individual religious path. Only if western culture has reached sufficient maturity to clearly distinguish between religious and spiritual revival and only if it can elect and insist on spiritual renewal alone, should it adopt the spiritual renewal and spiritual

reintegration path to address the terrorism problem, along with a myriad of other related problems. It is not at all clear that this level of maturity exists, but it is certainly time to pose the challenge to America and the West.

The by-word that we are all hearing now is that America's response to the awful terrorist attacks of Black Tuesday must be "Smart." A fully coordinated international campaign informed by a western perspective, led by western diplomacy, and utilizing western military might as a final strategy is not smart enough. A truly smart response must be framed by leaders whose reflection and planning has fully explored and incorporated stage 6) in the evolution of our responses. If we can act with the awareness of our own participation and responsibility in the terrorism that has descended upon us, perhaps we will all be able to reach the point where we really evaluate the two non-military alternatives outlined above and leave open the door that one day we may achieve reconciliation and true closure for the events of Black Tuesday. I look forward to the possibility of that full closure for terrorism. It will take a truly enlightened and dedicated leadership across many diverse countries to make that day possible.

Unfortunately, it is much more likely that we will muddle through utilizing some strategy between 4) and 5), lose sight of who the terrorists are, and end up fomenting an escalation of the terrorism threat.

It is up to all of us to decide what will emerge from the rubble – on America's front porch.

The Imus/Stern Factor
And the American Sub-Culture of Adolescence
2007

At 230 years of age, America is a young culture, and unfortunately in many respects it is acting like its adolescents, who have become accustomed to roaming "free."

Why is everyone so surprised by the crass foolishness and lack of civility of the Don Imus phenomenon [April, 2007]? For five generations now, America has progressively bought into celebrating an independent adolescent subculture: glorifying physical youth, permitting ever more crude expressions of protest, and downplaying the role of adults as guiding elders. In this context, Don Imus and Howard Stern and their talk show ilk are what we should expect to get and what we deserve. Indeed, Imus and Stern, who are themselves in their 50's and 60's, are the perfect exemplars of the phenomenon – they produce their shows with a clutch of males [and/or fawning, giggling females] gathered together around microphones, and being outrageous "boys" in the level, quality and nature of their patter. The members of the audience are virtual onlookers who are allowed to overhear the "racy," irreverent, cute and supposedly humorous banter of these "boys." What we get is the behavior and expression of the "boy" mind from men who have been applauded for their ability to daily regress to this mental state and worldview position. And, of course, these "boys" are themselves rewarded economically and admired socially by many protest oriented adolescents [and the adults who identify with them] who are looking for someone to express their frustration in feeling stuck in their prolonged position as "not quite adults – yet." Anyone who can recall the nature of expression in this adolescent boy culture can attest to the fact that it is all about posturing to appear more verbally abusive, crude, and outrageous than the next guy. Adolescent gangs just take this same mentality and convert the verbal protest into action, with its escalating levels of violence and criminality.

When adults leave adolescents mostly alone for years to develop their own separate culture and when commerce and the media discover the financial value of the adolescent market, the stage is set for the adolescent take-over of much of American culture. If we do not like this situation, the only real answer is for adults to "take back the street."

Most cultures recognize the precarious and vulnerable nature of adolescent males and move them rather quickly through this life phase to adulthood. They do this by limiting the time boys spend in this phase and the degree of separateness from adult supervision that these boys are allowed individually and especially as a group. With the advent of universal education in America at the end of the 19th century and the concentration of children and adolescents in the separate school environment, and with the subsequent vast extension of this separate education period from concluding first at age 14, then at age 16, then at age 18, and with college at age 22, adolescence has developed into its own virtually independent subculture. Through this same period parents have adopted more and more the role of "friend" rather than decisive authority to their children, a development that has further empowered and fostered adolescent separateness and independence. One indicator of this familiarity - adolescents now commonly calling their parents by their first names – so much for the signs of respect in

Mother/Father, or Mom/Dad, or Sir/Ma'am. And the emergence in the last generation of two parent working families has left children and adolescents more and more on their own without adult supervision. Teachers in the separate school context are isolated and in the minority, and it is common for adolescents to gain respect by disrespecting and demeaning their teachers – teachers becoming the adult front line subjects of adolescent protest.

What we get out of having inadvertently allowed this adolescent "revolution" to occur is comparable to the problems that arise when adolescent elephants are separated from the matriarchal herd and relocated to an area without adult elephant supervision. Left on their own, these adolescent animals fail to form herds defined by the usual matriarchal structure. Instead, they become marauding bands which attack other animals and exhibit such extreme and non-elephant like behavior that eventually they have to be destroyed. At the same time, the related adolescent elephants that remain with the original herd under the constant supervision of adult elephants in the matriarchy mature to take their normal roles as adult elephants in the group. The solution for the rogue elephants is the same as for human adolescents: adults have to take their proper authoritative role and carefully "manage" the development of adolescents into adulthood. Adolescents cannot be allowed to "go wild" and exclusively pursue their own limited, egotistical, and non-socially responsible impulses.

Understood properly, Don Imus and company are merely leading a section of the rogue adolescent media chorus in an American culture that over the last five generations has made the mistake of progressively abandoning consistent adult supervision and direction for its ever extending adolescent population. This is a new condition in world culture, and it is neither culturally normal, necessary, nor productive.

It is entirely possible for the adult American community to reassert consistent control over and guidance of its adolescents while still encouraging their creative and innovative spirit. I have seen what this alternative looks like among many home schooled adolescents, who have adults around most of the time, who relate much more easily and positively to adults, and who are generally happier and more confident than their totally peer oriented counterparts who have been "reared" in the typical school environment. I am not recommending home schooling; I am just pointing out what tends to happen when adolescents grow up <u>with</u> responsible adults in the lead and not with peer groups defining their own "lead."

If America's adults decide to take back their adolescents, I would expect the Imus/Stern "factor" to be discarded quickly to the cultural scrap heap where it belongs, and for civility and respect for the elders of the culture to return to define the nature of social relations within the American community. Side benefits of structuring our relations to reclaim America's rogue adolescent culture should be greater civility in our adult political discourse and a surrounding mass media that is more serious, less flagrantly crude and violent, more domestically constructive, and more decorous and less objectionable to surrounding world cultures.

School Violence and Adolescence – Reflections
2000

Violence in America has been a concern for some time now with the forces of the NRA, gun manufacturers, and the misguided 2nd Amendment fundamentalists battling the efforts of many groups to restrict access to the ultimate tool of individual violence, the gun [and especially the cheap handgun]. The same issue is at the center of efforts to restrain the media and video/computer game producers from exploiting the interest of young people in ever escalating graphic representations of violent behavior. These graphic games are especially insidious since they invite the game player to identify ever more closely with destructive behavior, in an ever more interactive format, for ever longer periods of time, and at ever younger ages.

The American tolerance for violence, real and vicarious, and the gun as a powerful and easily available instrument of violent expression are certainly legitimate concerns. America's continued tolerance for violence in the modem world setting is witness to the adolescent state of American culture, being not yet willing to grow up into responsible adulthood. Adolescents hunger for independence and individual freedom of expression, always with an edge for rebellion, and charged with the hormones to promote instant, unrestrained reactions. In a world characterized by ever more dense populations of people living in a more and more socially and economically integrated condition, mature societies have to exhibit a very low tolerance for violent physical behavior. In addition, they need to look with great disfavor on threatening verbal behavior. America is struggling with the requirements of growing up. Ironically, it is American democracy, technology and economy that have led the world to the condition where the level of integration required among all persons, communities and states is such that a laissez faire approach to violence is no longer tolerable in the world which circumscribes America itself.

The recent spate of school violence is but one evidence of the adolescent condition of American culture in general. School violence in white, middle class, suburban communities merely gets the attention of the culture in a way that the same behavior in poor inner city, ethnic and racial communities does not, unfortunately. In this "up scale" setting, it is difficult to blame the "problem" on environment, class, race, or ethnicity. In the "expert" assessments that have emerged following these violent events in our public schools, a myriad of variables have been identified as causal: peer intolerance; lack of sufficient school supervision and security; lack of parental awareness, involvement and control; the numbing effect of increased exposure to ever escalating violence in the media; easy access to guns; and minimal gun security. All of these variables are valid and contribute to the problem, but even collectively I do not think they are sufficient.

As a social scientist with an interest in artistic and spiritual matters, I suggest there are two issues that are more fundamental to the problem than the ones most often identified. The first is the acceptance of adolescence by most of western culture as a separate stage in the life course of the individual. Having accepted the separateness of this phase of social maturation, Americans have further permitted adolescents to define a distinct culture for themselves which largely lacks mature adult oversight. The second factor is America's failure to provide emerging adults with a spiritual [not religious] basis for a positive and secure sense of self.

Adolescence - A Recent Artifact of Western Culture

In most traditional societies, children are ushered into adulthood at or near the time of puberty. The mechanism for making the transition is an elaborate passage ritual during which the individual's identity is re-experienced and redefined in combined spiritual and social terms. Adults supervise throughout childhood and guide the transition process to adult status through ritual. Children and young adults are in the constant presence of mature adults from whom they learn the viewpoint and behavior of maturity in the fields, woods, shop, etc. What adolescent period there is is short, and rarely is there a separate adolescence, unattended by adults, especially no extenuated such period.

Adolescence as a separate phase in the individual's life course is a modern artifact of western culture. It has its roots in the western beliefs 1) that all individuals have the right to become what they want - regardless of what their parents may be or do and 2) that a relatively long period of abstract universal education in a setting separate from the adult world of family, relatives and neighbors is the best means for children and young adults to discover their way in this pursuit. Adolescence emerges as a full-blown, separate period in life when this extended education period moves from a rural agricultural location to the urban and suburban settings. In these latter settings, young people are no longer involved in practical and valued activities and have few opportunities to continue to learn directly from practicing adults and to significantly define their lives in terms of experiences with adults. While teachers lead the education process in classrooms, adults no longer model directly to young people the jobs their education is to lead to. A great many adolescents have only the vaguest idea of what their parents do occupationally. Add to this picture families where both parents work outside the home, where technology [the pill] can replace parental vigilance in protecting young girls from pregnancy, and where family activities are weakened a) by conflicting individual schedules, b) by private spaces [rooms] and c) by a focus within the household on news and entertainment provided by outside media, and you have a situation that encourages the emergence of a very strong, and mostly separate adolescent subgroup.

In the course of the last two generations under the above circumstances, the strength of the adolescent subgroup has consolidated to the point where a separate adolescent culture has emerged with adults orienting media and consumer products to serve it. Outside of the classroom, this subgroup and subculture has become all consuming and all defining for adolescents to the point where its members reject most contact with parents and adults. When adults respond to this rejection by redefining it as the natural quest for space and independence by their children, the degree of adolescent separation becomes virtually complete. So long as adolescents attend school and come home with satisfactory report cards, the rest of their world is mostly theirs to define. In behalf of catering to their children's right to self-determination and independence, adults have abdicated all but the most basic controls.

While this separate adolescent social condition has been accepted as the norm over the course of the 20th Century, it is essential for everyone to recognize that it is new, artificial, and dangerous. The social identity of young adults is tenuous and fragile. Without adult supervision and guidance, adolescents are inclined to define a secure world for themselves where access to power and "popularity" are defined in very narrow

terms, terms which are minimally tolerant of differences. In this setting, it is extremely easy for individual young people to become marginalized, and this can happen overnight and for the least imaginable reasons [the "wrong" hat, shoes, coat, haircut, etc.]. Adolescent peers can be incredibly intolerant, unbelievably demanding, and supremely influential. Those who vary slightly from the mold often experience themselves as outsiders, and those who display more apparent differences are very often ostracized and abused, sometimes mercilessly.

The fragile identity of adolescence covets the sense of being empowered, and it is here that drugs and the media enter the scene to feed adolescents with experiences of grandiose gratification and fantasies of rebellion and control over life and death. In the separate adolescent subculture, graphic expressions of violence in interactive contexts where the young person has the ability to control the consequences are the norm. Success in these "games" is measured in terms of the number of "enemies" vaporized by pulling the trigger on the "joy stick." Often the only adult figures attempting to exercise some control in this virtual world are the ones being vaporized or eliminated in a stream of blood and guts. Drugs and media in moderation and in the context of adult presence and control are one thing, but in heavy doses and totally outside adult observation are an invitation to big-time, wide-spread trouble. Just allow that heretofore "normal" kid to be marginalized for a long enough time by his surrounding peer group, to immerse himself in drugs and violent media, and to locate a friend or two with easy access to guns to share in his anger and fantasies of retribution, and you have the adolescent recipe for asocial behavior, including violence, inside or outside of school. It does not take a history of domestic abuse, poverty, or a "broken" home to create the conditions for adolescent violence. These conditions just further motivate asocial and violent inclinations.

If we need an analogy from the animal world for the negative consequences of young adults being separated and left on their own to mature, consider what occurred when a group of adolescent elephants in Africa were separated from their herd and relocated to an area where elephants had been eliminated. The intent was to see these adolescent animals flourish and reestablish herds in the new location. What happened was that the adolescent animals failed to form herds defined by the usual matriarchal structure. Instead, they formed marauding bands which attacked other animals and exhibited such extreme and non-elephant like behavior that eventually they had to be destroyed. At the same time, the related adolescent elephants that remained with the original herd under the constant supervision of adult elephants in the matriarchy matured to take their normal roles as adult elephants in the herd. Just as there is no instinct for young elephants, when left on their own, to mature into responsible adults as defined by herd "culture," so it is with young human adults. As it turns out, the "lord of the flies" syndrome from fiction is not that far from the facts. To site a related phenomenon, what else is the much touted "boot camp" rescue for aberrant teens but an enforced approach to re-integrating adolescents into a society where adults have the power and adolescents have no choice but to learn to adopt the roles and play by the rules of the adults who closely supervise and control them. What we need to realize is that we are the ones who have allowed our adolescents to "go wild," and it is we who must reclaim adult authority and supervision in the same constant, constructive and benevolent fashion as characterizes the normal elephant herd.

Socially, the answer to the current adolescent "problem" is to do what it takes to eliminate the separate adolescent condition for America's young people. We must realize that we have created this adolescent condition; it is not "the way things are," and we can at a minimum severely alter the shape it takes. In the process, adolescents must be re-integrated into adult society on an ongoing basis. They can not be allowed to define their own world on their on terms for an extended period of time. It just doesn't work; and if we give the matter much thought at all, we should not expect it to work. The young adult's world must return to one oriented to adults and supervised by adults where young people participate with adults in real activities [not just symbolic events like sports]. Education must be less abstract and isolated and more experiential and of an internship, or "apprenticeship" nature - in the real world of adults, with real compensation for the value of the young person's effort. Regardless of school size, opportunities must exist for all young people to identify and cultivate their talents, to discover the niches where they can excel and be respected for their different talents and abilities.

We must not allow "popularity" among young people to be narrowly defined and reserved for the privileged few. Respect for differences in others must be absolute - so long as the differences do not impinge on the legitimate rights of others. Peer hazing and teasing must be met immediately with suspension, and if continued, with expulsion from school. A "get tough" policy of zero tolerance for drugs and weapons must be matched by zero tolerance for intolerance and a very low tolerance for exposure to even vicarious violence. The media cannot be permitted to feed the festering wound of adolescent anger just because there is a lot of money to be made and a first amendment right to hide behind. We must insist that the individual right to free expression does not extend to the point where the fundamental social fabric is put at substantial risk. Individual rights and freedoms must be balanced against social commitment, security, and responsibility.

If we redefine the student social experience in the ways mentioned above and re-integrate adolescents into adult society, many of the social factors which currently undercut the adolescent's self-esteem and motivate and provide the medium for adolescent anger and violence to grow will be eliminated or severely curtailed. When this new education experience becomes the norm, there will be less need to focus on variables of external containment [metal detectors and campus police] which are not the real answer and which have the unfortunate effect of transforming the creative environment of schools into the punitive condition of secured compounds.

Spirituality, Subjectivity and the Sacred

While much can be accomplished by attending to the social factors which account for the problematic emergence of adolescence as a separate life phase and culture, it is also necessary to consider the loss of spiritual connection in American culture as a whole and in the culture of young people in particular. This loss compounds the difficulty young people face in the search for a positive sense of self. Identities are potentially fragile at all stages of life, but fragility in adolescence is more dangerous to society than in either childhood or adulthood. The tantrums of children do not have the scale of effect that the rampages of adolescents have, while estranged adults are likely to focus their asocial behavior in criminal activities that are not intended to call attention to themselves. Adolescents are betwixt and between childhood and adulthood and when

allowed to drift in a world defined by their intolerant peers can easily have their fragile identities severely wounded with no constructive outlet for the expression of the confusion and anger which accompanies the scarring.

Identity defined by material existence and objective reality alone is uncertain at best, whatever life phase one is talking about. In this context, American culture is all the more vulnerable since it defines identity throughout life almost exclusively in these physical, intellectual terms. Subjective, spiritual reality is denigrated and denied influence in all but the "peripheral" activities of art and religion. So, when the whims of the material, physical, social world challenge the identity of most Americans, they have no fall back position and the self is fully exposed to the blows of the moment.

Traditional cultures define realty in spiritual, subjective and sacred as well as material and objective terms. The result is that identity and self-esteem are not so vulnerable. We need to take from these cultures a recognition of the "sacred" thread that runs through all of life and reality, while not accepting their particular religious interpretations and definitions of the sacred. Indeed, there are severe restrictions and limitations that accompany traditional spirituality in the form of religious institutions with their dogma and ritual. It is these limitations which western culture recognized when it insisted on the separation of church and state and removed the spheres of politics, economy, law, and intellectual pursuit from the impact and control of religious dogma - while allowing for the separate freedom of religious expression by individuals and groups. But in the process of excluding religion from input into the definition of everyday events and reality, western culture also excluded the input of the more fundamental subjective, spiritual experience which lies at the core of all traditional religions, whatever their particular, problematic dogma and ritual may be. We won in excluding the peculiarities and narrow mindedness of religion. We lost in excluding at the same time the underlying principle of spirituality and the subjective and sacred experiences of life and reality.

If we carefully reclaim and reintegrate the spiritual and the sacred into our everyday culture and lives, we have much to gain. The problematic and tenuous nature of adolescent identity is but one major area that would benefit. Identity that is grounded in the spiritual experience of unification [transcendence, enlightenment, etc.] is much less subject to the whims of external experience. In unification, the individual experiences self as other, as indistinguishable from other persons and things, and as part and parcel of these others. In its extreme form, self-identity is fused with all other things in the identity of the whole, and separateness itself disappears. Self and the whole are one at a fundamental level, and discreteness in time and space as experienced by the limited senses in objective reality is illusory. The notion of a sacred thread running through and connecting all things is merely one way to characterize in description appropriate to objective reality the understanding which emerges as a result of the unification experience. The unification experience is intuitive and emotive, not intellectual. It is experienced internally and subjectively as an extraordinarily decisive feeling and knowing. In its extreme form it is absolute and beyond challenge. Identity that is experienced as fundamentally connected and shared is secure in a way that momentary experience in the objective world cannot dispute. Individuals whose cultures encourage them to grow from childhood into an ever deeper experience of unification as young

adults have a much less fragile sense of self than individuals whose cultures fail to encourage this awareness and growth.

I contend that the subjective unification experience is as real as being hit on the head with a stone is in objective reality. The two events just occur and are perceived at either end of a continuum of reality revealed by different states of mind. Potential complications of great magnitude arise when the institutions of objective reality and culture step in to interpret and give definition and meaning to the unification experience. It is at this point that most cultures offer a very narrow and self-serving interpretation of the experience and claim it as exclusively affirming their society and as only revealed through their set of beliefs and rituals. In this way religions arise to encapsulate the spiritual experience and reduce its universal implications for identity to the affirmation of a particular group committed to a particular set of beliefs and associated rituals. Once the intense experience of unification is reduced to a narrow social and religious view, the consequence is typically a powerful commitment to the specific group and its beliefs. Ironically this narrow commitment can become the basis for some of the most horrific human behavior, expressed toward those who are not part of the "chosen" group and committed to the "truth" of its beliefs and rituals.

The universal spiritual experience of unification is real and very important. The limitation of religious interpretation of the unification experience has nothing to do with the legitimacy or importance of the experience itself. This is where western culture, including most emphatically American culture, missed the point in tossing out spirituality along with religion when it excluded the sacred as a fundamental input in everyday life and in the pervasive sense of self.

We can re-incorporate into western culture the spiritual together with growth into the depths of the unification experience (the transcendent experience or the experience of enlightenment). And we can do this without the negative effects of narrow religious and social interpretations. In the process we can reassert the whole of self, reality and culture, and provide young people with a much more secure overall sense of self. This subjectively confirmed identity is much less prone to respond to the unfortunate whims of the world in terms of angry and violent behavior. This is true whether or not we address the social problems of having allowed the emergence of a separate adolescent life phase and culture.

If we want to really attend to the problem of adolescent violence in our schools and adolescent anomie in general, we need to make progress on both the social and spiritual fronts. That is the view from where I sit.

Take Back the News

2010

Virtually all aboriginal human groups that have been studied over the last 150 years exhibit a condition that in all likelihood has been characteristic of traditional human communities for 99.9% of their history – up to the modern era. The sphere of concern of these small human bands and tribal groups is strictly local both socially and geographically. And while regional trading is common, information beyond the local and immediate regional sphere tends to be periodic, partial and quite limited. In this mostly local setting there is good news and bad news, but in the cyclical nature of living out life through the seasons, a lot of what is expected to occur in fact manifests as anticipated. Life is fairly predictable. There is daily reporting on events around the fire, and much of this is good news. Bad news is the exception and it gets significant play when it arises, but it rarely takes over the situation for lengthy periods. In this context, there is overall balance between the good and the bad news reporting with the good generally outweighing the bad. Humans under these conditions are realistic about the significant natural and social challenges that surrounded them locally and to an extent regionally, and while they must be alert and careful and industrious and resourceful, most of the time they are not excessively concerned, fearful, or stressed out about either their present circumstances or what the future may bring.

In the modern human setting, which has become pervasive over the last 2,000 years, humans are aggregated into much larger groups defined by cities, states, and nations. And these nations are now linked into ever-tighter international relations. In this context, there is a greater sensitivity to what is happening across a vastly expanded social and geographical domain because in the modern setting it is understood that events in distant places can significantly affect the situation “at home.” While it is true that at the local level, social control [rule of law] extends over a much broader area – offering security in this modern situation, the umbrella of this coverage includes mostly strangers whose intentions are unknown – offsetting somewhat the sense of security that the rule of law provides. In addition, in the modern setting, life is understood as a linear progression through time with change occurring at an ever more rapid pace. This is not the comfortable context of the predictable and repeating cycle of life through the seasons and over the years. In this situation of a relatively unknown and more open-ended future, there is greater uncertainty about what may happen. Overall it is fair to say that there is considerably greater experienced uncertainty in the modern living situation than in the aboriginal human condition, and uncertainty in turn evokes increased fear regarding potential outcomes.

While the actual proportion of good and bad news may in fact be much the same in the modern and traditional human contexts, humans perceive themselves to be at greater risk of potentially negative events in the modern context where uncertainty and fear are enhanced by the prevailing circumstances. As currently practiced, broadcast news both reflects and promotes this modern situation of increased uncertainty and fear. Broadcast news is dominated by bad news – all the places, worldwide, where negative events are occurring due to what is happening in the environment, or in the various spheres of social, economic, political, military, or religious activity.

Modern humans are swamped with bad news, which itself engenders more uncertainty and increased fear about what the future may bring. Even though we know that there is plenty of good news out there, there is little inclination to balance the good and the bad in news reporting, and of course the sensational – especially in a graphic visual version – grabs human attention [exactly because it is atypical] and brings in dollars for those who sponsor news reporting. It is a self-fulfilling condition; bad news feeds on itself as uncertainty feeds fear and fear feeds uncertainty. In addition, the understandable impetus to bad news in the modern setting can easily escalate irresponsibly into rumor mongering, spin and dissembling, the epitome of which are talk show blowhards and internet libel arcades where in the name of free speech information is systematically edited into half truths and outright lies to serve preconceived religious or political views.

Whether from the news or its bastard child – tabloid journalism, the world of negativity and rumor that is portrayed in the modern media is not REAL because it lacks a realistic balance in relation to the way things actually are out there. Every day there is a wealth of good news, news that goes unreported, almost entirely overlooked. The concern is that this imbalance in the direction of constant negativity is detrimental to the condition of the modern human psyche. And an impaired psyche in turn negatively impacts not only the quality of our social, economic and political discussions and decisions but also human physical health – through all the mechanisms related to chronic stress.

What can we do to address this "disease" of the modern human communications system? If we are aware of the changes that are driving us in the modern situation to be overwhelmed and stressed out by all the bad news that is fit to be mass disseminated, we can require adjustments that bring news reporting and information media back into conformity with reality, without authorizing or promoting Pollyanna or propaganda versions of the news. We can start by requiring that infotainment programs and the celebrities that "enable" them label themselves as entertainment and stop allowing them to masquerade as purveyors of accurate information. In the world of broadcast news reporting, news is currently at least 90% all about problems and threats and conflicts and injury and all sorts of human degradation. The print news media is somewhat better balanced, but it still gives decided priority to the sensational and the negative. In reality, the balance in positive and negative events is probably 60 – 40 in favor of the positive; life is just not as precarious as the news media would represent. So, the minimum requirement for news reporting should be to reverse these proportions allowing for 60% bad and 40% good news. Tell us what is right with the world, not just what has gone wrong, and occasionally the good news can even be fronted and not tagged on to the end of the program! We need to be relieved of the representation in the news that the bad dominates in everything, everywhere, and almost all the time.

If we require infotainers to disclosure their actual roles as character actors in their own serial infodramas and demand appropriate balance in news reporting, we can reduce undue stress in modern life, support human mental and physical health, improve the quality of the decisions we make at all levels, and even educate the public about accomplishments humans are making in understanding who they are, in addressing their collective needs, and in learning how the universe in which they live works. These can be substantial gains for modern humans, and they can be achieved by merely insisting that the communication of information be brought into conformity with the reality of the human condition.

In Defense of “Media”

2008

In this statement I want to address the celebration among some in favor of print/written word while demeaning most other media, especially television. This bias frequently informs the tendency of these people to glorify their decision to spend their evenings reading rather than watching television. Often these elitists tout their superiority by either refusing to own a TV or refusing to subscribe to cable or satellite broadcast services. Ironically these same people are often devoted users of the Internet and celebrate the computer and the vast wealth of connections it brings to them through the worldwide web with its spectacular search engines. Somehow in the minds of these people the computer screen and the Internet service provider are regarded as totally different from the television screen and cable/satellite service. Certainly, to the extent that television viewing or computer gaming is thought to detract from individuals becoming skilled readers, this result is to be mourned. But excessive involvement in any media can have a negative effect. Children can bury themselves in books to the extent they impair their vision, fail to exercise and become obese, or lack development in appropriate social skills; just as these same children can loose themselves in 24/7 computer based gaming; just as adults can become addicted to internet poker or online stock market trading. Any media tool can be pursued to excess and the point of addiction, but that fact does not justify bias against the tool or media form itself.

Print is simply the first mass media, replacing the scribe and the handwritten process of reproducing texts. At one time reading and writing were skills restricted to the upper classes and as such these abilities and the possession of books were a “sign” of superior social status. This status association seems to linger even to the present among reading elitists, in spite of the democratization of reading and writing skills and the ubiquitous availability of low cost print materials. Indeed, with the computer, personal websites, and email and document attachment, everyone has the equivalent of their own printing press, publishing company, and distribution system. Ironically, again, the Internet medium [media] has emerged to promote a vastly expanded network which depends on and fosters reading and writing skills – rather than necessarily competing against them.

Now, let’s look at the facts about the relative value of media alternatives to words in print.

1) There is at least as much “trash” in print as there is in any other form of media. Some might argue there is a great deal more garbage in print since the cost of computer and Internet production is so low and the skills so minimal as compared to creating visual based media. In all media, selection for legitimacy, authenticity, and value is equally essential. There is no fundamental or “necessary” distinction in quality of communication among the different forms of media.
2) Where the visual medium can be used, it is a much more efficient and holistic way to pass information than any other format. A quality one hour film or video can cover information that would take a day to communicate by words alone. We recognize this in our common statement, "A picture is worth a thousand words." The assertion in this commonplace is in fact about right, but it covers only the

information in a snap shot, not the kinetic image - or "motion" picture, which makes the media image 1000% more effective as a communication tool when compared to the WORD. Indeed, most print documents, even in science, have come to rely extensively on visuals in the form of graphs, charts, illustrations, and photographs to provide a visual complement to the text. Even in technical print, the inclusion of this visual component is recognized as key in achieving effective and efficient communication. Indeed, it is known that some “readers” rely primarily on these visuals, and move to the written text only secondarily, if at all! From the time of woodcut images in very early printing, the significant value of visuals in print has been understood.

3) Humans are first and foremost visual creatures, rely secondarily on auditory cues [of which word dependent language is a specialized set], and reference tactile and olfactory information tertiarily. This is clear in the proportion of human brains assigned to the different senses. We dwell under a modern illusion that gives words, and especially written words, great prominence and importance. We have only about 4,000 years of the written word, but a million year history as hominids. And it is understood that even speech may not have developed beyond rudimentary use until the last 30-50,000 years. So a focus on verbiage and words, and especially writing, is off the mark as contributing much to the history of communication in human development – until very recently.
4) The broadcast medium has matured greatly in the last 25 years and now offers a whole range of very fine products, many now on channels devoted to science, technology, nature, medicine, history, culture, and serious social, economic and political investigative journalism and commentary - worldwide and from the perspectives of different groups. It would take thousands of magazine subscriptions to match this coverage in the print media. And the range of entertainment offerings in film, music, theater, dance, and sports is vast and can easily be sifted for quality. The stereotype of the broadcast media as consisting of sitcoms and game shows and news sound bites is no longer accurate, if it ever was.
5) In the modern context, many people spend their days reading and writing – often at computers. Most of these people do not feel the need to devote their nights to more of the same when there are ways to broaden their exposure to challenging and educational programming while often being entertained at the same time.

There will always be people who choose to read for information and entertainment. That is their choice; but the time is long past since there has been any justification for the elitist prejudice in favor of the limited media of the printed word. As media has evolved, print no longer implies serious communication that is worthy of respect any more than broadcast/cable/satellite means superficial communication that is deserving of disdain. All media contains the same range of offerings from very high to very low quality. The only important consideration in judging media involvement is whether the participants are first selecting for quality products and then making the effort to independently evaluate the messages they receive.

Letter to a Christian Nation, (2006) By Sam Harris

Review

2006

Harris has produced an impressive, well-written work, which is an exposé of the lack of evidence to support the claims of the Bible and of the fundamentalist Christian believers who define their worldview in terms of it. In the current time and condition of our culture, Harris also suggests the detrimental effects of fundamentalist religious belief and dogma on the prospects for survival and advancement of human civilization. The book is a well-reasoned attack for its time on Christianity and religious belief systems in general, as so many other similar works have been comparable attacks in their time. The problem is that none of these attacks to date have had any substantive effect – except to stir the pot of controversy. There are good reasons why Harris' work does not succeed in overcoming this problem.

The key weaknesses of the Harris work:

1) While addressing his work to Christian religious conservatives, Harris' tone of address is frequently so condescending [loaded with pejorative adjectives] that he puts his audience off by this alone, making it that much less likely that his "announced" audience will ever get to a consideration of his factual argument. This tonal problem in effect reduces the book to a good sermon to the choir, to those who already have adopted Harris' negative view of religion and who will cheer his "charged" harangue. However worthy the argument, the book fails rhetorically for this reason.
2) While at the end of the work Harris alludes to the value of a transcendent view of reality, he does not develop this view to indicate how it can offer an alternative to religious belief and not be in conflict with the intellectual and rational. He did the same thing in The End of Faith, leaving the reader with only the tantalizing notion that there may be a way to see the transcendent in a positive light.
3) By not offering a compromise between the religious and secular views, between religious dogma and rational science, the Harris book can only focus on the inadequate evidence that religion offers for its claims. As a result, Harris works from the restrictive dichotomy of religious belief versus atheism, ending up celebrating atheism. In so doing he places himself at the extreme as a secular humanist, rationalist, having no sympathy for religion whatever. It is not necessary to deny the value of the spiritual and intuitive principles which underlie religion [the transcendent view that Harris credits] and offer only atheism as the alternative. And it would seem that Harris does not really want to do this, but it is in fact the extent of what he offers in this work.
4) Harris' very important argument against religious moderates and their view that tolerance is what is called for in dealing with religion and religious fundamentalists is not as well developed in this work as in The End of Faith. It is this contribution that is the highlight of what Harris contributes that is "new" to the debate over the appropriate role of religion in the modern civilized context.

White and Black, Rich and Poor
For 700 Years
Among the Aarsheims of Stadlandet, Norway
2005

The Aarsheim extended family of the Aarsheim area of the Stadlandet region in Western Norway are the descendents of the “black” or poor division of the two clans that took over the land of the area's previous monastery in the mid-1200's. Interestingly, it was not until after World War II that the tradition was broken of the female descendents of the original “poor” clan — including the Aarsheim girls — being confirmed in black dresses while the descendents of the rich family were confirmed in white dresses. That is 700 years of announcing one's coming of age while displaying the emblems of lesser status, long after all vestiges of any legitimate rich and poor division had disappeared among the residents of the area!

When I suspected from various bits and pieces of information gleaned during the Aarsheim Family reunion of 2005 that this tradition had persisted in this manner, I shared this possibility with Inger Marie Aarsheim, who supervises the historical museum of the larger Stadlandet region and who is now one of the middle aged Aarsheim family members living in the Aarsheim enclave of the area. Initially, Inger Marie was reluctant to think it could be so. But subsequent inquires with the 70 and 80 year-old women of the Aarsheim family, together with pictures from family albums, confirmed the persistence of the black and white discriminatory tradition into the modern era. It seems that it was only in the liberating aftermath of WW II that the Aarsheim family threw off the black “veil” and began wearing white confirmation dresses, the new tradition that Inger Marie has come to assume as the norm.

Astonishing, how long traditions, even negatively associated ones, can remain active even when they have no basis in fact and no source for enforcement. After 700 years, wearing black became “just the way things are.” And yet, the women of the area were sensitive enough to this discriminatory practice that they elected to “discard” following it in the late 1940’s.

Interesting that this example of a sustained negative and discriminatory tradition should be found among the otherwise much celebrated, egalitarian Norwegians, with their long history of strong women.

JOURNAL

Native Language and Education
In the Context of the Different Corporate Solutions
To Native Claims Settlement in Alaska and Western Canada
2001

For six weeks in the summer of 2001 Inger and I traveled to Alaska from Chiloquin, Oregon with two other couples, all utilizing campers, ours a pop-up camper [48 sq. ft.] in the bed of our 1989 Ford F250 pick-up. We remained together for the first two thirds of the trip and then returned on slightly different schedules and routes. The separate time on the return trip provided me with the opportunity to focus on the cultural issue of interest to me: how successful the two different "solutions" to native claims settlement had been in Alaska and Canada from the native point of view. Both national solutions arose relatively recently – 1970's and 1990's respectively – and both were responses to the failed 19th century reservation solution. The Alaska oil pipeline was the motivation for the corporate based solution for the Alaska native groups in the United States, while Canada's 1st Nations approach took 20 more years to mature and had the advantage of observing the results of the corporate approach in Alaska. I was interested particularly in whether the result of these solutions and the independent control it returned to the American and Canadian tribes had resulted in their adopting curricula based on an experiential education approach. It was clear from my research, reading, and experience with the Narragansett of Rhode Island and the Klamath Tribes of my home territory in Oregon that on the one hand trying to create an artificial wall of isolation and attempting to educate children only in traditional language and lifestyle was not viable or sustainable in the modern setting, and that on the other hand educating native children in standard classrooms where western basic skills were focal channeled young natives into assimilation and sacrificed both the identify and the strengths of native culture. And trying to teach western skills in classrooms and subsistence knowledge and skills separately in the natural environment was both inefficient and lacked integrity. Experiential education seemed to be the best way to achieve bicultural competency in a single educational setting by training native children in subsistence ways while also deriving from these traditional hunting, gathering, and craft experiences important mathematical concepts and encouraging reading and writing skills.

Some form of true and sustainable biculturalism, or some creative fusion of western and native cultures were the only approaches I could see as viable to address the challenge confronting native cultures. With regard to the cultural fusion option, I have thought for a very long time that the strengths of western culture [science and technology, rule of law, regulated capitalism, and democratic polity within complex social organization] could be combined with the strengths of native culture [communal values, pervasive spiritual/sacred awareness, balanced and respectful relationship in nature] to produce a culture more substantial, holistic, and productive than either one alone. Instrumental in initiating this notion of a creative cultural synthesis had been reading Jamake Highwater's The Primal Mind [1982] in which the two mindsets and worldviews of native and western cultures were presented as complementary rather than necessarily competitive and hierarchical.

In light of the long and tortured history for native cultures in the North American setting, I was well aware that both language and culture for most native groups had taken a huge hit. And, given the key role of language in promoting and sustaining the worldview of all cultures, I wondered whether either of what I saw as the two viable approaches to native education was really tenable any longer. The question was whether the 150 years of cultural "terrorism" had so diminished the tribes that they could not take advantage of the window of opportunity that had finally opened for them, if indeed the two new "solutions" to resolving native claims really allowed for this opportunity at all. I had been building impressions of what seemed to be a wide range of tribal vitality through the first two thirds of the trip. I had seen signs of both very depressed native conditions and possibly flourishing conditions.

What follow are my journal entries for my experiences with different native groups over the twelve day period from August 22 to September 2, 2001. These entries reflect my emergent thoughts as the experiences collect. I end with a summation of what I discovered. Of course, this overview report would only qualify as an opening move in suggesting a direction for more substantial research. But, allowing for both this reservation and the fact that I will not pursue the matter further, I have decided to share this "opening."

August 22 – Manley Hot Springs to Yukon River on the Dalton Hwy.

We stopped in the native Alaska village of Minto, a native Athapaskan village in the Tanana River flats area, a broad water pocked valley between the Alaska and Brooks ranges — 75 miles from the confluence of the Tanana and Yukon Rivers — 120 miles from Fairbanks on the Elliott Hwy. The Milepost – 2001 described a Minto Lodge and Arts Center, but it was necessary to "cruise" the village to locate this facility. In the course of this cruise, the village physically showed all the signs of pervasive depression.

With persistence, we located Laurie — the native director of the Minto community center. Laurie is the daughter of a Minto mother and a white father, the father long gone. She has had some schooling in Fairbanks , but she considers the village as her "home." Laurie is raising her two boys in the Minto village but tells them to get an education so they can make it in the white world — then come home. To stay in Minto according to Laurie is to be trapped and to have limited opportunities. The problem is that there are no real opportunities in Minto for educated tribal members. Those that stay are those that could not make it outside and they are "lost" - alcohol and drugs and lethargy, with a few administrators and professionals and elders trying to hold it together so the band and village can survive.

Since the Minto village moved to the highway side of the Tanana River in 1971 - in response to constant flooding problems on the flats, the Minto have come in for more contact, and they feel the pressure of the dominant western culture. The local Minto Village Corporation controls some land as does the regional Athapascan corporate consortium, but the Minto do not control their former territory on the Minto flats — the extensive system of lakes and braids of the Tanana River, which is rich in fish and wildfowl. The area is open to all to hunt and fish and is under the control of Alaska Fish and Game. Without control, the Minto people see their native residence area open to "outsiders" who use and abuse it with minimal concern for the Minto. Whites

— like us, arrive in pickup campers, which tag them as problematic outsiders. No surprise that the greeting we get is cool — at best, at least at first.

All the paradoxes are here — especially with the tribe lacking control of the resources of the Minto flats. The native language is spoken by elders only, and while there is a desire for the young to learn the language, there is no substantive program to teach it in spite of the fact that the Minto control the K-12 school in their village. According to Laurie a great many of the young people are the children of dysfunctional families, and the clan will is not there yet to design a creative future for the children. Most are caught in limbo, ambivalent and without clear motivation. Elders and professionals are struggling, but the core of the band seems to be dying — slowly.

If they controlled the Minto flats, the Minto could control white access and manage the area so their economy and ecology could be sustained and their ambivalence toward whites turned to a positive orientation — licenses and guide services, tourism, etc. As it is, there is no future prospect of control of the resources of the flats, so the likelihood for improvement for the group is slim. SAD. I hope others groups elsewhere are doing better, maybe under more conducive circumstances.

It would help greatly if the Minto leaders knew what the essential principles of their traditional native culture were, but it seems that the best they can do is announce the social values of community participation and responsibility and respect for the natural world. These values contain the principles, but the spiritual underpinnings for these values seem lost with the loss of native language and spirituality. Mostly Christianized and English speaking, ritual for such native groups becomes social ceremony and sacred art becomes secular art and craft for sale. Laurie respects and participates in the various Minto potlatch rituals, but their significance now is mostly social — mostly to assert the values of social relations beyond the individual, to encourage connection to family, clan, village, and tribe.

Unfortunately, the fulfilling answer for the Minto only partly lies in better houses, schools, roads, water systems, and health and welfare services, which end up being the central concerns of most of the administrators. It is the loss of the worldview core, which gives these material things and services meaning, that is the underlying problem. The tendency of the leadership is to focus on the immediate needs of the community and trying to satisfy them — Laurie included. It is a stop-gap strategy; trying to stay alive, but all the while losing more and more of the essential culture with each generation. They may have new log houses, but much chaos and confusion surround them — all the signs of physical disarray characteristic of the depressed and dependent who lack a clear sense of identity and direction. Unfortunately, this is a picture of a people struggling and with their future in limbo.

We do not have a clue what it is like to grow up and live in this “Minto” kind of situation. At worst, we may have suffered some family dysfunction within a secure sense of racial and social and cultural identity. It is relatively easy to see beyond the immediate health and welfare needs of the Minto and identify the root problem that the Minto and their ilk face — as complex as it is. It is achieving a solution that allows the Minto to recover the basis for their essential identity and that does so while preparing them to live productively and in a balanced way within the strengths of both western

and native cultures that constitutes the real challenge. Our western culture has not yet recognized the need to address its lacks and to incorporate what native culture has to offer it. We get away with ignoring our weaknesses because we dominate and control the situation, but at a fundamental level our need for change is as great as that of the Minto. The outward symptoms of imbalance are merely more obvious for the long dominated and diminished Minto.

The Minto are struggling with the same issues westerners are — just from the other end of the cultural perspective continuum and from the "dominated" position. If we look far enough into the Minto, we see through to ourselves. It all comes full circle if we follow the path far enough!

August 24 — Delta Junction to Tok

Off on the Al-Can toward Tok. The Mountains of the eastern end of the Alaska Range — Mt. Hayes brilliant snow tops in the sun. We are mostly in the clouds in the valley below — looking to 13,000 ft. from 1,300 at valley level — BIG! This is one of the major features of Alaska — the immediacy of the mountains. Except for the Yukon valley, most valleys are rather narrow and at relatively low elevation, 100-600 feet above sea level, so the mountains are both close and tall relative to our observation location at valley floor level. Very impressive!

I can only take so many miles on the Al-Can before I begin to feel too much like a road tourist — the real Alaska flying by and beneath the awesome landscape vistas. Inger reads that Dot Lake is a native village with native Athapaskan corporate headquarters, so I try Dot Lake Lodge on the highway to explore what the results have been of the Alaska native corporation alternative to the lower 48 reservation. The non-native Lodge owner gives his view : some native corporations have been productive and succeeded — others less so. In his view, Dot Lake belongs to the latter. He gives us directions to corporation headquarters, down the next dirt road and into a village that is not looking prosperous. The community center is together with the health clinic. As I depart to explore, Inger remarks, "Don't be long."

I go in the clinic to find a native nurse and her patient, Dan, with his daughter. I indicate the nature of my interest, and Dan says he can take me to talk to Bill. Dan is Chippewa from Michigan, and he tells me how anthropologists “missed” a key local native burial site — until the highway department "unearthed" it, this in spite of the natives telling them repeatedly of its presence. Dan is not impressed with anthropologists!

Off to Bill's house which backs up to the Clearwater River, and an hour plus with Bill leaning on the back of his pickup with mosquitoes buzzing all around both of us — the field worker’s test. Bill is retired Air Force security — he chose to be retired after twenty plus years in Alaska rather than be moved to the lower 48 — away from his native Athapaskan Dot Lake. Bill came back to help lead restoration efforts in 1980 after the 1971 ANCSA (Alaskan Native Claims Settlement Act) set up two layers of related corporations — one regional for each main tribal group and the other, sets of local corporations to deal with specific village tribal matters. Bill's take, after serving for years on the boards of the regional corporation, state school collective, and tribal

government at the village corporate level, “It does not work; and it is not working.” He has seen it all over the years, and he is very frustrated and disappointed.

Bill says the essential problem is that the regional corporations control the assets that came with settlement, and they must operate under Alaskan corporate law, which requires them to provide maximum economic return to their “shareholders.” Local communities/villages, especially small ones like Dot Lake — pop. 46, cannot get the regional corporations to support their needs because many of these needs at the local level are social and infrastructure in nature, and as the regional corporations are set up, they cannot address these needs because there is no “return on investment” to the regional corporation. Even economic development projects go without support [Dot Lake wants an RV Park] for the same reason. The way the ANCSA system is set up, some corporations have invested much more in the stock market than in local project development because that is where the highest return is to be achieved. This situation leaves local tribal governments, the local tribal corporations, to serve the people but having few land resource assets and little support for local native needs – of all types.

According to Bill there is a parallel catch 22 for efforts in education. Local native input is mandated in the settlement for curriculum development, but actual decisions on curriculum and the hiring and firing of teachers are made by the state. The Dot Lake School is local, but locals cannot control — or agree to control use of funds and the selection of teachers. So, native villages cannot structure education to meet what Bill recognizes to be their dual needs — proficiency in western language and technology together with training in native language, culture and subsistence competence.

Bill's view is that the structural problems of multiple layers of conflicted management could be resolved — along with local design of the school curriculum. The challenge of promoting biculturalism could be handled with good results. Bill wants to see native kids trained in science and math and English, but also trained in traditional subsistence and native cultural values. Bill's assessment of this ever happening is, "Not in my lifetime." Bill is a scruffy man in his late 50's, bright and well spoken — a real talent — trying to make things better for his community — but frustrated with the system and suspicious that the whole program was designed to achieve failure — the reservation in a different guise.

So, Congress tries again! And at least for Bill and Dot Lake it has created another monster that does not serve. Trying to protect natives from exploitation, it created so complex a structure organizationally that Bill says lawyers walked way with most of the one billion dollars funded to transition natives into "self-sufficiency." Awesome. And Bill makes no apology for his "piss it all away," drug addicted brothers who cannot face the challenges of trying. Good man — a pleasure to spend an hour and twenty minutes with - unannounced.

Remember Inger’s, "Don't be long." Not a demand easily met for most anthropologist/ folklorists. Cool receptions are not just from natives, but Inger tolerates and is “converted” after I relay the gist of my discussion with Bill. The venture to the banks of the Clearwater and the back of Bill's pickup gives meaning to me for what can otherwise be a scenic whirlwind tour of Alaska surfaces.

Tomorrow to Dawson City and back into Canada — the Yukon. We will see how the Canadian First Nations solution to the native settlement challenge has fared, another even more recent attempt to address this very old issue. Did they learn anything from the results of the U.S. reservation and Alaskan corporate efforts?

August 26 — Dawson Day

For me, this is a day of huge contrasts. On opposite sides of the street – Parks Canada's three films celebrating the gold rush, and the Han-Hwech'n cultural center.

The Parks Canada films are very well done — on the rush and the miner experience and the riverboat supply system. The advance in technology from pick and shovel, to drift mine, and then to dredge [placer] mining for gold is documented. Each technological step is a geometric leap in efficiency for extracting ever more gold from the land. Unfortunately, the dredges leave huge snake like gravel mounds in their wake to cover the entire river shed bottom — placer mining. The films are all about the $250,000,000 in gold recovered as "man overcomes nature." Ah — impressive western culture! The epitome — focus on tiny flecks of gold and do anything and everything to get as much as possible without regard for anything else — total tunnel vision with science and technology to support positive economic consequences. When you are "through," just pack up and leave your mess "behind." The Parks Canada films never mention the negative environmental impacts, just the glory of the rush, the technology and the fortunes made. An excellent celebration of the golden age of Dawson without any critical evaluation of the ecological or cultural undertow.

At the Han cultural center I meet Kim, the director, a 26-year-old great granddaughter of Chief Isaac's brother. The two brothers shared political (chief) and shaman duties. The cultural center is a symbolic structure, which incorporates the structural elements of the Han summer fish drying racks, and winter circular lodge with center smoke hole (sky light). The Han put the center together in 3 years. It is an impressive structure, presentation and displays. The entire center is intentionally low key, "You come to us — with questions" — not the "Sell 'em" and "Wow 'em" approach of Parks Canada. The center presents the gold rush history as the beginning of tribal disintegration as the Han are displaced multiple times to accommodate the shifting interests of whites. Land taken by the crown, rivers despoiled, game hunted with abandon, and land denuded of trees — cut for wood to feed the huge appetites of the ever-larger riverboat boilers. After the gold rush came and went, the Han went through the separation of native children from their families to live in residential schools with the goal of achieving enforced assimilation. Language and culture were literally "beaten" out of this generation. The Center is gentle in its presentation, but the message is clear — the Han were screwed while whites stripped the land of its gold and resources, and then departed leaving their mess in their wake.

Tragedy vs. Celebration — just a matter of point of view and experience from different perspectives. The truth is that both versions of history are accurate, and neither deserves to be presented without the other as a counter balance. In this case, you have to cross the street and spend a little quality time with Kim to get the alternative. It is a small minority of visitors/tourists that make it across the street and pay the $5 for the native view. Very few talk with Kim long enough to discover she is more than a

summer native "interpreter." Most visitors to Dawson get just the Parks Canada celebration and the "rush" of the Dawson recreation/restoration experience. How many learn that the modern town of Dawson divides at the corner where the Han Center is located, with all property beyond the Center being part of the Han corporate holdings that were secured by the tribe in the later 1990s as part of their First Nations Settlement?

Canada came late to the native reparations table — 1996. The First Nations Settlement Act returned 1000 square miles — 640,000 acres — to the Han, and another 1000 square miles were set aside as preserve where only the Han have access to the resources — but without ownership. The tribe took all land; and none can be sold. The Han selected the lands they wanted and negotiated for some significant parts of what they selected — including about 1/3 of residential Dawson City. Imagine what a comparable situation would mean for Minto or Dot Lake in Alaska.

Kim says the Canadian version of settlement is working well for the Han. There is no corporate structural conflict comparable to the Alaskan Dot Lake Athapascan report. The local tribal groups indicate what they want through their selected local leaders and representatives, and the corporate structure above is designed to meet all reasonable requests. Cultural and social needs are recognized in an entire division of the corporation that exists to serve only these needs. The Canadian First Nations corporations are not defined in solely economic terms as in Alaska. The Han control their 1,000 square miles — locally. Han Hwech'n also own many businesses in their territory and locally in Dawson with the income and its use belonging exclusively to them. The quality of housing in the Han part of Dawson is impressive. About 360 of 980 Han live in Dawson, and while we see some native “derelicts,” most of the Han natives seem in much better shape over all — for sure. And the First Nations settlement has only been in effect for five years, though it has been in process since 1992!

I talked to Kim for about an hour after the museum presentations. Her parents are mostly subsistence, traditional Han, leaders in teaching hunting and fishing ways to the tribe's youth. Kim feels the settlement was the best they could get – land, preserve, and federal support for many services. Their focus now is on making it work!

We talked about language, and interestingly, there is a prominent video in the center which addresses the key role of language and the need for all Han to learn it. Kim indicates that all Han children are taught the native language in school from K through 8th grade, but this does not result in fluency. We talked about the need for the early language and culture immersion experience — Kim knows about this option.

In light of the Han Hwech'n's effective negotiation through their recent settlement history, it would seem that they have a reasonable chance to remain viable as a native culture. They control resources and can direct funds to their priorities, and they benefit from federal services and Chief Isaac's range of local and regional businesses. Since 1992, when the Settlement process began, the Han in Dawson have achieved a great deal. If they can solve the language acquisition issue for their children, Kim thinks they can design a way to live in both worlds. I agree. The super culture that is possible takes the best of western and native cultures and requires each to illuminate the other. Kim

agrees, and though she recognizes the need and benefit of western science and math and law and technology, her emphasis personally is more on the traditional native component. Kim has ambitions to go to college and First Nations will pay her way, but she has spent the last 8 years working for First Nations and participating in the settlement and the transition of the Han under that settlement. She may well not make it to college, but we talk about how she might structure her higher educational experience to get what she wants and not be overwhelmed by the "western" structure of the classroom and book based learning.

Kim is a fine person with the best interests of the Han at heart. She understands the whole and the relevance of the spirit and the sacred in it. She says the Han were totally puzzled by the fascination of the white man with gold and their willingness to disrespect and abuse "all" to get it. Kim is bitter about the past and the losses her people have suffered, but she is positive and looking to the future and working creatively to "make it work." That is the combination that can be successful, and the support structure seems to be there from the federal government to assist, not diminish her effort. Great! Nice to see a native settlement "solution" that has a chance of succeeding. This is my first really positive read on the native settlement issue. Super! Maybe, after so many abuses and blunders, First Nations shows the positive way forward, at least for the scraps of native culture that have survived.

August 27 - Stewart Crossing to Whitehorse

We head south on the Klondike Loop and stop in Carmacks at the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation Northern Tutchone Interpretive Center on the Yukon River. The center is a ways off the highway and manned by one woman, Ceshea'. There is little visitation — 3 others in the two hours we were there. As with other visitors, Ceshea' welcomes us, but does not lead — waits for inquiries. Other visitors look around at the good set of exhibits and leave. The Center is the result of local work and First Nation settlement money. Ceshea' is an active tribal member and a native speaker, whose English is good but clearly secondary. In Ceshea's case native language primacy comes from being raised as a young girl by her grandmother. Conditional statements and complex tenses in English are not easy for her; these complexities probably do not correlate well with the grammar of her native language.

Ceshea' confirms for her tribe Kim's earlier assessment of the success of the First Nation settlement in Canada: it is working and she is hopeful. Ceshea' is active teaching the language to adults and preschoolers, and she is getting her diploma (GED) so she can teach in the schools. While we are talking, a radio news broadcast, which is on in the exhibits, indicates that a new program has just emerged to address the needs identified by First Nation peoples for changes in the standard education curriculum. Ceshea' says education should be split — half subsistence/experiential/native language, half-western classroom — English. If done right, Ceshea' thinks her people could be educated to live in both worlds. Ceshea' is working toward this goal. One such curriculum exists for one group, Ceshea' suggests.

Ceshea's personal story is most interesting. She is now in her sixties, and she lived through the time when she was raised traditionally with the native language. Then came the period of 6 years of separation in a residential school where Ceshea' was taught that the worst thing she could be called was "Indian." She remembers that

during this time she never wanted to be an Indian. All of her native language, belief and worldview was denigrated in the residence school context. In spite of her strong traditional experience in her own family, Ceshea' was of an age where she took the anti-Indian attitudes promoted in school to heart and well into adulthood. One result was that she only taught her children — all five girls – English. They learned some subsistence, but Ceshea says the focus of the period from the '50s to the '70s was for native people to get a good western education and a good job and assimilate. All five of Ceshea's girls are currently doing well, but now Ceshea' regrets her own children's loss of the native language and many of the details of traditional subsistence life. She is trying to make up for this loss with her grandchildren, teaching them the language and traditional ways. One daughter is in law school in Vancouver and wants to become a judge, but for all her accomplishments, Ceshea regrets that this daughter is not as grounded in native ways as Ceshea' would like her to be.

The turnaround in attitude toward native culture began in the '70's and matured in the '90s with the First Nations settlements. Now, Ceshea' can see a future with youth growing up — competent in both worlds. But she says few are fluent in speaking the native language; mostly they just know the lexicon. There are some intensive summer language and culture programs, and if the new curriculum allows what Ceshea' wants, fluency may really be an attainable goal for young people. Clearly the hope is there and Ceshea' is actively working to make it come about. She is pursuing her own teaching and education after 20 years raising her own five children and caring for her paralyzed husband. Her husband died in 1997, and Ceshea' has emerged since then in her own right. Her youngest daughter just left home this last year — the one she watched over and who studied all the time. Now Ceshea' is on her own and very involved in her community's reemergence under First Nations structure.

The craft shop in the Tutchone Center was shut down for lack of business — moved to the Five Fingers area 7 miles up the road where the tourist traffic is better. Ceshea' says it will take some "aggressive" marketing, but plans are in the works for First Nations to revitalize a trading post next door to the Center and set up an RV park and motel. The craft shop will return with this development. This is the kind of economic development support at the local community level that Bill wants in Dot Lake and Laurie needs in Minto but that neither can get his Alaska corporation to support.

On the road again, Inger and I talk about Native issues — how to understand the lethargy among natives as perceived by whites. There are many causes, but there is an interesting parallel between native experience in history and the rituals of identity reconstruction — as in the military. These identity rituals first tear down the existing identity, then rebuild it in terms of what is desired. Native cultures have been through this process – long term. Historically the tribes have been broken down with a series of debilitating hits. First, a succession of diseases reduced populations by as much as 90% - with loss of leadership and severe stress on social structure and cultural continuity. Then came the missionaries to expunge native spiritual belief and to Christianize the heathens — substituting the individualistic Christian religion for native spiritualism, which supported the social structure and tied native identity to the community and the integrity of the natural world. Then with full on contact, there was the loss of land and loss of control over resources, governance and lifecycle activities – giving rise to all the problems of dependency in the U.S. reservation system. In the

1950's with the reservation system not working, conservatives pressed for enforced assimilation which resulted in native children being ripped from their families and communities and put in residency schools where native culture and language was systematically shunned and beaten out of most of them. The result was a generation adrift, not knowing who they were with many losing themselves to drugs and alcohol. The task of sustaining native culture fell to a generation of grandparents, many of whom had to bridge across their own children to raise and teach their grandchildren the language and culture of their tribes.

The combination of these experiences over time would be enough to break most individuals, and paralyze most groups! It is a wonder the tribes survived to see the 1970 - 2000 period of renewed respect for multiculturalism, reinstatement of assistance and the return of some lands and control over resources and governance. Enough native individuals and tribes persisted through it all to make a restoration movement possible — if challenging and very difficult. No wonder the current difficult path to reclaiming vitality is entertained with a lot of hope. The present sure looks better than the prior century! It seems that many will survive; the question is how many will make it to a really empowered form of biculturalism. Not many from what I have seen so far in the northern environs. Western culture needs to keep this thorn in its side.

August 29 — Skagway to Haines and back, then on to Johnson's Crossing

We are now at the top of the southeastern inland waterway of Alaska at Skagway. We take the fast Ferry to Haines, and during the trip a native guide gives an effective interpretive presentation of Kluckwan Tlingit native culture. At the end he mentions that he is the headman for the Raven clan and the clan spokesman. I wait to be the last to get off the ferry and talk briefly to him. He is on duty until 1:00 p.m., then off for 1 1/2 hours. He is Ray Dennis and he says we can talk during his break. He gives me his business card and then is off to prepare for the next ferry trip.

From 9 am. to 1 p.m., Inger and I explore Haines on foot . We stop at the Seward Fort where the Totem Art center is located in the old hospital. There is a nice craft display and sale area where I find the center coordinator to talk to. The regional Tlingit corporation owns the center, and it is the master totem carvers from the Chilkat and Chilkoot tribes who are doing great work at $1,000/ft. There is an apprentice program to train young tribal members in the craft, which clearly can be quite lucrative, but I am told that the center cannot recruit native trainees. The regular financial distributions to young people from their tribes are so generous that there are few young men willing to put in the time and effort to apprentice with the elder master carvers — even for pay. Some families have done so well through settlement that the young do not need to work. They just hang out and "piss it off."

I talk to Tresham Gregg who is a workaholic/alcoholic and a very talented artist in many media — graphic and plastic. Gregg is from the non-native family that owns much of the old fort. He runs a gift shop in the buildings that are in the center of the Fort parade ground, and he also operates the salmon bake concession in the area. All of his art work is derived from and a celebration of native northwest coast motifs. Gregg started Chilkat Dancers many years ago and has been an important force in preserving native art and craft for most of his life. Now he says the tribes want to take

over and push him and his family out. Gregg and the tribes are caught in a tough spot now as both the regional tribal corporation and the individual tribes have flourished and become powers to be reckoned with, especially since settlement and the vastly expanded, cruise oriented, tourist economy. It is troubling to discover the conflict that a long time native supporter like Gregg finds himself in presently. It is entirely possible for the once disenfranchised natives to become powerful and lose a sense of restraint. It seems there is truth for Everyone – white and native – in the adage: "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

There is a lot of "native inspired" art in Alaska — by natives and non-natives, and Gregg's work is in the top echelon, in my view. The best of this native inspired art is more interesting from my perspective than the more regimented and replicative native forms; it is more fluid and kinetic and graceful.

In downtown Haines, I talk to a native art and craft shop owner. She relays that it has been a tough year since the large tour/cruise boats ceased stopping in Haines because of protests that made the tour passengers feel unwelcome. The protestors are environmentalists talking about the harm caused to marine life by the ships. This native shop owner has had to let five assistants go and now runs the shop herself — alone. In addition, her husband has had to leave to get work elsewhere. She says just a few rich newcomers have caused the problems — trust fund kids and early retirees who want the area all to themselves.

It is 1 p.m. and I talk with Ray Dennis over lunch in the noisy Bamboo Curtain restaurant in downtown Haines. Ray confirms the view of the native craft shop owner. He says a lot of people in Haines are suffering this year — tribes included — because of the drastic tourism loss. Ray indicates that native people depend on the sea more than anyone else and have always been especially sensitive to the area ecology. He indicates that any damage to the sea is the result of past, not current, tour ship practices. Moreover, Ray claims that paid outsiders were brought in by the Sierra Club to protest at the tour ship docks. He says, unfortunately locals were too slow to respond and to stage an effective counter demonstration — before the sensitive tour boat companies decided to bypass Haines and stop only in Skagway, where they are welcomed with open arms. Locals are trying to make it through the year and renegotiate with the tour companies — now with strong local involvement and support.

No doubt there is truth on both sides – just look at the tourism take over of Skagway with streets lined with shop after shop selling highly inflated native art on the one hand and "native" souvenirs made in China on the other. The effects of unrestrained tourism are not pretty, but neither are communities caught in the circumstances of economic depression. As always: it is so easy to lose Balance and Respect on one side or the other in this equation.

In general, Ray says the Alaska settlement solution is working for the tribes of southeastern Alaska. SeaAlaska, the southeast regional native corporation, is sensitive to local needs and even has a separate language and culture division to promote social/cultural development. Ray indicates that the local Kluckwan corporation, of which he is a part, is a major force in the Haines area, owning several businesses including the Fast Ferry line between Skagway and Haines which amounts

to five boats carrying 125 passengers each — no small capital investment. Ray's main criticism of the 1971 settlement act is in terms of the very limited land returned to the tribes and the fact that most of the land that was returned was marginal land. Ray says in the early '70's with the rush to get the oil pipeline through, the tribes were told to settle for what had been negotiated or likely face getting nothing. Now the tribes find themselves stuck with limited and lesser lands, but they are trying to add to what they have with additional claims on federally owned properties. Ray does not think that these claims will produce much since in Alaska there were no treaties with natives, no reservations; the natives were just "over run." So, in 1970 with the pipeline to be constructed and the requirement in the law for natives to be consulted, it was finally necessary for the native issue to be addressed. Overall, Ray says that native tribes got 12% of Alaska — a lot of acres by other standards, but not by Alaska standards. And it is all a matter of which acres you get, and few of the prime acres in which whites had an interest were returned!

Ray, who is in his late 30s, has an interesting personal story. His parents were taken to residential schools and went through the cultural shaming and language beating process, but his grandparents were strong traditionalists and his parents rebelled. They raised Ray in the traditional way, with exclusive use of the native language. But when Ray entered school, he was so intensely shamed by other native children for his native accent that he finally, consciously, determined to totally deny/block his native language and become a Standard English speaker. And he has! But his problem now is that he cannot break through the block that he put in place with such intensity as a young man, and to this day he cannot speak his native language. He understands native speakers perfectly and is even aware of the mistakes that are often made, but so far Ray has not been able to speak himself. So, somewhat akin to Ceshea' among the Tutchone, Ray denied the native language in himself as a young man and has carried the burden of this decision forward into adulthood. He wants to retrieve native speech, but it is difficult because he must be willing to make mistakes "publicly" to do it. But as the young headman and spokesman for his Raven clan, Ray feels it is risky to be seen as anything other than fully competent. Still, he knows he has to find a way.

In Ray's traditional Kluckwan village, they decided to integrate the Tlingit language into all of the school curriculum, in spite of the "English First" law in Alaska. In other local schools the native language is extra — but at least it is offered. Ray recognizes the importance of the native language in the tribes' restoration. His view on language and other cultural aspects is that he must do all he can with all those who are willing to preserve as much as he can, but in the process it is inevitable that some things will be lost. In Ray's view, it will take 2-3 generations to bring the tribe back, and everyone must have <u>patience!</u>

Native language centered, subsistence education with a strong English, math and science component is what Ray wants to see instituted comprehensively for native people. He is committed to the fact that his people must be able to operate in both worlds. We talk about experiential education as a way to design a field oriented curriculum where the field experience can be used to teach both subsistence and science and math concepts and literary skills. Otherwise education is split between field (native) and classroom (western) and the suggestion inherent in that approach is

that the two worlds and perspectives cannot be unified. Ray is very interested in exploring this option.

Ray is trained as a master eyeglass technician. He is not an optician; Ray is the one that actually runs the machines that make the lenses in the automated world of eyeglass production. Ray says he gave up a very lucrative future in the white man's world in Anchorage to return to become headman of his Raven clan house; but he says the future of his clan and tribe is at the core of his heart. He has returned only after obtaining a written commitment from the clan elders, legitimizing him as the selected headman. Ray indicates that one thing he has learned from his experiences among both whites and native people is to avoid the uncertainty of oral, "consensus" commitments. Two years back from his optical work in Anchorage, Ray says being a good headman is a tough job, but he is committed. Ray has a very strong communal sense and takes his hereditary responsibility very seriously — to guard the tribe's rights and traditions. Ray is no CEO with an eye to a huge salary, bonus and benefits package!

As our time concludes, Ray and I both discover that both of us are in trouble with our wives; he forgot to attend a funeral, I failed to locate Inger to be part of our talk. We part, and it is very clear to me that Ray is a truly quality person. I can't imagine the joy that will descend in his life when his native language speaking competency reemerges; this event will make him whole again and retrieve the denied but highly valued essential behavior that most identifies him as a native of his tribe, clan and house. When it happens, Ray will fully model what it is to be truly accomplished in both the native and western worlds.

We take the late afternoon ferry back to Skagway. A long day, but good to discover a Native American Alaskan option that is working. Ray says 2 to 3 of the regional native corporations have got it together. Another 9 or 10 are in lesser states for various reasons: the conflict with local village needs, the quality and value of the returned resources, the area where the returned resources are located relative to economic developmental options, and the extent of white contact and interest in, as well as access to these native resources.

This is it for Alaska. We return for the rest of the trip in Canada, mostly on the Cassiar Highway.

<u>August 30 — Al-Can Highway south to Teslin, on to Liard, and south on Cassiar Hwy.</u>
After a late start, we stop at the First Nations Inland Tlingit Heritage Center outside Teslin, which just opened in June, 2001. This is a 2.3 million-dollar center with beautiful new, carved totem clan figures at the entrance. This facility was paid for from the tribe's [referred to as a council] interest on their settlement trust fund. It is a beautiful wood building, architect designed to reflect native symbolics. They have made a good start on the display area with a succinct history of the tribe. This branch of the Tlingit moved inland from the coast to supply the fur trade. The result has been that the tribe has combined coastal and inland Athapaskan cultural traditions — land/water. However, at this point the clan totems are all terrestrial — eagle, raven, bear, frog, beaver. Being inland, the inland symbols have prevailed.

Delores is a center interpreter, council member, and mother in her 30s. Inger makes this contact which proceeds with Delores taking Inger down the hall to show her the embroidered garments she is helping her nieces from Vancouver to create. I follow. Delores' first language was native, then her mother and grandmother died and in her school experience she lost it. She still understands and recognizes the importance of the native language. She says the language is being taught in the local schools along with traditional ways in classes that are open to whites under special honorary clan status.

Delores indicates that the Inland Tlingit are one of the more successful of First Nations in the Yukon. Their leaders serve as consultants for other native groups who are not doing as well. They are helping these other native groups learn the process of planning and creating organizational structure and accounting that allows them to get where they want to go and still accommodate the expectations of the government that is defined by western culture. Delores focuses on the role of elders in the tribe's success. These leaders were very strong and determined during settlement, and they knew how to back up their claims with documents. As a result, their council got much of the land it claimed. But Delores indicates that elders can also be a source of inertia. It took 20 years to get the center approved, and the totems out front were one of the issues. Some elders were not sure these icons should be shared with outsiders. So elders are not an unmitigated benefit — as Ray also said. But the underlying principle in both cases is commitment to communal consensus and respect for ancestors and elders as the overseers of traditions. The emphasis is on identity in the clan, the homeland; that is who you are — not being a lawyer in Vancouver. One of Delores' nieces is becoming a lawyer and the plan is that she will return to the council to replace the current white Whitehorse lawyer. The tribe is looking to accomplish this with all occupations and roles — plumbers, electricians, etc.

Delores wants education to be ½ native language and tradition, ½ western — English, math, and science. She sees these as separate. I suggest that experiential education can unify them. It is not clear she understands what this curriculum option is really about. But within her pride in promoting the traditions of her tribe, Delores clearly sees the need to instruct native children to be competent in both native and western culture skills.

Delores confirms that the First Nations path in Canada is working. The native local tribe [council] controls its own resources, and the decisions are local to approve projects. She is very positive about the council's future — as is the museum display. The presentation cites the abuses of whites, but does not focus on them.

<u>September 2 - `Ksan Village in Hazelton, B.C. and on to Prince George</u>

From 10 am. to 3 p.m. - vastly longer than planned - we spend at `Ksan village. Inger and I arrive early with no other visitors in the museum. We purchase the village tour tickets and are extremely fortunate to have Dan, a center interpreter, present us with a private tour through the village - totems and houses. Dan provides a great deal of ethnographic detail. In the 1970's when the village reconstruction had just been completed at the instigation of Dan's grandmother, tours were four hours at the site and then another two to four hours at a village site upriver! Now they are an hour at the one site. Clearly there is a "grand" tour option for those really interested! But we

have already “lingered” on this trip. We will keep the possibility in mind for another time in a trip focused on southeastern Alaska and southwestern British Columbia!

`Ksan is a reconstructed traditional Gitsan village, which opened in 1970. From early on it had an associated RV park, where we stayed last night, next to the Skeena River. The Gitsan Village now includes a museum/gift shop, wood carvers' house, arts and crafts house, cafè/video house, and three clan houses displaying residential, potlatch, and seasonal "artifact/activity" set-ups. In the museum structure is a superb art and craft shop, which Laurel Mould, the center Manager, has developed over the last seven years - all northwest native crafts and art. And all the offerings are at reasonable prices. This complex shows what can be done with time, effort and vision.

Dan is 18 years old and was raised by his grandmother. He is a very rare, young, native person, who is entirely fluent in English as well as in both the traditional native Gitsan language and the vernacular native Gitsan. Dan says the traditional native language is so different that vernacular native language speakers cannot understand it. Dan just finished high school and is in line to become headman of the wolf house/clan, in part because he is so well versed in traditional language and culture from his grandmother. It is a real plus for all the interpreters that Laurel requires all of them to use the museum's archives and books on Gitsan to learn all they can in their spare time. Dan is very mature for 18 and aspires to degrees in computer science. He is clearly capable of doing anything he sets his mind to, but he is afraid he may be called as the wolf clan chief before he has a chance to attain his personal goals, which he also sees as important for his clan and the Gitsan tribe. He emphasizes the huge responsibility and demand for time and effort that accompanies being a clan house headman.

Dan says that 1958 was the break point for all native cultures in Canada. Earlier there was severe suppression by the government of native culture, but in spite of this pressure, committed tribal members continued to practice Gitsan traditions in secret. The government burned villages, removed totems, outlawed potlatches, and separated children from families and sent them to residential schools where they were beaten if they spoke their native language. Finally, in 1958 the law officially authorizing native cultural suppression was repealed. Since that time, the tribes have seen steady improvement in relations with the provincial government, but there remains active prejudice and reluctance to fully recognize area natives, especially in Lower B.C.

Dan indicates that the suppression and treatment of natives was worse in the Gitsan area than in the areas to the north because the resources of the local native groups included much desirable farm and timber land, which the whites wanted. This was not the case for groups in the permafrost zone to the north, just 70-100 miles north of `Ksan. It is notable with the change coming south from boreal into the temperate zone that western white settlement grows exponentially. According to Dan, Lower B.C. natives had it much tougher than did those in the Yukon. The B.C. government, working with law enforcement, attorneys, and economic interests, combined to actively pursue a policy of native suppression from 1920-1950.

When we arrive back from the village tour, Dan arranges to open an exhibit upstairs in the museum for me to look at while he is conducting his next tour. This exhibit is not

open to the general public and it is a privilege to experience it in this inner sanctum of the 'Ksan facility. It is a devastating exhibit detailing the history of the abuse suffered at the hands of whites by one Gitsan extended family. The natives of the area did not oppose whites, and embraced much of white culture, but natives who tried to farm on tribal land that whites wanted were subjected to all kinds of "special" treatment to take their land away from them. This exhibit documents the story of one native family whose farmstead was burned and taken over by whites when the native family left for the annual salmon fishing, thereby inadvertently providing the whites with the opportunity to declare their farm "abandoned." After a lengthy battle in court over many years, in 1996, a B.C. Supreme Court justice wrote the opinion upholding the white take over of the native family's property. His opinion is so laced with demeaning racial stereotypes it is astonishing, and this in 1996!!! This Justice actually references in his written opinion 18th century authors on the "brutish" nature of the cultures of the "unwashed." This in a recent, published, Provincial high court decision – representing the position of the court as a whole!! The exhibit is an exposé of the treatment of the native "owners" over the years by a non-native photo journalist — also available as a book. In modern times, this story reveals official B.C.'s decent into native holocaust territory. It will be interesting to see what the ultimate consequences of the exposé are, but for sure the events reveal that the dominant white culture is still actively doing its dirty work, right up to the top of the legal system. Of course there are always two sides to any story, but this exhibit is so potentially explosive and revealing, it is no wonder that it is housed in a separate area and made available to only a select few.

I talk to Dan and Laurel through the day, as they are available. When one is busy, I am able to locate the other most of the time. Both are very committed to see the Gitsan culture and language revitalized, but both realize the very difficult task that lies before the tribe to realize this dream. Laurel describes the negative conditions that they have to fight — alcohol and drugs, depression and suicide. Dan talks about this but stresses the number of his friends who are coming to him to learn the language and the extent of the teaching of native language and culture in the schools. Gitsan children are 70% of the school population and the tribe has a much greater influence on the local school curriculum than seems to be the case elsewhere. There are now eight Gitsan villages in the area, three of these revitalized since the 1960's after being lost to disease in the early contact period of the 19th century.

It is a fascinating challenge to answer the question of how cultures like the Gitsan managed to survive their century long history of debilitation and active suppression by the dominant western culture. One important reason is the communal nature of these native societies. In this communal framework, commitment is to clan and clan structure, and individual identity has meaning only in this context. Whatever the individual's independent merits, he or she has no real identity separate from the identity of the clan or tribe to which he or she belongs. Traditionally this is reflected in the warrior code — all must be willing to die to protect the clan chief, or be killed afterward if chief is killed and the warrior survives! The rule is: to the death for the survival of the clan and village. With identity so fundamentally tied to the group, if only a few members of the group survive, the clan continues to exist. So, while individuals may be lost — indeed many, like the anthill or beehive the clan survives if the queen remains protected, or another queen can emerge. The clan may be significantly

diminished in vitality, but it can persist if a few individuals with the mindset of identity defined by the group can sustain.

In this regard, we can look at other cultures where there is a similar emphasis on group or family identity rather than individual identity – many Asian cultures. In these cultures individual identity is subservient to family identity, a fact that is reflected even in how individuals are named. "Wu Y-djen" is Inger's name in Chinese. It is the last name, the family name, that comes first. Only once this family name is declared does the individual name have "meaning." The family context has priority in identity. Modem western culture, with its emphasis on the individual, does not understand the strength that lies in communal identity. The Gitsan exemplify how clans, communities and tribes can persist if but a few communally identified individuals survive to perpetuate the "idea" of the group.

So, the big question: why bother to sustain traditional native cultures? In a world that is slowly unifying and headed in the direction of becoming a single organism, why try to sustain diversity? In the ideal sense, there is no reason because all diversity will be lost eventually — if a unified world culture does emerge. But in the pragmatic sense, even if social and cultural unification does occur, what that world culture will look like is still up for grabs. And until it is determined, I suggest that native culture has too much to offer to this potential "Super" culture. To give up on cultural diversity before humankind can consolidate the best that all cultures have to offer is to lose the full array of potential inputs that need to be considered. Western culture has great strengths [law, science, technology, democracy, secular humanism, regulated capitalism], but it also has great weaknesses. And interestingly, the areas of Western weakness are the areas of strength in native culture [community, spirituality, connection to and respect for the whole of nature]. The fact is that Western culture needs native culture although it does not realize it — yet. So, I say, "Hang in there Gitsan Tsimshian, and Inland, Kluckwan and Chilkat Tlingit, and Han Hwech'n, and Tutchone, Dot Lake and Minto Athapaskan. Even though your culture will likely to be lost in the final unification, some of your cultural principles may survive to be an important part of the unified, cultural whole that arises." That, in the ultimate sense, is the reason that I think that the Gitsan struggle to survive, and similar struggles worldwide, deserves our respect and support. Whatever we admire about native groups and their art and culture, the justification for supporting their continuation at the highest level lies in our own recognition of our need for cultural humility and our awareness that the evolution of the "best" unified culture will occur if it draws on the "best" elements from all human cultural "experiments," western and non-western. We need to retain cultural diversity now precisely because we are not there yet and there is much to be winnowed out before we do get there.

And it must also be said that if humans are not a species destined to achieve Gaia level unification, and if instead civilization disintegrates and humans return to tribal conditions, then humans will need all the cultural diversity they can muster to continue to survive in the varied ecological niches of the world. So, our present cultural diversity serves to insure our future whichever path cultural development takes.

Overall Evaluation

As a whole, our trip through western Canada to Alaska and back was a wonderful experience, well worth the expense and effort. I was extraordinarily fortunate to encounter excellent native representatives at virtually every stop during my exploration of the results of the two different, more modem solutions to the native settlement challenge that have been developed in Alaska in the 1970's and in Canada in the 1990's. Although I was totally unannounced, these native representatives and spokespersons proved willing to spend a good deal of time with me and to openly share their views and experiences. I am very grateful for the privilege of their generosity.

What I learned. In general, the Canadian First Nation option seems to be set up to avoid some of the "corporate" problems of the Alaskan solution with more consistent examples of groups that felt the settlement approach was working. Among groups in Alaska, the only place where the corporate arrangement was said to be working well was Sea Alaska in the Southeast — also the most prosperous area economically.

My other points of interest with native culture were the retention of the native language and the extent to which the curriculum in education included native language and culture and took advantage of the experiential approach to education. In general, I found, as expected, that fluency in the native language by the young correlates directly with the vitality of the culture. And in most of the native groups that I contacted few of the young are fluent in the native tongue. Different local tribal groups are more or less aware and active in trying to address their language loss. Those groups that have the greatest awareness and activity to restore the language seem destined to have the best chance to achieve restoration. No group has implemented a full experiential education curriculum, but a few are aware of the option. For me, getting this kind of curriculum in place — and quickly — is essential to native cultural survival and viability as well as achieving in an efficient way the bicultural goal to which all aspire.

Presently, almost universally, the tribes recognize the positive aspects of Western Culture and the need for their members to be truly bicultural. They are on the cusp of making what can be "One Giant Leap for Mankind." If they could grasp the underlying principles of native and western approaches to natural and social reality and place their emphasis on developing ways of embedding these combined principles in a unified manner in their members, they could develop and demonstrate a model for a truly integrated and holistic world culture. If in pursuing this embedding goal, they employed an integrated curriculum based on experiential education, they could model both a unified culture and how to inculcate and perpetuate it. In the process they could avoid getting bogged down in struggling to perpetuate the details of each group's specific traditions [e.g. these colors in this season go with these designs for this artifact for this clan] while failing to transmit basic principles [the seeing the woods for the trees problem].

Short of recognizing, pursuing, implementing and achieving this cultural unification ideal, which being betwixt and between the native tribes are ironically closer to being able to do than their dominant cultural brethren, the best we can do is to support continued cultural diversity in the hope that one day some "enlightened" humans will draw upon the positive aspects of native cultures in reaching for the best possible consolidation of world culture.

FOOD and NUTRITION

[The combination of my daughter, Kia's, profession as a clinical nutritionist/family counselor and my major heart attack at the end of 2003 brought diet into focus for me. Especially important in the view that has developed is the inflammatory basis of cardiovascular disease and its connection to stress and diet. What follow are two reviews on works that have been important in how my thinking on these issues has matured. A third work, for which I cannot locate my review, is unfortunately the most substantial of the three, Michael Pollan's The Omnivore's Dilemma (2006). The Pollan work is mentioned in the second review.]

Life Without Bread: How a Low-Carbohydrate Diet Can Save Your Life,

(2000) By Wolfgang Lutz, Christian B. Allan, Christopher Allen

Review

2003

The Truths

I accept the fact that humans did not evolve with a high proportion of grains in their diet, and definitely not refined grains. In the modern diet of western civilization, certainly grains are the major sources of carbohydrates – together with sugar in its various forms. The fact that there are no essential carbohydrates that must be part of the human diet is suggestive in itself that carbohydrates are not essential foods! So, it seems reasonable to reduce the degree of carbohydrate consumption – especially in its refined form – to promote the hormonal balance that Allan and Lutz propose and to avoid the diseases that can be associated with the hormonal imbalances that high carbohydrate intake can promote. Indeed, one of the outstanding contributions of Lutz and Allan is to lay out in detail the relationship of excessive simple carbohydrate consumption to insulin resistance [Syndrome X, type 2 diabetes] and the foundation role insulin plays in the hormonal system overall. The book is worth reading for that explication alone.

Stretching the Truth

What is not clear is the need for the degree of the reduction of carbohydrates in the diet that Allan and Lutz propose – to 72 grams of useable carbohydrate. There are many sources of carbohydrate that are not associated with grains or sugars. And more importantly, there are diets among modern cultures [Asian and Central and South American in the main] that center on the consumption of starch [rice, wheat, corn] that do not display the insulin based diseases so prominent in "western" culture. Clearly not all diets high in starch [carbohydrates] are problematic, and clearly diets high in meat products [protein and fat] are not necessary for good health – a central assumption in the Lutz argument. One has to ask, how is it possible to ignore the health consequences of the diets of half the modern [agriculturally based] human population, diets which directly challenge the major contention and assumption of Lutz's low carb diet.

Allan and Lutz virtually ignore the contribution to ill health in the western population of stress [multiple sources] and lack of exercise. Neither do they take seriously the potential contribution to ill health caused by fertilizers and pesticides, which have been used exponentially in the same time frame as the recognized emergence of "modern" health problems among western populations. And it has to be obvious **that in the existing western cultural context** there are as many potential negative health

consequences of a high fat and protein diet as there are for a high carbohydrate diet [the Lutz diet is a no holds barred high fat diet].

Most importantly, Lutz and Allan do not identify the ill health effects to the fat composition of meat and dairy from animals raised or finished on grain. True, Paleolithic man ate very little grain. But it is also true that the high fat and protein diets of Paleolithic man were from wild animals that consumed what was appropriate for them in their natural ecologies. Most of these animals ate very little grain and more insects, vegetable matter, and the organs and meat of other animals. Modern industrial husbandry is based on grain feeding [mostly corn and soy] and the animals we now eat are themselves ill on these diets and have a very different fat composition – the relation of Omega 3 to 6 fatty acids. The fat of grain fed animals contains four to five times as much Omega 6; so the ratio of Omega 3 to 6 is entirely different in these animals as compared to that found in the wild animals that humans adapted to consume during their evolution. So, while Lutz and Allan's contention may be accurate that humans can survive and even thrive on eating mostly animal products [including organ meats to obtain much needed nutrients], this contention does not extend to the animal products of industrial, grain based husbandry [where at the very least the organ meats are eschewed]. Indeed, these industrial animal products are thought to be making us as sick as the animals themselves – the difference being that the animals are artificially short lived while we desire to be long lived.

My Conclusions

The answer Allan and Lutz offer is too simple! It is another example of a truth carried too far, a search for a single variable explanation for a problem that is complex and that has several variables that probably are causal – in combination!

The whole point in all of this pursuit of the "best" diet should be to recognize physiologically where we come from in the range of diet that formed the basis for our evolution and to keep the components of diet in balance – respecting that history. At the same time we need to recognize that the human diet has always been extremely variable [depending on circumstances and food availability], and humans are extremely adaptable with diet as part of that adaptability. Our physiological evolution is not monolithic; it includes great flexibility in what can be the dietary base – from nearly all fat and protein based diets to nearly all vegetarian based diets, with good health achieved at either extreme [when these food sources are from the natural ecology dynamic and all the other issues that affect health are addressed!]

When the information presented in the Allan and Lutz work is put together with the results of research surrounding the emergence of the glycemic index, it becomes clear that the matter of excessive carbohydrate intake in the modern western diet, and especially of the intake of simple carbs from refined grains, is clearly important and significant, but I am not convinced that the case has been made for the more extreme carbohydrate reduction proposals, like that of Allan and Lutz.

Eating Animals (2009) By Jonathan Foer
Review
2010

Foer has produced a work that is admirable as an exposé of the horrors of factory animal husbandry. In this regard it is one among several other similar works, which Foer recognizes. So, there is nothing new about the exposé itself. In this regard, Foer's contribution is to add to the corpus of such offerings and to remind us, again, of the problem and the challenge we face in addressing it. But while it is important to highlight the modern abuses of industrial husbandry, we need to keep in mind that the problem of animal abuse is not modern or limited to factory farming. Do we think it was humane or respectful when our human ancestors drove entire herds of animals over a cliff to suffer agonizing deaths in mangled, suffocating piles at the cliff base where humans only culled what they wanted from the animals lying on the top? Most predators have it in them to be abusive when the circumstances are conducive. "Hidden" factory animal farms are just one of these unfortunate contexts.

The solution to the problem that Foer proposes is unfortunately confused because the motives of the author in writing the book are in conflict. On the one hand, Foer is committed to reaching a logical conclusion, and he respects those husbanders whom he discovers who are responsible and exemplars of the fact that respectful husbandry is viable in the modern context. On the other hand, the author is clearly seeking to justify in the abuses of industrial animal farming his on-again/off-again personal journey in committing to vegetarianism. At the personal level, Foer WANTS to claim that vegetarianism is the solution to the factory animal farming problem. But he is restrained by his own awareness that his exposé and the evidence he develops do not necessitate this conclusion. So, as Foer is torn, so the reader is left betwixt and between, if sensitized to the underlying problem and desiring to do SOMETHING.

The justified conclusions from the Foer work are those of most other works on the subject:

1) Require of all animal husbanders that they treat their animals in a humane and respectful manner from inception to slaughter and butchering.
2) Recognize that the health of the husbanded animals correlates with the healthiness of the animal products that result for consumption by humans.
3) Recognize that animal husbandry is expensive environmentally to resources and is not sustainable as currently practiced, which necessitates:
    a) Reduced meat consumption per capita on a global basis,
    b) Acceptance by the public that meat will cost more per unit to produce and as a result to buy,
    c) Acceptance by the public that more of their food will have to be vegetable in nature – more along the lines of the traditional Chinese diet where meat is more of a complement in food than the "entrée."
4) Require that individuals and policy makers commit to 1), 2), and 3) and implement regulations to assure these requirements are met for the good of the animals, humans and the ecology of the planet.

The unjustified conclusion that Foer is everywhere tempted to claim and constantly on the edge of claiming is that if all the people of the world would commit to vegetarianism, as he has finally decided to do, the animal factory farming problem would be solved. Of course, vegetarianism for ALL would be a solution, but it is a solution that denies the evidence of the centrality of meat in the human diet throughout human evolution and that solves the problem by excluding a whole category of food resource. Taken to its vegan extreme this "solution" denies not just animals as food, but all sensate beings [including insects] as well as the reserves they produce and stockpile [eg. milk, honey]. We can get to the point in this idealized program of food resource exclusion where humans can not eat any living thing, because at some level all living things have being and identity, are connected to all other living beings, and should be entitled to life without predation. In short, we can carry food source idealism to the point of requiring that the human species starve itself into extinction.

In the real world, humans are predators – plain and simple, and with the technology they have developed, they exist at the top of both the vegetable and animal food chains upon which they depend as omnivores. And logically humans prefer animal food products when they can get them as the most concentrated form of nutrition and calories. This is the reality humans have inhabited since they became Homo sapiens 150,000 years ago. No brand of food idealism can deny this reality.

So, Foer's dilemma is in fact our dilemma: to determine where the necessity for food for humans meets with respectful forms of predation. We should neither idealize ourselves out of existence nor brazenly disrespect other creatures and the environment upon which we depend. Culture can only be asked to shape our biological base and control its inclination to excess; it cannot be expected to deny its basic condition. Michael Pollan in The Omnivore's Dilemma recognizes the animal abuse problem as well as the inclination to the vegetarian solution and exposes both the excess of the one and the fallacy of the other. Foer even quotes Pollan in this regard on page 255.

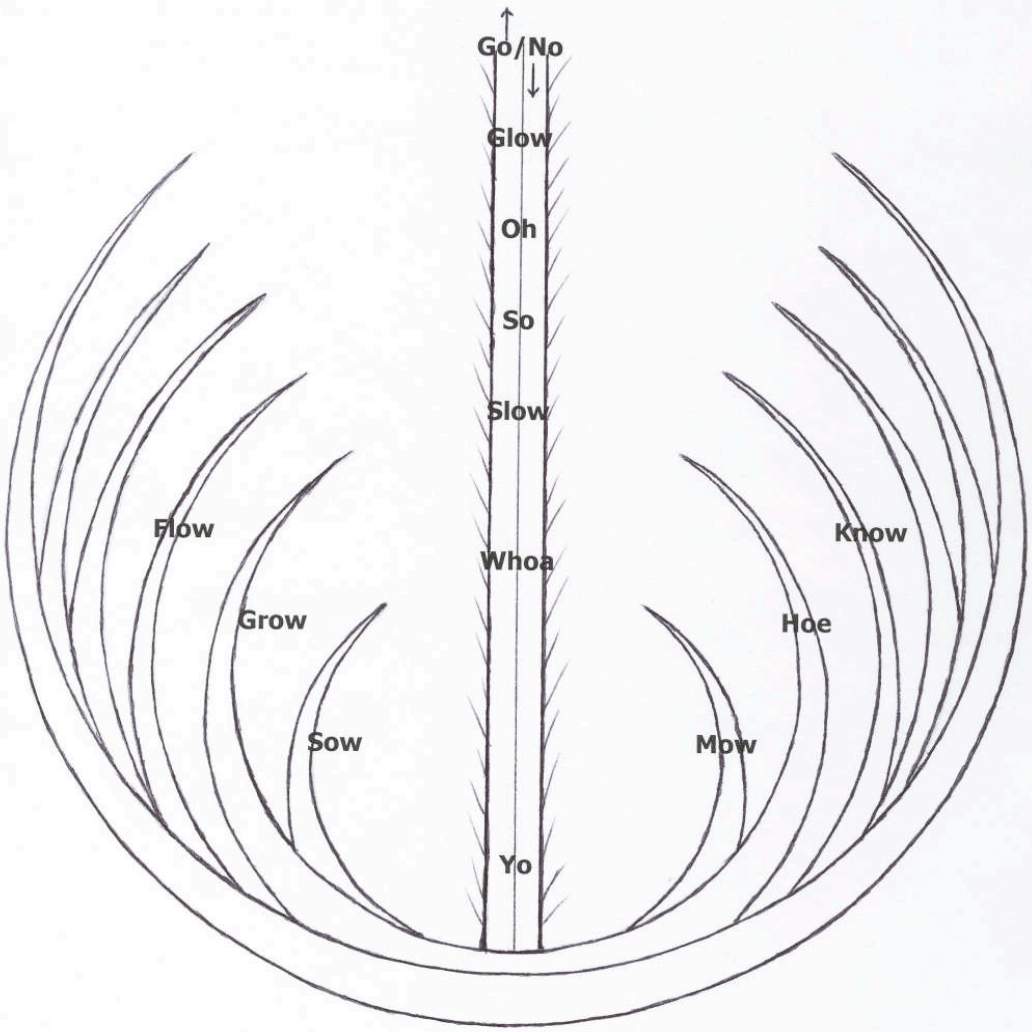
As in all things: food resource issues are a matter of achieving reasonable balance between biology and culture. No doubt, current animal factory farming is culture [in hiding] promoting an abusive and cheap pursuit of biology. But chemical based intensive vegetable and grain farming is equally abusive! And in the last analysis, excessive human population, the commitment to a constantly expanding economic model, and the expectation of a constantly more luxurious standard of living for ALL are what are driving both of these abusive food production trends. And almost all of us are hiding from having to attend to these underlying drivers.

So, yes all farming should be organic and respectful of both animals and the land, but how do we feed the world and not disallow the omnivore base of the human species in this context? Balance in this REAL world is not easy to achieve, even if we were really trying to commit to it, which we are NOT. Pollan is to be honored for both pointing out the very significant challenges of industrial farming, AND exploring the farming options/models that may offer viable answers at world scale, without jumping to the vegetarian solution, as Foer is inclined. On the other hand, Foer is correct: if population increases unchecked and we continue to pursue industrial farming on the basis we are, we will so foul the planet nest that we may well put the survival of the human species at risk.

There are a lot of different fronts on which we “civilized” humans must make progress if we are to achieve the kind of balance that will allow us to take advantage of our specie’s window of opportunity, and not BLOW it. The treatment of animals is just one of these.

ART

Art of Life
2001 - 2010



On Art in General

All art is created within cultural perspectives and frameworks of expression. Given this inherent limitation, the most universal art is the least contained by references to the worldview of any particular group or sub-group. The cross-cultural potential is greatest for art forms that are visual [plastic, graphic and kinetic] and then aural [musical or verbal] – in that order. Language based art forms are the most culturally circumscribed.

The ultimate task in poetry/ritual/art/religion is to express in the simplest possible terms the human challenge in living a meaningful life. There are many subdivisions which can be explored within this larger challenge [relationship – friendship, romantic love, hatred, revenge; loss – death, injury, theft, catastrophe; power – leadership, conquest, greed, enslavement; etc.], but it is easy to become consumed in these domains and to lose sight of the paramount task of illuminating life as a whole.

When art becomes arduous to learn, or to produce, or to understand, we focus excessive attention on admiring the artistic envelope and tend to diminish the significance of the core message that the envelop contains. A major error we make in the more "advanced" cultures is to celebrate envelopes and artists and to make art self-conscious and self-referential. The best artistic envelopes are transparent and unencumbered by intellectual complication and allusion, or by identification with particular artists. Scholars and artists who celebrate the complication of art and publics who celebrate artists as much or more than art itself have lost sight of the core of the creative/humanistic process and the experiential purpose of art. In an enlightened world, all persons are artists and the value of art is located in the rewards of participating in the creative process rather than in the artistic product. We make a huge mistake when we give over the production of art to a few, celebrate these few as somehow special, and relegate the experience of the "rest" of the public to second class vicarious involvement. Eventually this mistake leads to the hideous notion of "owning" art – the mausoleum state for art. Ironically, our art museums actively participate in preserving art by promoting its dead state as "honored" physical product. We need to learn the lesson of sand painting. Art is an everyday means, temporary in nature, and not an end in itself. Most "Simple" cultures understand this. That is why art and ritual are fused in most of these cultures, and why art is the art of the ritual moment in which many participate as the creators, where this art is allowed to survive only as a reference to this valued ritual involvement, and where this art is not intended to be valued otherwise as important in itself.

The simplest artistic expression which captures an essential human truth will also be the most elegant – as in mathematical proofs. If the elegant expression is revealingly metaphorical, symbolic or compressed, it becomes art in whatever genre.

The greatest art a) is the most universal in reference; b) addresses the essential meaning of human existence; c) is simple, elegant and revealingly metaphoric, symbolic and/or compressed in expression; d) invites participation by many in the creative process; e) is readily understood; and f) avoids celebrating the artist, related art and artists, and the aftermath product of the process of creation.

The Message in the "Art of Life"

Nothing is "new" in this piece, only a different way of expressing old ideas as they are "rediscovered." The message is carried by one of the simplest and most universal

metaphors for life – the flower. Plants, and especially flowers in their various forms and types, are symbolically associated with virtually all key times and events in the life cycle for cultures worldwide. When we focus on the specific flower, we discover constant motion and change including birth and death, but when we consider the flower in the context of the much larger cycle that surrounds it, everything regarding the flower is constant and remains the same. The perception and conception of Change or Stasis is all a function of in what scale we locate our perspective. The Change we "see" at a lesser scale disappears to become Stasis at a greater scale, where we discover other "things" changing.

So, in the "Art of Life" above I offer only a static image of a stylized lilly. If I could fully realize my intention in a kinetic color image, it would repeatedly unfold and fold in response to light and heat. We would see this flower opening and closing in a daily life frame until it goes to seed while other surrounding flowers bloom, then we would see this same flower slowly disappear as a separate entity as the perspective shifts to larger and larger scale until the field of flowers of which it is a part itself becomes but an undifferentiated color spot from high altitude. This is one visual symbol of life: simple and nearly universal and suggesting both the importance of perspective and scale and the relevance of change and stasis, in the search for meaning. Overlaying this kinetic visual flower symbol is the poetic use of the English language, a much more culturally specific form of art. I have used a set of ascending rhyming words to capture in the context of the unfolding and refolding flower the movement for Yo [or You] through the process of discovering the material poles of life [sow – birth] and death [mow – reap] with the desire to stop right there [Whoa], to the more subtle awareness of nurture [grow to hoe] with the slow release to accept the inevitable [Slow], to the enlightened position of Knowing [Know] as it relates to being in the Flow of Being [Flow] with the awareness, "So that's how it is," [So], to the broadening unification awareness, as in "Oh, I see," [Oh], to the static condition of radiating the fullness of enlightenment [Glow], to the reentry or return awareness of the need to act or not [Go or No]. As the flower opens and closes and as life proceeds, these are the progressive challenges in developing awareness of both self and the world and in determining the relationship of being to doing. We begin by acting or doing and satisfying our physical needs in the physical world [sow – mow], we proceed to more subtle and conceptual levels of social awareness - nurture [hoe – grow], until we discover ourselves Knowing our place in the Flow of reality, at which point we have an Ah..Ha moment in the unification [Oh] of our material and spiritual aspects of self and the world, from which we advance to Glow in wisdom, and out of which we must decide either on returning with enlightened activity or on dwelling in the passive condition of enlightened Being. As I see it, this is the challenge of the human life course, advancing or not with each unfolding and folding opportunity. Some make it little beyond the pragmatic sowing and mowing and the first move to social nurture in hoeing and growing. Others make it to knowing and flowing but often have only dogmatic faith to direct their use of it. A few reach various stages of expanding enlightenment [Glow]. Some of these remain in the cloistered ascetic domain to Dwell in the expanded state [No]; others return with enlightenment to be Active in promoting advanced awareness and its implementation in human affairs [Go].

Personally as an existential, dynamic humanist, I favor the Go option, but I recognize the fundamental dilemma contained in the Go/No location in the development cycle. In my view, absolute awareness without any action is as irresponsible and unbalanced as

absolute action without any awareness. The goal in life should be that action reflect an ever developing state of awareness. In this way we encourage action while we require that great humility, respect and caution inform it. We cannot avoid the dilemma of having to act short of an ideal state of awareness. We must take the risk and act, but we can do so with the proper restraint and sensitivity. It is the position of balance within this dilemma that we must idealize, not the extreme of all-knowing avoidance. In my perfect world, I would make a minister of both the monk and the miner!

The creation of art is part of discovering, displaying and doing in the ongoing process of personal development. So, in the spirit of this offering, “Go” with grace, and create your own artistic visions of life as you flow through the process.

The Role of Art in Dynamic Humanism
2007

[This essay appears as a section in Dynamic Humanism (2007) where it is part of the larger argument for the importance of human intuitive competence at the individual, social and cultural levels.]

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

As complex society develops further and secular humanism emerges, free artistic expression reappears, but often with minimal understanding of its connection to the intuitive or the spiritual. For a time there may be a loose appreciation of an undefined "spiritual" basis in art, but for the most part art is seen as emanating from the psychology of the individual or the sociology or culture of the group as filtered through the emotions of the artist. In this secular world of art, the intuitive source is often hidden in an undefined and mysterious zone referred to as "creativity." Conceptually unhinged from the pragmatic world of everyday life, art – like religion itself – is peripheralized and associated with non-serious, leisure, entertainment, and playtime activities. Some art becomes truly secular in this context, losing virtually all underlying intuitive or spiritual reference. It may become mostly emotional, psychological and sociological in its reference and commercial in its motives. It can even masquerade under a mostly intellectual or elitist banner. At its worst, art devolves into vacuous entertainment – titillating, graphic, sensational, and/or sentimental with only the most superficial and often gratuitous message. In this situation, artists themselves may struggle to rediscover the roots of their art in intuitive awareness.

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

intellectualization – represented by secular forces, and literalization and dogmatic incorporation – represented by the forces of religiosity.

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

In art, metaphor exists at two levels: form and content. Metaphor at the level of form is the "as if" condition that applies to image, story, drama, etc. standing for real life. This is the metaphor upon which the "willing suspension of disbelief" rests. We accept the representative form as if what it contains is real. The drama on stage or the characters and action described in narrative or graphically represented are accepted as if real – for the moment. On the other hand, content metaphor in art exists within the frame of formal metaphor, in a sense metaphor within metaphor. When the lion represents the king in a fable, a butterfly stands for the soul in a batik print, the Bible declares Peter the rock upon which the church is built, or a character transforms from a human to a serpent in a modern special effects film, metaphor at the level of content occurs. In each case, one thing is declared to be another thing, highlighting the shared features of the two and insisting on the connection between two otherwise disparate entities [in the physical or material world]. Metaphor insists on a shared identity across discrete categories of the objective world, and in so doing, it suggests the unification awareness of intuitive and spiritual understanding. A simple and base metaphor is to declare, "Louis is a dog." The grandest of metaphors is to announce, "Louis is God," or "Louis is the Universe, and the Universe is Louis," or to declare that the part is the whole and that the whole is the part. This is to state the essential understanding of intuitive awareness, the unified identify [oneness] of all things. Every metaphor carries us in the direction of this unification awareness, and art is the primary domain of metaphorical expression – in both form and content. This is why art plays such a key role in Dynamic Humanism – it is a primary communicative tool in the intuitive – intellectual dynamic [or the secular and spiritual, material and the immaterial dynamic].

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

developing these intuitive capabilities as we have in developing the aural language of communication and the written language of science and the intellect. Even with such a well-developed intuitive channel, art will remain vital in bringing intuitive awareness to expression metaphorically in the concrete, material world.

Art can, of course, be more or less interactive, asking more or less involvement by the audience in realizing the metaphoric message. Some artists only pose a question in metaphoric terms and leave it to the audience to generate the answer [abstract art]. Other artists pose the question and offer the outline of an answer leaving the audience to fill in the details of the message [impressionistic art]. Still other artists deliver question and answer in detail leaving it to the audience to receive their fully formed metaphorical message and respond [representational and photographic art]. Dynamic Humanism allows for all of these options recognizing that different artistic offerings are appropriate in different situations and for different audiences. Art can only be judged by 1) whether it readily communicates its intent to its target audience through the creative use of metaphor in the expressive form the artist chooses, 2) whether it illuminates a more or less critical issue in awareness, and 3) whether it stimulates appropriate and productive reflection, understanding, and feeling regarding this issue.

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

The Traditional Arts In The American Arts Complex
The Rhode Island Example
1979/2010

[This is a slightly revised version of a document entitled “The Role of Art in Rhode Island Culture” in the Library of Congress, Rhode Island Folklife Project, 1979. The companion document that I wrote for this same Project, “’Little Rhody’: The Shape of Traditional Culture in Rhode Island Today,” provides the overall cultural context for the observations made in this essay concerning the system of the arts.]

In Rhode Island there is a tension, a set of contrary forces of attraction that characterize in the broadest sense the modern cultural scene. On the one hand are the forces, attractions, and problems of the city, exemplified by the extensive urban complex of Providence. On the other hand there are the attractions of the shore and the country. I have suggested elsewhere that these two centers of influence are the cores respectively of two other traditional culture complexes in present day Rhode Island. While the shore and country are made up of different cultural elements, they are one in the larger sense of the major cultural dynamic that exists in Rhode Island: the city vs. the country and shore and the regular, periodic moves between them made by Rhode Islanders. It is the place of the Native American, the Yankee, and the urban ethnic, and the role of the elite, popular and traditional arts within this dynamic that are the subjects of this essay.

While what I have to say here relates to Rhode Island specifically, I think the art complex in Rhode Island is representative of a much larger dynamic of the arts in America overall. All that is necessary is to recognize that in other areas of America the arts fit into a comparable primary cultural opposition of city vs. country/mountains/lake/river/desert/coast instead of the specific opposition exemplified by Rhode Island - city vs. shore/country. So, while I focus in this essay on Rhode Island, if the reader just makes the appropriate substitutions for other areas of America, I think a very similar picture of the dynamic art complex emerges.

It is a long-standing tradition for urban and suburban Rhode Islanders to make regular use of the country and especially the shore. Prior to the 1938 hurricane which wiped out many of the beaches in the upper Narragansett Bay area, and prior to the massive pollution of the Upper Bay in the 1930-1970 period, most residents of Providence were a five cent trolley ride of a few minutes away from the shore with its many activities. Family outings and picnics to numerous nearby recreation places or somewhat further south to Rocky Point or Goddard Park were common during summer weekends. Urban, working class, ethnic people of today who are themselves of retirement age, recall an active shore tradition of this sort as far back as they can remember in their own families, at least involving their own grandparents. Upper middle class WASP families indicate long-standing familial life cycles that oscillate between the city and the shore or country. They describe families with seasonal homes and cottages on or near the shore where grandchildren with their mother would spend summers with their semi-retired grandparents. Parents or fathers would visit periodically for weekends and for vacations. It often followed that grandparents would winterize their cottages and retire to live year round at the shore. For the parents, the years surrounding marriage, career advancement and child rearing, including the children's education, required living in the

city or its near suburbs. But by middle age, with the children gone and careers established, more and more time would be spent around a new cottage or old shore home of the departed grandparents. And so the cycle would go. From working class to upper class, the shore has been a long-standing point of contrast with the city. In recent years the country has become a more and more important alternative to the shore as a contrast point, but the shore remains preeminent.

Few Rhode Islanders today are probably aware that the winter to summer, city to shore oscillation that is so fundamental a part of their culture was also basic in the Native American culture that preceded them. Indeed, it could be argued that the present culture of Rhode Islanders in this respect, as well as many other patterns, depends directly on the original Native American culture. The Narragansett Indians, who were the dominant tribe in the Rhode Island area at the time of white settlement, were an extensive group whose clans yearly wintered in inland collective villages, but who dispersed into smaller family groups over the entire area in the warm spring and summer months to raise crops and to reap the harvest of sea life in the salt ponds and along the coast. At the annual meeting of the tribe in early August, stock was taken of the tribe's crops and prospective harvest, the needs of each family and each clan were addressed, and plans for wintering were outlined. The fall harvest festival in October celebrated the foods grown, gathered and preserved, and was the occasion around which a final large-scale animal hunting drive took place. The tribe then separated into its clan divisions with each locating itself inland in its winter village location once again.

The Narragansett movement from winter inland, permanent, collective villages to summer shore, temporary, dispersed dwellings is most likely the precursor of the current Rhode Islander's cycle of winter home in the city to summer cottage on the shore. Besides this fundamental living pattern, the corn cultivation and shell fishing of the Narragansetts are probably the sources for the foods that today are considered most closely tied to the identity of Yankees and Rhode Islanders. These foods include chowders, Johnny cakes, clam cakes, little necks on the half shell, and most likely the famous clam bake. Ultimately even the summer romance with sweet corn that is so typical of Rhode Island shore communities depends on Narragansett corn culture and the practice of eating in celebration some of the sweet immature ears of corn.

Yankees who, unlike the Narragansetts, settled permanently in one place, accordingly split the previously united Narragansett agricultural hunting and fishing culture into farming and fishing villages with seasonal hunting by members of both communities. Vestiges of the previous unification even among Yankee agriculturalists are to be seen in the recollections of family traditions of Yankee farmers as far inland as Exeter and West Greenwich. These farmers recall two and three day family trips south to the salt ponds and coast around Charlestown in horse drawn carts and wagons to engage periodically in clamming, scalloping and fishing in the summer and early fall months. They would return with baskets full of shellfish to be shared with neighbors and eaten as steamers and chowders. Through the periodic trips of different neighbors, even the inland farming Yankees could share fairly continuously in the plentiful seafoods of the shore during the summer. Over the years chowders and Johnny cakes have become the symbols of Yankee fishing and agriculture, while their source has been overlooked, the often persecuted and demeaned Narragansetts.

Clearly Rhode Island traditional culture's debt to Narragansett culture and the culture of associated Native American groups is much greater than just the general winter-city, summer-shore oscillation. Still, while I pursue only this major opposition in the present essay, I think it can be shown that the urban Rhode Islander's fascination with and need for the experiences of the shore are related to the kind of understanding of the social and natural world that is characteristic of Rhode Island's Native Americans like the Narragansetts.

In the course of my fieldwork from August through October, 1979, in various shore communities, rural villages, rural farmland, and rural suburban developments in Washington and Newport counties, I talked with 1) various Narragansett Indians, 2) long-time Yankee fishermen, craftsmen and farmers, 3) residents and seasonal dwellers in shore communities of all different types and levels of economic investment, 4) families and students frequenting the state's beaches and parks, 5) sport fishermen fishing from bridges, from the shore, from small open bay and pond craft, and from deep sea craft with flying bridges, and 6) rural suburbanites restoring old homes and building prefab log houses, colonial house reproductions, and Tudor style ranch homes. All of these people share the fact that they are strongly attracted to the shore and/or country, while most of them spend the majority of their time working and living in the urban-suburban area.

The chart which follows summarizes my understanding of the cultural complex as expressed in art that rests on the difference between the attraction of the city and the draw of the country or shore. I think it is in this distinction that the role of traditional art in Rhode Island is to be understood. The chart is especially drawn to represent the view of those who actually do move between these two environments, and so live out different parts of their lives in these two different places. For these people the oppositions suggested are more clear cut. For those, like some Narragansetts and rural "swamp" Yankees, who live and work continuously in the country, the sense of opposition may be less intense with respect to some of the points mentioned.

The chart beginning on the next page is designed to be fairly self-explanatory, and I will not go over it point by point in the text, so I suggest that the reader spend some time with it. My discussion will focus on the place of ethnicity and suburbia in this scheme and particularly the way in which Rhode Island elite, popular and traditional arts relate to the dynamic and fundamental city-shore opposition in Rhode Island culture.

The Arts in the City-Shore/Country Opposition in Rhode Island and American Culture

City (Tendencies in Urban Life)	Shore – Country (Tendencies in Shore-Country Life)
Social	
1. Sense of community tends to be weak because the large size of the city and diverse groups that are all present make it difficult to identify with the city as a whole. People living in the same block, even the same apartment house, may share only sidewalk space.	1. Sense of community tends to be strong because the small geographical size of the community and greater homogeneity of people's backgrounds make it easier to identify with a town despite the fact that people may be dispersed on the land. People have an opportunity to share many activities and events which encourage broad personal contact.
2. Social relations are more highly structured and formalized - authoritarian. Relations are determined more by the role a person occupies than by who he or she is as an individual. Relations tend to be impersonal. At one and the same time individuals are more isolated because they know few around them, yet more "free" because others around them do not care much what they do.	2. Social relations are less highly structured and more informal and egalitarian. Relations are more determined by the qualities a person exhibits as an individual. Relations tend to be more personal. Individuals are related, connected, known and committed within the community and feel both a sense of belonging and sometimes a sense of restraint or confinement.
3. Attitudes toward others tend to be competitive and often aggressive, but the opportunities for advancement are great because change is much more rapid.	3. Attitudes toward others tend to be co-operative, while real advancement may be limited since change is less frequent.
4. Frequent change in role or position is accompanied by high mobility in place of residence from apartment to apartment, neighborhood to neighborhood, city to suburb, city to city, and state to state. Few adults live in the location where they were raised as children. Continuity of community is weak. Relationships of friends and family rarely extend beyond those who first establish them, and many of these are maintained secondarily by mail.	4. Stability of position, growth within a role is accompanied by stability in place of residence. Many more adults live in the neighborhoods, even homes, where they were raised as children. Continuity of community is strong. Relationships have a sense of considerable time depth, sometimes over generations.

Psychological

1. Commerce, government, industry, finance and higher education are all associated with the urban center. The city is the intellectual center of planning and technological development. The office, the desk and the sedentary analyst at work is an urban stereotype. The factory in the city is the expression of the practical in the urban world. The factory stands as a monument to productivity, the consequence of planning in terms of the intellect alone which separates each nut and bolt from every other one. In the name of efficiency, the individual factory worker often sacrifices social identity and a meaningful sense of work.	1. Knowledge and being aware and able to do, to act in a practical world, is focal in country life. The work table or bench, not the desk, is important, and it is the real consequences of actions that count, not the thought. Sensing and feeling, not just reason and intellect, are important since synthesis in understanding the broad picture is as crucial as isolating the pieces. Work involves accomplishing whole tasks whose consequences are recognizable, immediate, and often personal. Work tends to be satisfying and work and life are integrally related, not disjunctive.
2. The city is the world of words, ideas, talk. It is a verbal world where written and spoken language prevail. The telephone. Good talkers are admired.	2. The country is the world of observation, sight, watching. It is a visual world where observing actions and activities is focal. Frequently speaking too much is frowned upon.
3. For people who move regularly between city and country, the city provides stimulation, variety, vibrancy, on the one hand; noise, discord, pollution, hypertension on the other.	3. For the city to country to city people, the country-shore provides relaxation, simplicity, tranquility, harmony, purity, quiet, on the one hand; boredom, routine, lethargy on the other.
4. Change is expected in the city. Progress through innovation, invention, and creativity is assumed. Those who lead and create new products, ideas and programs are admired.	4. Continuity is central in the country. Established traditional ways are proven and should be followed. Ingenuity, the ability to come up with new solutions to keep the old system working, not innovation per se, is highly prized. Admiration goes to those who respect the past and preserve its worthy traditions.

Time

1. For those who regularly move between the city and the shore, the city is associated with everyday, work-a-day, weekday life. In the seasonal sense the city is associated with the school year, and with the winter months, cold weather, and shorter days. In the life cycle, the city is allied with the marriage, child rearing, and working years.

1. For the city to shore people, the shore and country are associated with weekends, holidays, and vacation periods. Seasonally, these areas are associated with the summer months, warm weather and longer days. From a life cycle perspective the shore and country are associated with childhood and the retirement years.

2. In the city the orientation is to the future. Time is understood as linear with new and different events always emerging as the future unfolds into the present.

2. In the country and on the shore the orientation is to see the past in the present carrying into the future. Time is more cyclical as patterns of the past are replayed in the present.

3. The urban world is one of rapid pace, little time, fast living, hyper-rhythm. Admiration is expressed for those who are the fastest at what they do.

3. The rural world is one of slower pace, enough time, natural rhythm, sometimes even "time on your hands." It is more important to be patient and persistent and do the job right than to be the fastest.

Economics and Occupation

1. For those moving between city and shore, the city is associated with work, study, school, business and the process of making a living.

1. For city-shore movers, the shore and country are associated with leisure, rest, play and recreation.

2. The urban world is one where man imposes his will, in manufacture and production, through the planning that underlies them. Harnessing the atom and taming the elements are characteristic metaphors.

2. In the country and at the shore men still struggle against nature, but they are more impressed with nature's power. There is a greater inclination, especially among the city-shore mover, to utilize and organize his surroundings to his advantage, doing with nature rather than doing to nature. Only for traditional Native Americans is the metaphor of joining with nature appropriate.

3. The city is the world of the office building, skyscraper, high-rise apartment, supermarket, factory, and discount department store. The work world is nearly always separate from the rest of living.

3. In the country and at the shore, office and home, work and family life are often united in the family store, the fishing boat, the shop of the individual craftsman, the farmstead.

Environment

1. The urban environment is almost completely a product of man. Asphalt, concrete, brick, steel and glass create an artificial enclosure where man lives, works, and plays indoors in atmospheres created and controlled by his technology. Man's culture has virtually negated nature, short of snowstorms and blackouts. Parks and central squares are the only concessions to nature and these are controlled by lawnmowers and dams. Nature is largely excluded and admired only under carefully controlled conditions: parks, zoos, botanical gardens, and licensed pets.

1. The shore and country find man in nature. The ocean and shore are especially impervious to man's control, and the reforestation of western Rhode Island in the past generation is testimony to the power of nature in the country when agriculture is abandoned. Man at best keeps nature at bay, as on his farmsteads, but much land remains in wild condition in marshes, bogs, ponds, rivers, and woods. Life and work is oriented outdoors, and only homes create controlled environments that deny the weather at times of rest and refreshment. Nature is respected by most, and enjoyed and admired for her power and beauty by some. Woodlands, parks, and sanctuaries preserve nature in its wild state, and hikes, canoe trips, and yachts carry man into areas where the culture of man is mostly negated.

2. With nature tamed, there is an image of permanence in the solid structures of the city that is belied only from within by the city's own commitment to change, progress and "modernization."

2. Man and his structures - buildings and boats seem more fragile and precarious and so less permanent. Seasonal dwellings are less elaborate and often movable, some being in fact trailers and campers. The mobile and temporary image, especially on the shore, is offset by the country commitment to continuity where generations of the same family on the same farmstead in the same farmhouse are respected as "natives."

Religion

1. The Judeo-Christian belief system is one well suited to urban man. God exists apart from man and man's creation is separate from nature's. A God-man mediates between Heaven and Hell, both separate from the natural world. Man goes to one of these places after death to live a life separate from his earthly life and from continuing life on earth.

1. Native American religion like that of the Narragansetts is a useful contrast here. The Spirit exists in the world with man and in the land, and man's creation is one with, even derived from nature. Spirits of dead ancestors remain in the world to protect, punish, and guide the living during their lives. These spirits often locate, express themselves, or are one with beings of nature, especially animals. The Spirit is in all things of the world, including man, and so there are many important dwelling places for the manifestations of the Spirit (gods).

2. Within Christianity, there are recognizable differences between its expression in the city and in the country or on the shore. It is in the urban context where the most elaborate, formal, and expensive buildings, decors, dress and ritual is to be found in places of worship. There is also likely to be an elaborate priesthood that places itself between man and God.

2. The country and shore are sites of simple, basic and inexpensive buildings, decor, dress and ritual. Just as simplification and orientation to the natural world are associated with the religious country retreat, so churches for seasonal dwellers emphasize simplicity and natural decorations and interiors. Elaborate priesthoods are either absent or de-emphasized with the priest or minister serving more as a guide in man's personal relationship with God.

Art

1. Traditional, popular, and elite art are all found in the city, but elite art is the art of the city. In this respect New York City, America's city of cities, is the capitol of American elite art. The other great metropolitan areas of the nation are the regional centers of elite art. Providence is not a major regional center like Boston, but institutions like the Rhode Island School of Design with its faculty and students help to foster a small, and mostly young, elite community of artists in Rhode Island. Between elite art and traditional art is transitional art, not to be confused with popular art. Transitional art is the art of those who on the one hand are committed to many of the social and environmental values of the small community in the natural setting. On the other hand they are also committed to the expansive worldview, stimulation, intellectuality, and creativity of urban life. Transitional artists most often live and work in small communities, but their background and life patterns generally reveal considerable time spent in the elite institutions of the city. Features of transitional art are further discussed in the text.

1. Folk art is the art at home in the small community, town, village, or hamlet in the countryside and on the shore. Outside of the Providence area, Newport, and pockets in certain other communities, the art of Rhode Island is traditional art, popular art and transitional art. Popular art is the art of mass media that transcends communities and is commonly available at the regional or national level. It is the art of the regional or national sense of identity. Traditional art includes folk art - the art of the small community in the natural setting, and communal art - the art of those who have a strong social sense of themselves as groups or communities, but where that social sense is not tied to or expressed in terms of a natural setting (especially urban family, ethnic and special interest groups). Features of popular art are further discussed below in the text.

2. Modern elite graphic and plastic arts have withdrawn from representation or realism or the concrete image. These elite arts dwell either in the range between impressionism and abstract design, or they

2. Apart from the design crafts (weaving, basketry, e.t.c.), the limit of abstraction in the folk arts is impressionism. Graphic and plastic folk arts are tied to the real image, the concrete expression. Folk music is

deal abstractly with images as in surrealism or hyper-realism. Withdrawal from representation in the graphic and plastic arts is paralleled by the withdrawal from linear, programmatic, dramatic, narrative structure in modern musical arts. Elite drama and dance, besides evidencing the characteristics of the graphic and dramatic arts, have withdrawn from drama as presentation in their participatory and improvisational forms.

3. Symbolism in elite art results from a process the opposite of folk art. Symbols arise as a result of progressive withdrawal from the image or from overall linear development and reflect a desire to search for general or universal meanings which are ideational, and at one and the same time momentary and timeless.

4. Because modern elite art has withdrawn from concrete images and established linear patterns of development, it seems removed from its subject, distant. With its subject unspecified and distant, elite art is impersonal, acommunal, not tied to person or place. As such elite art looks out from person and community to the universal. It is expansive, and encourages the audience to open out to new ideas.

5. In its abstraction, elite art seeks the idea, generalization or issue behind the image. As such it is intellectually and philosophically provocative.

6. Provocative elite art tends to suspend before its audience some dynamic tension, leaving either the tension unresolved, or the resolution without judgment or comment. Such art is searching, but often disturbing, even pessimistic.

correspondingly dramatic, programmatic, linear and narrative in structure, evidencing overall patterns that can be anticipated and remembered. The melodic and harmonic contours are always standard, and improvisation constitutes an embellishment of, not a departure from, these patterns. Folk drama and dance reveal the same programmatic patterns. Only folk ritual unifies participation and presentation, but here there is no pretense of fiction.

3. In folk art, symbols arise when aspects of life which are understood to be real but which have no presence are provided specific and recognizable images so they can take their places within the linear dramatic structures of folk genres. These "symbols" then participate in meanings which are moral and addressed to the present.

4. Because of the concreteness of folk art and its commitment to recognized linear patterns of development, it seems close to its subject. The subjects of folk art are recognizable and often images from within the community itself: landscapes, seascapes, village views. The images are those of everyday life, and these images are personal and tied to community. As such folk art focuses attention in to the community and to the powerful communal images within it.

5. The concrete, communal images of folk art are more reassuring than provocative. Folk art is less concerned with ideas and intellect and more concerned with sentiment. Its images, characters and events are designed to evoke feelings of joy, security, or sadness with respect to the small community.

6. Folk art emphasizes resolution within a statement of opposition. It leaves the audience with a clear message, the result of which is usually positive, affirmative, reassuring and optimistic.

7. Perhaps because it is provocative and demands contemplation and mental attention, and because it exists in a world of the intellect, elite art tends to be decorative art, art for its own sake, art with an end in itself.

8. Set apart as it is from everyday living, elite art requires special contexts and events of its own.

9. Elite art pursues innovation in all respects. To be at the edge of development, flexible, and ready to change or adjust at all times is essential. Artists constantly push particular techniques, compositional modes, subjects and materials to their limits and seek new ones.

10. The elite artist either is or is striving to be professional. His work is for sale, and in the case of graphic and plastic art the work is bought for private collections or sold to institutions and museums where it is displayed. Middlemen in galleries are typical with artists often not knowing or even meeting those who purchase their work. Special theaters and music academies like Trinity Square Theater in Providence cater especially to elite performances. Rarely are artists and members of the audience known personally to one another, even where they live in the same city. Artists and their works are frequently drawn to a particular city for exhibition or performance from regional and national pools. The artist and his work usually make no pretense of "belonging" to the community where they appear. Formality reigns in performance and exhibition events.

11. Among artists in the same genre there is a fairly strong sense of competition and an intense desire to succeed, to "make it." Elite artists are very self-conscious about their work and insist on being prominently

7. Because it is reassuring, easily understood, and exists in a very practically oriented world, much folk art occurs as ornamentation on utilitarian objects or as performance associated with everyday activities.

8. Folk art tends to be unified with craft, and is expressed as a part of the contexts and events of ordinary life, not set apart from it.

9. Folk art emphasizes stability and continuity. The artist's task is to create again something of established quality and value. Technique, composition, material and subject are stable. Variation occurs within recognized boundaries and reveals personal style in the performance or creation of something otherwise well-known.

10. Folk art, if for sale at all, is usually bought from a person who considers him or herself a craftsman. Most often it is a utilitarian object that is being bought, not art per se. Museums do not buy modern folk art, though local historical museums often display folk art of previous periods, most of which has been donated by families in the local area. There are no galleries, and often buyers and sellers are known to each other as members of the same community or locality. Folk artists are known in their communities, and rarely claim their art as their personal creations. Many folk musicians, singers, dancers and storytellers typically perform privately in homes for family and friends without pay. If they are professional or semiprofessional, folk artists most often perform in their areas before audiences whose members are personally acquainted with them. They perform in established community places like local pubs, taverns, grange halls, and clubs where informality is the rule.

11. Folk artists in the same genre generally avoid the competitive mode, frequently sharing a role or joining with one another in performances. There is an intense desire to be good and known in the area, but other

identified with it. Among collectors it can reach the point where owning "a Pollock" is more important than the particular painting.	than craftsmen, most folk artists earn their “real” living in some other way. At best, folk art is a supplementary source of income.
12. Elite art is formally taught with respect to both performance and appreciation. Formal academic disciplines teach its history and appreciation and assess it in its different forms. Recognized critics, often themselves not performers, formally evaluate elite art. An explicit aesthetic and an elaborate language of understanding and evaluation surround elite art.	12. Folk art is less taught than it is learned by example as a function of being around it and growing up with it from childhood. When teaching occurs, it is informal and applies only to performance, never to appreciation, which is assumed with membership in the community. Except for occasional formal contests, there are no separate critics who evaluate performances. Evaluation is the prerogative of all community members, but especially of other recognized artists. The folk aesthetic is implicit. A very limited language of description and evaluation typically surrounds folk art, because quality is recognized from prior experience. It is not determined by verbal debate.
13. Most people participate in all the arts to some extent. But to the degree different arts are associated with socioeconomic class, elite arts are largely supported by the educated, upper-middle and upper classes - the urbane, professional and aristocratic groups.	13. Folk art is shared by all, but it is typically the art of the common person in the rural, natural setting. In the folk community, basic formal education is complemented by extensive practical experience. Income is usually in the lower to middle class range. Folk art is the art of men and women more than it is the art of ladies and gentlemen.

The preceding chart risks being too simplistic in behalf of making a point which is less about absolute dichotomy than about tendencies on a continuum. The point is that the characteristics of the art produced largely match or mirror the characteristics of the milieu of the artist. Art reflects the attitudes and values of the group that produces it. The art of the artist is one with the other features of the world to which he or she orients and belongs. In this regard modern elite art in Rhode Island and elsewhere in America embodies the same basic tendencies, attitudes, and values as urban life in Rhode Island, while folk art does the same for the Rhode Island sense of community in the country or at the shore. Modern urban life and modern elite art both tend to be provocative, innovative, "free," futuristic, expansive, intellectual, formal, specialized, and professional, while at the same time they are a-communal, impersonal, competitive, tense, man dominated, and artificial. Country and shore life and folk art on the other hand tend to be reassuring, repetitive, conservative, restrained, past oriented,

restrictive, practical, informal, non-specialized, and amateur (in the positive sense of the word) at the same time they are communal, personal, cooperative, tranquil, man influenced, and natural.

Consider the premier example of Rhode Island folk art at the shore, a painting either of a sailboat underway at sea as seen from land, or of a wooden quahog or lobster boat or trawler moored in the harbor of a fishing village. Some contend that these paintings are uninteresting, that they constitute naive art by amateurs and are at best quaint. I suggest that this is a position that accurately reflects the values of the urban elite person who judges the art appropriate to one kind of community by the values of another. When well executed, the seascape in question is doing exactly what it sets out to do, to fulfill the mandate for art by the small shore community and by those who perhaps are not part of the community but at least periodically identify with it. Such paintings, whether on canvas or on rocks, are folk art. The image is real and ordinary. The subject is traditional. The composition and techniques are established. The picture reveals man in nature, moving in harmony with nature. The overall effect is pleasant, clean, tranquil, reassuring. The old wooden boat suggests continuity with the past, stability in the present, and continuance into the future. It is a picture by a community member who probably knows the owner of the boat he or she paints. It is a painting that may well be sold or given to someone within the community to decorate the walls of his or her cottage or home. The picture is traditional, but it is also personal. The artist is most likely amateur, painting part time, and as much for personal pleasure as for any monetary reward. Beyond an interest in drawing since childhood and perhaps a season of lessons at the local art association, personal experiences and the comments of other artists like herself or himself are the main sources of the artist's growth. Members of the community can and do judge the quality of the painting, but these judgments are expressed by where the painting is placed in the home, or by the general, informal remarks of others, not by formal evaluative showings and critiques, using an elaborate vocabulary of assessment.

The only feature of folk art which this seascape does not exhibit is the commitment to practicality. Should this painting appear on the lid of a chest, then the typical unification would result of folk art with folk craft, of decoration with utility. Folk art and folk performance typically exhibit the characteristics of paintings like the one just described. From quilts, to dances, to tunes, to stories, folk art is art which expresses the attitudes and values of the small community in the natural setting.

Through all that has been said so far I imagine thoughts among readers like, "That isn't what city life is like for a lot of people," or "You can't say that folk art is not germane to the city; you have overlooked the art of ethnic and other groups in the city." Indeed, it is time now to consider one of the most prominent aspects of Rhode Island traditional culture, ethnicity and ethnic art, and the way they fit into the elite-folk, city vs. shore-country scheme I have described. Ethnicity is the outstanding feature by which urban Rhode Islanders seek to create the sense of the small community within the impersonal, a-communal urban situation. Ethnic groups with their social clubs, their performance groups, their weekly meetings and weekend activities, and their special days for celebrating patron saints and national events create a sense of small community around a common national heritage prior to coming to America. Other special interest groups within the city serve a function similar to ethnic groups, the more so, the more they

provide social and recreational activities for their members (occupational, athletic, horticultural, religious, fraternal groups). Despite the fact that memberships in these special interest groups do not overlap much, collectively these groups contribute significantly to the individual's sense of social identity and of belonging within the otherwise a-communal city. The art and performance of urban ethnic groups and other special interest groups is the art of the small community in the city.

I have termed this art "communal" art, and it resembles folk art in many respects. However, communal art is expressed in the artificial urban setting, not the natural environment which is characteristic of folk art. In terms of the scheme worked out in the chart above, ethnic groups and special interest groups in the city at best satisfy all of the social tendencies (I, 1-3), some of the psychological (II, 3 and 4), time (II, 1 and 4), and economic and occupational (IV, 1 and 5) tendencies, but none of the environmental or religious tendencies of folk culture. The art of these groups, communal art, is like folk art in most respects (VII, 1-7), but it tends to be more decorative, formalized, codified, and consciously preserved as well as rendered more frequently for professional ends than folk art. Communal art is the traditional art of the city. The large area of overlap between communal and folk arts is paralleled in Rhode Island by the similar position of these arts and their communities in contrast to the urban world. Just as urban and suburban dwellers move periodically between the city and the shore or the country, so communal groups in the city itself move regularly between the urban world, especially of employment, commerce, and education, and the small community world of ethnicity and special interests.

As more and more of the country and the shore of Rhode Island is being claimed by rural suburbanites with their ambiguous commuter orientation, more and more art in Rhode Island is becoming rural-suburban or what I refer to as transitional art. It is the old time native Yankees in Wickford or Block Island or Exeter, for example, whose art is folk art in the sense I have defined the term. But the economic viability of these Yankee people has waned, and control of their communities has passed into the hands of "the newcomers," the new settlers from the cities and crowded suburbs. These newcomers bring a worldview and a life-style that looks both inward to the small community where they live, and outward to the cities where they work and have been educated. Saunderstown and Block Island are communities where a significant number of artists from outside the local area, often formally trained in art schools and universities, have come to enjoy the natural setting and the benefits of the small community.

Stimulated by both the city and the country, the rural-suburban, or transitional artists appropriately ground their art in traditional craft and image, but within these bounds encourage individual creativity. Their commitment to both the country and the city is reflected in their art which is truly transitional between folk and elite art. Appropriately much of this transitional art is sold outside the community in urban centers or to tourists from the city. The transitional artist is likely to be very conscious of the seventeenth century mill or eighteenth century house in the country he or she has restored to live in, but the books on shelves reveal an interest in and knowledge of Scandinavian weaving, English pottery, German silversmithing, mandala art in the Far East, or Scottish ballads and tunes. The urban, elite tendencies in transitional art include its being more purely decorative, more abstract, more innovative, more philosophical and intellectural, more professional, more self-conscious, and more subject to formal evaluation than folk art.

Still, transitional art is restrained by the positive images of nature and village from which it rarely withdraws beyond impressionism. Dwelling as it does on these positive images, transitional art is also less provocative, less disturbing and more resolved and tranquil, like folk art. Also, while the tendency toward "art for art's sake" (decoration) is greater in transitional art, there remain among these transitional artists a great many craftsmen-artists whose work, while more clearly open to exclusive decorative use, remains fully utilitarian.

If transitional art in Rhode Island expresses the continuing influence of the urban elite environment among those who orient strongly to the little community and the natural setting, and if Rhode Island communal art expresses the powerful attraction of the small, rural community in the urban environment, what is the place of popular art in this elite-communal-transitional-folk art continuum? Popular art is mass mediated art. It is art produced for the general public, and made available through the mass media of radio and television, newspapers, magazines, books, records, tapes, and now - the internet. "General public" here means the population at large, regionally as with New England, or more often nationally as with America. Popular art, whether a person appreciates it or not, is the art of the American nation as a group, and Rhode Islanders as part of this group partake strongly in this form of art.

Popular art rests in the midst of the tension between elite art and folk art. It is the tension between the world of the city and the world of the country that is the subject of popular art. Appropriately popular art expresses in its nature the two different poles that influence it. On the one hand popular art is like elite art, it is impersonal. But popular art is impersonal in its mode of production and distribution, where modern elite art is impersonal more because of its withdrawal from explicit subject and image set within a linear, developmental structure. Indeed, popular art is more like folk art in its devotion to concrete images and programmatic structures. It is like folk art also in that it is dramatically stimulating but not provocative.

Reflecting its middle of the road stance, popular art draws about equally on the rural and urban settings (from "The Waltons" to "The Jeffersons"). Interestingly when popular art does deal with the small community, rural setting, it usually does so in terms of the past, where urban settings are usually current. Like folk art, popular art rarely deals with the future (science fiction being the bow to elitism here). Rather the future emerges as an unaddressed choice between the romanticized rural past and the stereotyped urban present. Popular art presents the choices (Country and Western vs. Hard Rock) in abbreviated and simplified forms, and affirms both. It also affirms the moral basis of both worlds. In its affirmative nature, popular art is like folk art, but in affirming in independent works both sides of the opposition, it is collectively unresolved in its message. Popular art plays both sides for the population at large but remains in the middle, on the fence. Seen in its broadest sense, popular art presents the range of American social choices, affirming them all, always dealing with the conflicts within the city or the country, rarely representing or suggesting a resolution for the fundamental opposition itself. Only in recent years has popular art begun to deal with differences of ethnicity, race and class, basic issues within the urban world.

Popular art rests appropriately at the midpoint on the issue of innovation-creativity vs. repetition-recreation. It seems more innovative than it really is. As a highly mediated

art, popular art depends on the technology of the various media, and it is in the area of media technology or the technique of the art that popular art tends to be most innovative (e.g. special effects). With respect to content, subject, and concept, popular art is only superficially devoted to change. Immediately below the surface are the same old established patterns on which the "new television series," "new songs," "new games," "new greeting cards" are based. Beneath real changes in media technology, which America tends to associate with progress anyway, and beneath shifts in a glittering surface content are basic character types and linear patterns of organization that are as stable as those found in folk art. Moreover, like folk art the message remains the same.

Rhode Islanders have their share of television and radio sets, record and tape players, and magazine and newspaper subscriptions. Providence's broadcasts and newspapers reach into homes anywhere in the state, and cable television [now satellite and internet based] makes the most powerful of the popular media available in the depths of the country in the most attractive and complete form. Flickering silver and blue light is now as characteristic of windows at night in the homes of old rural Yankees as it is in the urban row houses of ethnic families, as it is in the suburban ranch houses and Georgian mansions of the upper middle and upper classes. Popular music and song are equally the companions of virtually everyone who drives a car, whether it comes multi-channel in a Mercedes or in monaural in a Datsun. Popular art in Rhode Island, as elsewhere, is truly mass art, shared by the mass of people, and it is the art of the middle of the road, affirming first the country, then the city, but making no judgment between the two. As America has neither recognized nor resolved the opposition between these conflicting worldviews, so the art of America, popular art, neither displays nor suggests a resolution for this fundamental issue. The conflict is hidden in separate, but equal, representation.

Where communal groups (ethnic, fraternal, e.t.c.) seek to realize the social values of the little community within the impersonal urban world, suburban life seeks the more spacious natural setting and the greater socio-economic homogeneity of the small community, while retaining the impersonality and a-communal aspects of urban life. Suburbs typically produce physical communities composed of families of similar socio-economic class standing, but these communities are virtually devoid of any social sense or real communal social life. Individual families in rows of individual houses on various size lots separated by fences of one type or another is usual. While parents usually play out friendships and social relations established along lines other than what particular suburb they live in, the education of children in the schools is often the only phenomenon that produces any community sense. Indeed, it could be argued that it is only the children that sense their suburb as a community. But these children are typically caught up in middle and upper-middle class mobility patterns and rarely end up living in the suburban communities where they were raised.

With no suburban communal life there is no community level suburban art. Rather suburban art is restricted to the statements made by individual families with their homes, yards and automobiles. Except for upper middle and upper class suburbs, houses in most suburbs tend to be quite similar in style and size, so it is in upkeep and lay of the yard where each family expresses itself. Gardens, trees, hedges, shrubbery, flowers, patios, and the LAWN are the centers of attention apart from the house and the type and newness of the car(s) in the driveway. Upper middle and upper class suburbs add spacious grounds (estates) with swimming pools and tennis courts, besides larger

and more individualized homes. The abstract and impersonal issue of a family's class standing is the central statement made in suburban architecture, landscaping and associated automobile(s). In addition, landscaping also reveals the suburban attitude toward nature. With the exception of very large estates or unusual terrain, landscaping in the suburbs reveals an attitude toward nature first of basic control (pruned shrubs and mowed grass), then of formal organization within control (organized plantings of trees and shrubs in terms of the house, street and patio), and then of beauty or fruitfulness within organized control (flowers or vegetable plants organized by types within beds which should be kept free of "weeds"). Apart from the estate and special terrain exceptions mentioned, there is nothing of "wild" nature in the suburbs. Indeed, there are often ordinances that require the suburbanite to maintain what I have described as basic control. In the city, nature is virtually excluded at ground level with the exception of tiny backyards. In the suburbs nature is permitted, even enjoyed and admired, but only if kept under complete control. We take all this for granted until we see the way the Japanese struggle to create the impression of miniature natural settings in the smallest of urban spaces.

Once inside a suburban home, the full array of artistic expression in decor, furnishings, plantings, and hangings is possible. A few rules apply here as well as elsewhere, however. First, art of the public spaces will differ from that of the private family spaces. Typically art in public space is purchased art, where art of private family space is more likely to be given or understood as familial or personal art. In the public rooms the largest, most valuable or most expensive elite art is likely to be found in the most formal rooms, living rooms and dining rooms. Outstanding folk and personal art may also appear here. The kitchen and bedrooms are typically decorated with popular and folk art, and sometimes personal art. The more elite art a family has, the more it intrudes on other spaces in the suburban context, unless factors like ethnicity serve as restraints. Economic value, together with recognized quality in elite art, are the key issues that determine art selection for suburban decoration. Suburban art is the art of those who have been successful within a strong urban orientation, those who have "made it" or who are moving up. The elite art, monetary foci of suburban art are in keeping with the urban, socio-economic orientation of suburban life.

In keeping with the scheme described above, the art decorating homes in the country and at the shore is selected giving greater weight to age, to familial reference, to community reference, and to personal statements. The amounts of both modern elite and popular art tend to be much less and the amount of folk art tends to be much greater. Folk, familial, and personal art make easy entry into the most formal public spaces in the homes of small communities in the country or at the shore.

With this brief look at suburban art, I have completed my attempt to survey the different social contexts in which art appears in Rhode Island. I have tried to show how the artistic expressions of each of these different social situations reflect the pervasive values of social groups in that situation. To accomplish this, I have tried to locate each of these social contexts or communities with respect to a rural-urban, country-city continuum and their arts on a corresponding folk-elite continuum. I come now to the central concern of this essay, to relate this scheme of communities and their arts to the prominence of the oscillation between the city-suburbs and the country-shore as a basic pattern in Rhode Island culture. Few Rhode Islanders live only the urban or country life.

Most are involved to varying degrees in the regular shifting back and forth between these two worlds with their distinctive arts. Neither world alone seems satisfying or complete, and there has emerged no compromise that successfully unifies the two. Much like the popular art that speaks to their situation very accurately, Rhode Islanders move between one world and the other, affirming both, and seeking no unified resolution. They want the benefits of both worlds and apparently enjoy alternately immersing themselves first in one, then in the other. However, with more and more families settling in rural and shore suburbs, more weight has been given in recent years to the world of the small community and natural environment. For the families living in rural suburbia, the father is usually the only one to feel the full force of the urban influence, commuting daily to work somewhere in the metropolitan complex. The father's urban orientation reflects the fact that while the romance of family life in the urban and denser suburban worlds has waned in recent years, the commitments to progress, technology, and personal advancement in the economic, professional and intellectual marketplace of the city remains little challenged.

Most Rhode Island families live in the city or the suburbs where they feel more completely the influences of the urban world. Days are spent in the stimulating, change oriented, but hectic and impersonal city. Weekday evenings are spent with the family and the mostly popular, sometimes elite, entertainments. In the winter season, weekends and holidays are spent in ethnic or popular or less frequently elite indoor entertainments. In the warm months from April to October, weekends, holidays, and vacations are spent on the shore or in the country where outdoor, traditional recreational activities and folk and transitional arts and crafts prevail.

Few Rhode Islanders are not reached by all the arts over the annual cycle. The folk arts, which are the focus of what folklorists study, are an important part of this complex, just as the cultural environment where this art is produced, the small community in the natural setting, is an integral part of the Rhode Island experience for the great majority of Rhode Islanders. In Rhode Island folk art there is a calmness, a stability, a concreteness, and a sense of both continuity with the past and personal commitment that reflects the individual who knows he has a place in a community, and that that community is inseparable from the natural world. On the shore and in the country, Rhode Islanders discover and partake, if only temporarily and incompletely, in this sense of community and understanding of nature that is captured in the best folk art. Communal art in the city is closely related to folk art because both arts reflect groups that emphasize the values of the small community. As ethnicity is a powerful force in Rhode Island culture, so the communal arts make significant statements in behalf of small community values in the city. Indeed, it is often through communal entertainments that the small community sense is generated and sustained in the urban world. The communal arts occupy within the city a position similar to the folk arts outside the city. They are powerful points of contrast to the elite art of the urban world.

It is impossible to understand Rhode Island arts or Rhode Island culture without considering the folk and communal arts along with the transitional, popular and elite arts. Collectively the folk arts and the communal arts represent the range of the traditional arts in Rhode Island. These are the arts the folklorist studies along with their respective communities, but a folklorist must understand the larger picture of Rhode Island culture and its arts into which these traditional communities and their arts fit and

function because life in Rhode Island is a dynamic that includes and flows across the boundaries of these arts and social settings.

I want now to bring this essay back to its beginning and the beginning of Rhode Island culture with the Native Americans. The oscillation between city and shore that is so characteristic of Rhode Islanders and which has its original base in Native American culture, expresses something different today from what it originally meant in Native American culture. For the western man, the winter-city is set in opposition to the summer-shore as two different worlds. For Native Americans like the Narragansett Indians the winter encampments and the summer shore communities were two expressions of the same world. Though many thousand strong, the Narragansetts, like most Native American groups, organized themselves into small communities in close relationship to the land and nature. The larger sense of community was created around periodic collective events like the Fall Festival. The Narragansett community at large was not expressed in single, huge physical settlements on the land.

Ownership and permanent settlement on the land are the central conceptions of western man that distinguish him from the Native American and his culture. The Native American moved in small groups on the land with the cycles of the plants and animals and with the seasons. No one person or family owned the land and no person, family or clan established permanent settlements or created fixed boundaries on the land and said they would make their living within them. Community in the Yankee sense of permanent settlements on the land, though personal, is not community in the Native American sense. Similarly the Yankee view of nature, though usually respectful, is not the Native American sense of nature. Indeed, there is probably as great a distinction between the rural "swamp" Yankee and the Native American as there is between the rural Yankee and the man of the urban world. To the Narragansett, the Yankee's separate, permanent homes on separate, permanent homesteads would constitute the height of isolation and impersonality compared to the Native American's communal ownership and longhouses or circles of homes in one area. Much more space and living was shared by the Narragansetts, with a much tighter sense of community resulting. In fact, for the Narragansetts, the winter collectives were the strongest expression of community, while the summer dispersed farm and shore camps were more separate and isolated, the exact opposite of the oscillation effect and significance for the modern Rhode Islander.

With respect to nature, the true Native American of the past and the present considers himself part of it, while the Yankee thinks of himself as in it. Where the Yankee works nature to get what he wants, the Native American like the Narragansett unites with it to locate what he needs. The Yankee clears it and plows it to make it produce what he wants. The Yankee never controls nature like the suburbanite with his sprinklers and crab grass killers, but neither does he begin to feel himself a part of it in the way of the Native American. The Yankee focuses on what he wants and then creates the technology to move the mountain to make it happen. The Narragansett senses the totality of his surroundings and discovers through his holistic sensitivity what he needs in it. It is the Yankee's tendency to independence, to isolation, to control, and his fascination with machinery as the way to get what he wants that links the "swamp" Yankee to his western urban cousins and creates the gulf between Yankee folk culture in Rhode Island and what one Narragansett I spoke with calls the culture of the "natural

man." We should expect an equally dramatic difference in the arts of the two groups. Probably most important here is the fact that for the Narragansetts art is more than decorative and not just integral with everyday utility. It is itself efficacious, it participates in cause because words and pictures and objects declare and affirm relationships among things, and since all things are related, art recreates and promotes life. For the Native American, art does not just capture positive images, sounds or actions of the community. It participates in directly manifesting these relationships.

Rhode Islanders should be aware of the dramatically different alternative that Native American culture in Rhode Island represents since it is ultimately toward this cultural perspective, and not just toward folk culture, that current Rhode Islanders tend every time they shift their attention and experience to the small community and the natural setting of the shore and the country. If Yankee based folk culture in Rhode Island is endangered, Narragansett culture is that much more fragile. The recent land settlement in favor of the Narragansetts presents hope, but by one knowledgeable Narragansett's rough figuring, there are only twelve families, totaling about fifty Narragansetts who have maintained first hand knowledge of and comprehensive experience within the Narragansett, Native American orientation to life. Many of these families are working hard to reeducate Narragansetts who have drifted away from experiencing their culture as a result of one hundred years of detribalization, poverty, alcohol, and the temptations of the government dole. The real dilemma for these true Narragansetts is that even they recognize the need to "walk in two pairs of moccasins" in order to survive. Yet the urban pair is so radically different from the Native American pair that it is hard to imagine both pairs being worn on the same feet without producing a disoriented personality and identity. Different as they may be, folk culture and the culture of the natural man are both extremely valuable components of Rhode Island culture - since in the larger cultural dynamic they both, along with communal groups, point to an alternative perspective as compared to urban culture.

I will conclude with two images that come to mind which link the western urban dweller with the Native American. Both of these images are mostly devoid of the spoken word, and this is one reason why both are such powerful statements for the perspective of the folk or natural man. In the first image a Narragansett mother is sitting in the woods with her three children who range in age from four to eight. It is a warm autumn day and they are sitting several feet apart on rocks, tree trunks and the ground. There is very little movement as they look out into the woods, all with different orientations. They came to this place quietly, and they will sit for an hour or two like this, then leave in silence. Once back in the home, each child will report what he or she observed, starting with the youngest. Each will add to the picture and make the other aware of sounds, smells and sights that he or she did not observe. The mother's role is not to teach, but to require observation and discussion. She will not mention the things they did not observe. Rather she will revisit the same place several times at different times of the day and in different seasons until each child has sensed the totality of that environment through the natural cycle. The mother will conduct the same kind of activity at a brook, at a pond, at a salt marsh, and at the shore. With repeated exposure, each child will slowly begin to sense the whole environment as a web of related parts which he or she can sense if he or she recognizes the cues. Each child will continue to refine his or her abilities as he or she goes with his mother or father, gathering, hunting, and trapping. The child will reach the point where while crabbing at a salt pond, he will hear a faint

flutter of wings in the nearby reeds and know that a duck is nesting there, a fact that could reemerge as important later with the coming fall. By adolescence the child will know that by immersing himself in the natural environment, he can respond automatically as part of it, and that by operating from within the system that he can most effectively obtain what he needs. It is also from within the system that he can truly appreciate the significance of what he takes and his responsibility to use it fully and to protect its place in the scheme of things. He will watch with dismay while the white weekend hunters from the city walk down the railroad track, chattering, and waiting for their half trained dog to flush a pheasant. He will himself feel the sadness of the river bank strewn with rotting fish taken for sport from a pool, and wasted, by a rollicking, beer drinking group of teenagers.

While no one will see the Narragansett mother with her children in the woods, it is a silent image pregnant with profound consequences. My second image is one that Rhode Islanders can observe in many forms along nearly any Rhode Island shoreline. In this scene, there are three retired people of ethnic background from the city, each sitting on his or her aluminum folding chair, the chairs placed ten to fifteen feet apart on the shore looking out to the water. It is a warm summer day, but the area is not populated. A young couple is stretched out on a blanket twenty or so yards down the beach and a beach stroller or two are in sight further down the sand in the other direction. The sun is hot, the breeze off the water is warm, but the three people are fully clothed, with hats to shade the sun. Their car is parked over the dune and down the path behind them. They have been coming to this same spot for some time now, and as the car approached the area they spoke little. Each took his or her chair from the car trunk and headed quietly toward the beach. They set up their chairs and made themselves comfortable. It is early afternoon, and they will sit looking out on the water for an hour or two. There will be little movement and no conversation. They smell the salt air, they watch the gulls soar, they listen to the rhythm of the waves, they hear the hissing sea foam and the water rolling the small shore pebbles and shell pieces together. They lose themselves, allowing these rhythms to overtake their everyday thoughts, concerns, worries, and pains. It is a time not to sleep but to drift attentively. After their hour or two, the three chairs will be folded, returned to the car trunk, and the trio will return to their shore cottage or home in the city. They will drive slowly, and they will comment on the outing and what they saw, but each will know that the real issue is the sense of refreshment and tranquility they all feel.

These are the water watchers, and it is the urban ethnics that appear to be the most common practitioners, though young intellectuals, attracted by meditation and mysticism, have a growing representation. Ironically, it may be these urban water watchers with their ethnic sense of the small community within the city and their periodic practice of immersing themselves in the natural world who come closest among non-Native Americans to the "natural" man's understanding of community and nature. In a sense water watching and comparable phenomena complete the folk cultural pattern for the urban ethnic, adding the component of the natural setting to their commitment to the small community. Of course the number of water watchers is few even among the ethnics, but many of the shore recreational activities like sailing and surfing, when pursued non-competitively, have the capacity to produce sensations of the natural world akin to, if not so potentially profound as, water watching. Moreover, activities like sailing and surfing are the pursuits of groups usually defined by other criteria than ethnicity

(socio-economic class and age-sex). As such these activities reach other major Rhode Island groups providing them with an opportunity to understand man as part of, and belonging to, the natural world.

Ultimately it is the point of this essay that the value of folklore, folklife and folk art in Rhode Island is one with the fascination of Rhode Islanders with the shore and the country. In these contexts, the traditional arts, crafts and recreational activities are pursued and appreciated by Rhode Islanders exactly because these pursuits emanate from and bring them into contact with the values of the small community and the natural world. The Narragansett mother in the woods with her children and the urban ethnics in chairs at the shore are particularly powerful images for me because they assume a commitment to the small community and reveal the quest for a sympathetic, symbiotic understanding and relationship to nature. I suggest that it is out of this commitment and understanding, realized to varying degrees by different artists, that folk art emerges, has its place and derives its appeal. Most Rhode Islanders SENSE this, if they do not KNOW it consciously. I think the same is true for most Americans in their alternative settings elsewhere in the nation.

SECTION III

PROFESSIONAL

CARD GAMES
Function in Light of Developing Preference*

[See the section at the end of this article for descriptions of the card games that are the expressive activities at the center of this study.]

Card playing in American culture is pervasive for both sexes and for all but the youngest ages. Considering the fact that playing card games is almost entirely traditionally learned expressive behavior, and that this behavior otherwise exhibits all the features of folkloric behavior, it is difficult to understand why this genre of game behavior has been left virtually untouched by folklorists. Perhaps because card playing is something folklorists themselves do, or because it cannot be said to be the special behavior of some conservative or exotic sub-cultural group, it has not appealed to their interest. Perhaps the association of card playing with gambling and the ethical issues that arise there from is another reason not simply folklorists, but scholars in general, have shied away from investigations of this behavior.

One purpose of the present study is to call attention to the value of studying card playing as traditional expressive behavior in the American context. More specifically this work reports the results of an investigation of the card game preferences of upper middle class, suburban children between the ages of three and fifteen. These results are discussed in terms of their implications for the developmental function of games.

The literature on the function of play and game is vast. Nearly everyone who has written on either play or game has set forth some proposal for the function of these behaviors. Avedon and Sutton-Smith have produced an overview, sampling, and bibliography of this literature in their volume, The Study of Games.(1) Sutton-Smith has produced the most recent comprehensive evaluation of this literature in his forthcoming work, The Dialectics of Play.(2) In the latter volume Sutton-Smith indicates that there have been many more functional propositions and interpretations of play and game than there have been investigations of function. In fact the experimental literature on the function of play and game is surprisingly small. Sutton-Smith reviews this literature for game and play in the above cited works and concludes that it is uncertain, particularly for non-physical skill games, whether play and game involvement have instrumental consequences and if so, exactly what these consequences are.(3) From therapists to educators to business training personnel, there is extensive use of play and game and the conviction that play and game involvement promotes practical consequences, but it seems that the basic research does not provide a firm experimental foundation for this conviction.

The present study is not an experimental investigation of card game function. As such it does not address the issue of function head on. Rather the present work discusses the functional implications of regularities discovered in the relations between the developmental schedules for card game preference and for assessment of card game difficulty. Sutton-Smith has challenged the reliability of play preference scales as indicators of game participation and competence.(4) While Sutton-Smith's reservations about the relationship between real play behavior and indicated play behavior must be borne in mind, especially for young children, it is hoped that the approach taken in this study to eliciting indications of play behavior has helped to minimize this problem. It is precisely with this concern in mind that different procedures were used for eliciting

information on card game behavior over the age range surveyed. The non-comparative, separate evaluation of each game, as well as the demonstration of the play of each game, were introduced as components of the procedure to circumvent some of the problems encountered in obtaining reliable reports of game behavior from children.

Data and Procedure

This study began with my recollection of the card games I played at different points in my own upper middle class, suburban upbringing near Toledo, Ohio. This recollection was stirred by my exposure to the identical sequence of games that my daughter, age ten, has moved through so far as a member of the suburban Philadelphia community where my family has been living for the past five years.(5) After checking carefully my daughter's card game experience, after inquiring with her into the card games that she knew children older and younger than herself were playing, and after adding my own knowledge that the overwhelmingly favorite social card game among adults in the community was Bridge, I concluded that the same games seemed to be current and popular at about the same ages in my Philadelphia suburban community as had been the case for upper middle class, suburban Toledo in my own upbringing. The card game sequence that emerged as common to both boys and girls over the age range was: War, Fish, Old Maid, Crazy Eights, Gin Rummy, I Doubt It, Hearts, and Bridge.

As a folklorist with an interest in what child developmental studies could contribute to an understanding of the function of participation in expressive behavior, I decided to investigate more systematically the preference for card games of a sample of children of different ages in my own community. I wanted to determine initially if there was in fact a general pattern of developing preference for different card games.

I submitted a proposal to the local school district to conduct a study on children's card game preference in one section of each grade level from kindergarten through sixth grade in an elementary school and for grades seven through nine in the associated junior high school. When approval was obtained, the elementary-school sections were easily chosen as the above are heterogeneously grouped. Selection of representative sections in the junior high school proved more difficult, but after a visit to portions of two different sections, I was satisfied that all but the ninth grade sample was reasonably representative. The ninth grade sample was slightly skewed in the direction of the more moderately motivated and less successful students.

A similar proposal was submitted to a private nursery school servicing the same upper middle class community. With acceptance of the project, I worked with the cooperating classroom teachers to select ten children from each of the three and four year old groups on the basis of their being typical for their age group. These children were also selected because it was felt that they would be approachable by me and my assistants after being introduced to the idea of talking about card games by the teachers.

The questionnaire I intended to use as the basis for the survey was submitted as part of the above proposals. It was designed to solicit six responses for each of the eight card games cited earlier. The areas which the questionnaire probed were: 1) knowledge of the existence of the game, 2) number of times played, if at all, 3) extent of preference for the game at the present time, 4) who the game is played with at the present time, if anyone, 5) impression of the difficulty of the game at the present time, and 6) the

degree of confidence in playing the game at the present time. These issues were explored with respect to each of the eight games arranged for consideration in the following randomized order: Crazy Eights, Fish, Hearts, I Doubt It, War, Gin Rummy, Old Maid, and Bridge.

By necessity the procedure for obtaining responses in the above cited areas differed significantly depending on the age group. For all age groups, the essential behaviors in the play of each card game were illustrated and the goals described. One of my assistants or myself used a deck of cards and showed the outline behaviors of the game, enough so that anyone who had played the game could recognize it and so be able to respond to the questions about it. Where the game might be known by more than one name, the alternative names were indicated.

In the case of the nursery school children, one of my assistants or I worked individually with each child. Care was taken to check the responses of these children by encouraging them to describe how the game was played, what the goal was, and when the game was over. In this way yes and no answers were not accepted at face value. To hold the child's attention, miniature games were played where these nursery school children were able. Moreover, the games were played and/or shown while sitting on the floor with the child so as to minimize effect of the researchers' adult stature. The investigator filled out the questionnaire on the basis of the combined verbal and behavioral responses of the child. Considerable attention was given to designing ways to ask the questions of these very young children so that the questions would be understood and reliable results obtained. Care was taken to be sure the children did not interpret our display of the game as their own playing of the game.

With kindergarten children, four assistants and I worked with the children at separate tables in groups of four or five. The games were displayed for these children, again encouraging them to participate in describing how each game was played. Questions were asked orally of each child for each game. The researcher filled out the questionnaires for the children on the basis of their oral and behavioral responses.

From the first grade upward I illustrated the card games at the front of the classroom for all to see. Each student was given a questionnaire sheet, and he or she filled it out him or herself. Students could solicit help from an assistant if they needed it, and assistants oversaw the responses of four or five students in the first and second grades to be sure the questions were understood and the responses were appropriately placed. A sample questionnaire was written on the blackboard and I referred to it after displaying each game. For the first and second grades, I went through each question for each game, indicating the choices as answers and the place on the questionnaire where the response chosen was to be put. For the older children, I went through all six questions for at least the first game and abbreviated the later question sequences for the following games displayed. For the first graders, responding to the questionnaire was broken at the half way point by a little exercise and the play of a game of Crazy Eights in each of four groups led by an assistant. With all grades an attempt was made to involve students in the description of those games that they recognized with some enthusiasm. From second grade on, a brief discussion period followed the filling out of the questionnaire during which I explored with the students what they thought their preferences might indicate.

Results

The above procedures produced twenty to twenty-seven usable questionnaires from each of the kindergarten through ninth grade groups and ten each for the three and four year old nursery school children. Four of the six questions posed with respect to each game resulted in useful data. The questions designed to elicit information on with whom the game was played and how confident the player felt during his play proved too problematic to yield reliable results. The findings for knowledge of, play of, preference for, and assessment of difficulty of the different games are presented in the graphs of Figures One, Two, Three, and Four at appropriate points in the text below. Each graph is a composite displaying the findings for all eight games with respect to one of the above-mentioned variables. In behalf of readability and to show the general tendencies of the data, the curve for each game on each variable represents the mean of the responses. These tendencies would be much less readable if all the fluctuations of each of the eight separate graphs in the composites were retained.

Knowledge of the Game

The first question posed to the subjects of the study after each card game had been briefly displayed was whether they had ever heard of the game before. Figure I below indicates the results plotting the degree of indicated familiarity with each of the eight card games over the grade levels of the subjects responding.

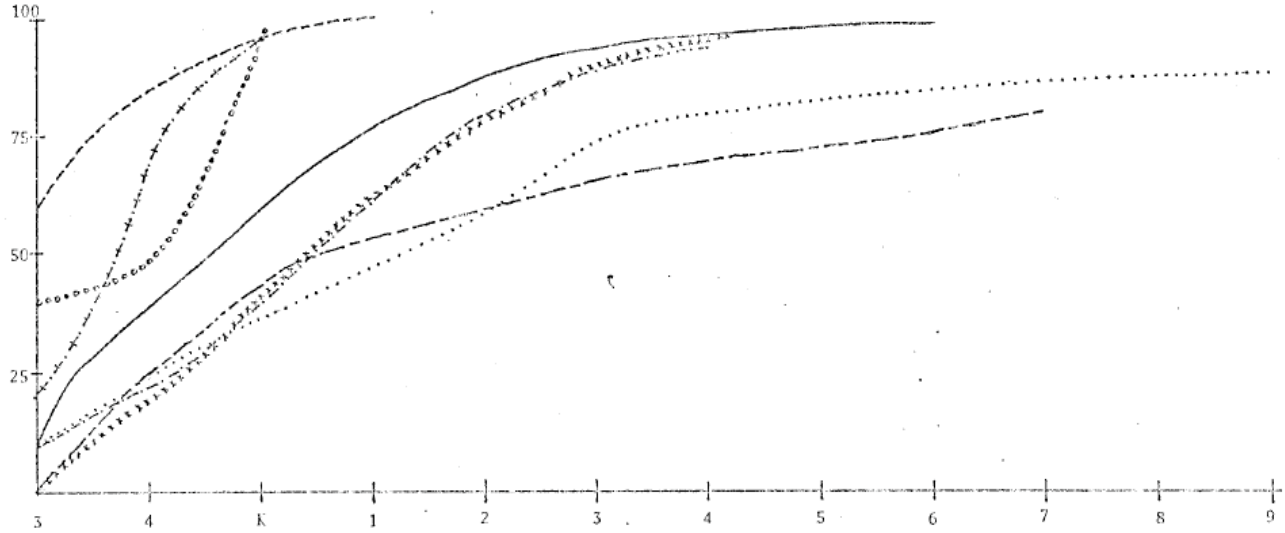


Figure 1
Mean Knowledge of the Game Over Grade Level

Fish – – – – – – – – – – War · + · + · + · + · + · + · I Doubt It · · · · · · · · · · Hearts — – — – — – — – —
Old Maid o o o o o o o o o Crazy Eights · — · — · — · — Gin Rummy x x x x x x x x Bridge ————————

The results revealed in Figure One are noteworthy in several respects. First, it is apparent that the majority of the students have heard of all the card games by the time they are in first grade. Indeed, before the students reach second grade seventy-five percent of them are acquainted at the personal level with all but two of the games. From third grade on, familiarity increases at a very slow rate. Clearly the children in this study are aware very early in their lives of the array of social card games that are being played. A closer look at the diagram reveals that pre-school children are most familiar with the games of Fish, Old Maid, and War, and that by kindergarten age nearly all such children know of these games. Indeed, familiarity is considerable already for three year

olds with respect to these games and further familiarity shows very rapid growth. The game of Bridge occupies an interesting position in the diagram. As the social card game played most frequently by the parents of these children, Bridge is consistently indicated as better known to young children than the card games that perhaps the older siblings of these children may be playing. This finding bespeaks both the centrality of Bridge in the upper middle class home and the primacy of the parents and their activities in the home to the knowledge of the young child. Before they are out of nursery school, it seems that the majority of upper middle class children are already aware of the basic nature of the social card game that is typically focal for their parents - Bridge. It is not at all unlikely that such awareness is part of the reason for the interest of these children in social card games of the types that we will see they come to appreciate and participate in.

After Bridge, the four remaining games, Crazy Eights, Gin Rummy, I Doubt It, and Hearts, are less familiar to the children, but they enjoy a steady, if less rapid, rate of growth into familiarity. The initial rate of growth for these games is approximately equal into kindergarten, after which Crazy Eights and Gin Rummy show a faster rise into awareness than do I Doubt It and Hearts.

Overall, the diagram suggests the following sequence of games with which upper middle class suburban children become progressively more familiar: 1) Fish, Old Maid, and War, then 2) Bridge, then 3) Crazy Eights and Gin Rummy, and then 4) I Doubt It and Hearts. If knowledge of the games logically precedes play of the games, the pattern of card game familiarity discovered here, with the understandable exception of Bridge, generally is in line with the pattern of play predicted both from my own experience and from the experience and knowledge of my daughter.

Play of the Games

Figure Two below presents the findings of the percent of the individuals at each grade level who have played each of the eight card games.

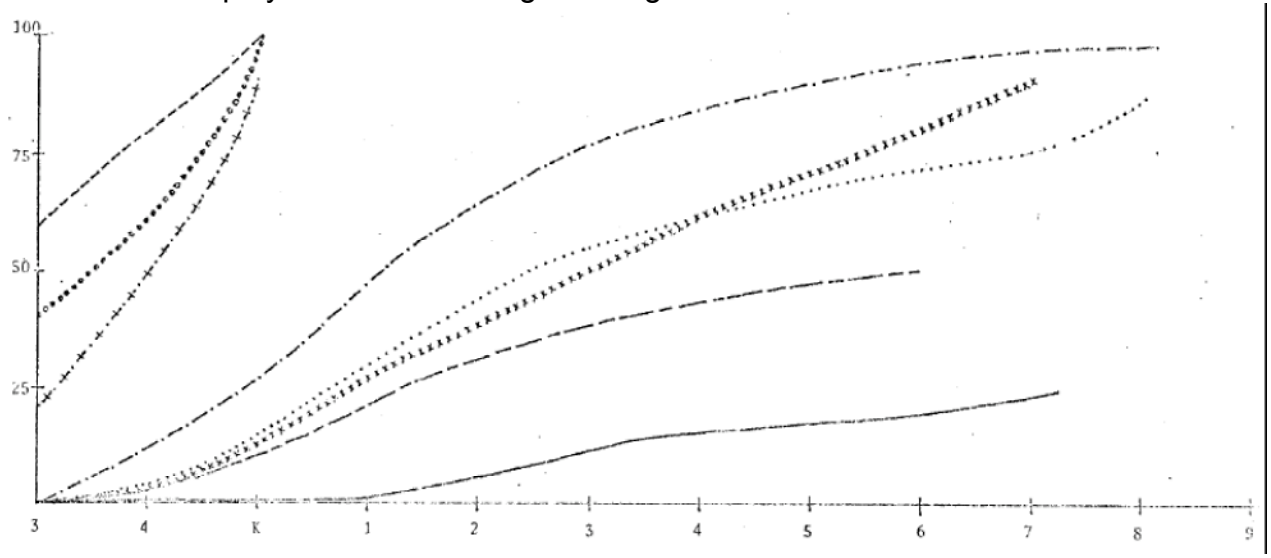


Figure 2

Percentage Who Have Played the Game Over Grade Level

Fish – – – – – – – – – – War · + · + · + · + · + · + · I Doubt It · · · · · · · · · · Hearts — – — – — – — – —
Old Maid o o o o o o o o Crazy Eights · — · — · — · — Gin Rummy x x x x x x x x Bridge ————————

From the graph it is apparent that the three games that were earliest known to the children are also the ones earliest played. Moreover, the percentage of the persons playing these games increases at a rapid rate similar to the rate discovered for knowledge of these same games. By the time children are in kindergarten ninety-five percent have played Fish, Old Maid, and War in that order. Again, as was true with knowledge of the games, the other five card games display a slower rate of growth for their play over the grade levels. Crazy Eights stands out somewhat from this group as the card game played by more children at the younger ages. By first grade the majority of the children have played this game and by the third grade seventy-five percent have played the game. Slower growth is shown by I Doubt It, Gin Rummy, and Hearts, all of which show a similar growth pattern to about first grade from which point I Doubt It and Gin Rummy show growth greater than that for Hearts. Indeed Hearts never exceeds fifty percent of the sample for any of the grade levels in the survey. Gin Rummy and I Doubt It have been played by the majority of the children by third grade and each reaches nearly ninety percent of the sample between seventh and eighth grades. Bridge is the card game played by the fewest children at all grade levels, with barely twenty-five percent having played the game even once or twice by the ninth grade.

When the diagram for knowledge of the card games is compared with that for play of the games, a similar pattern emerges with three exceptions. First, we see that while the game of Bridge is known very early in life, very few children have ever played the game through junior high school. Second, Crazy Eights emerges as the game played by the most children after the preschool games of Fish, Old Maid and War. Third, we note that while Gin Rummy and Crazy Eights generally share a pattern of growth in the children's knowledge, Gin Rummy shares with I Doubt It a pattern of growth in children who play the games.

Overall the diagram of play of the games suggests that the pattern of card game play over the grade levels is an initial group of Fish, Old Maid, and War, followed by a middle group of less rapid growth that nevertheless achieves play by nearly ninety percent or above of the sample before the ninth grade: Crazy Eights, Gin Rummy, and I Doubt It, and a final pair that have been played by only fifty and twenty-five percent of the students respectively by the ninth grade: Hearts and Bridge.

The legitimacy of this pattern is further supported by the results of the children's indications of their frequency of play of each game over the grade levels. A diagram of these results is not presented here exactly because it duplicates the overall pattern for percentage of the sample playing the games. Thus, the analysis of the card games both by mean frequency of play and by percentage of the children who have played the games reveals the same pattern over the grade levels. Again, this pattern is in general accord with what I recall from my own experience and what my daughter's experience and knowledge suggested.

Preference

Figure Three below presents the findings, for the children who have played the games, of their mean preference for each of the card games over the grade levels. The children were asked to indicate if they liked each of the games "a lot," "OK," or "not very much." It should be reiterated that the measure is of the expressed preference only among those who are players of the various games.

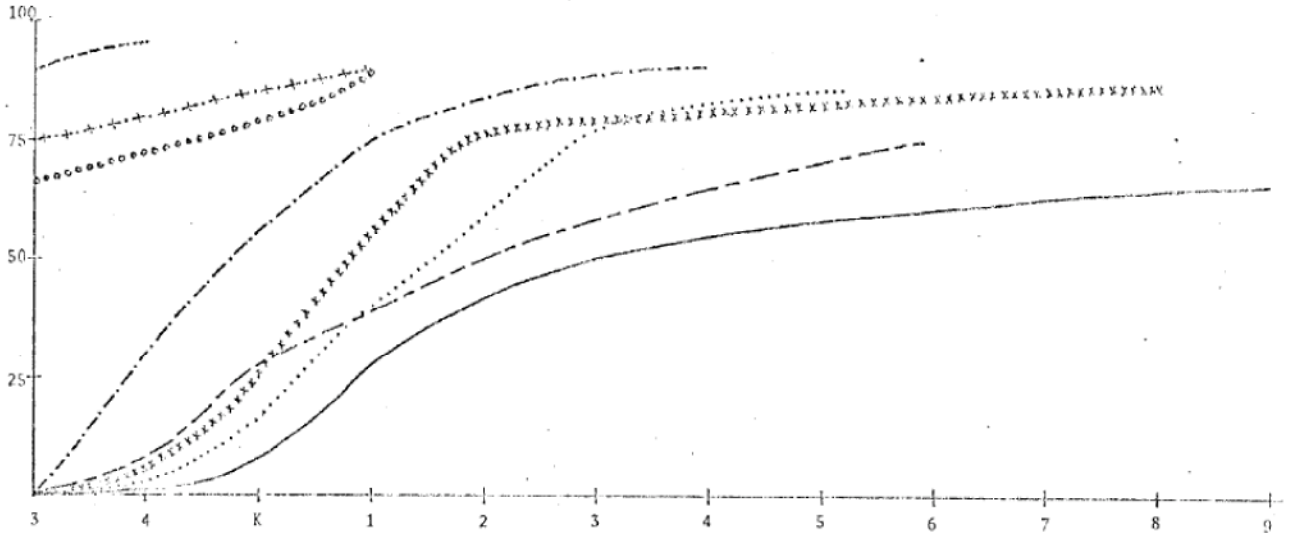


Figure 3
Mean Preference for the Game Over Grade Level

Fish – – – – – – – – – – War · + · + · + · + · + · + · I Doubt It · · · · · · · · · · Hearts — – — – — – — – — Old Maid o o o o o o o o o Crazy Eights · — · — · — · — Gin Rummy x x x x x x x x x Bridge ———————

The diagram presents a now familiar pattern. The three most known and played pre-school games are also the most preferred games of young children. Fish is the earliest and most preferred of these three, reaching its peak among four year old nursery schoolers. Although decline in preference is not shown on the diagram for the sake of readability, this result will be indicated where pertinent in this section. Preference for Fish declines steadily from four year old nursery schoolers on. War and Old Maid are both most preferred by first graders with Old Maid showing a steady decline thereafter, while the decline for War does not begin until second grade and shows a less steep fall from favor. From the findings on game play as well as preference, we see that Crazy Eights is most favored as well as most played in the early grade school years. The game holds its appeal reaching a peak in the fourth grade after which its popularity declines but only slightly through the remaining five years of the survey. Gin Rummy is the next game to become popular, rising in preference rapidly between kindergarten and second grade, after which preference for the game levels off, sustaining its highly preferred status through the period of the sample. It is with Gin Rummy that we discover the earliest card game to achieve and maintain high preference through the ages surveyed. I Doubt It shows a slower growth in preference pattern reaching its peak of appreciation in the fifth grade, after which it shows a slight decline. Preference for the game then levels off, retaining a mean preference rating of 75 in the ninth grade. In light of the previous patterns, Hearts makes a surprisingly rapid initial growth in preference, exceeding the preference rating for all but Crazy Eights of the intermediate group games in kindergarten. Thereafter the game grows more gradually, being overcome by both Gin Rummy and I Doubt It. By the sixth grade Hearts reaches a preference rating of seventy-five, a level it holds through the junior high school years. Among the few children who play it, Bridge is throughout the age range the least preferred of the card games considered. Even at this, the game shows a surprising rise between first and third grades, achieving a mean preference rating of "OK" at this point.

Thereafter Bridge gains in appreciation among its players very slowly, reaching a rating of only sixty-five by the ninth grade.

Overall the above pattern of mean preference for the different card games among those who have played them is in line with the patterns discovered for knowledge and play of the games. Allowing for the fact that the later slow rate of growth in preference for Hearts more than offsets its early rise in favor, the only difference in the sequence suggested by the preference findings from the earlier findings is that War and Old Maid shift positions in the initial pre-school grouping. The sequence indicated by the preference findings then is: in the initial group, 1)Fish, 2)War, and 3)0ld Maid; in the second group, 4)Crazy Eights, 5)Gin Rummy, and 6)I Doubt It; and in the last group, 7)Hearts and 8)Bridge.

Assessment of Difficulty

Figure Four below presents the findings for the children's mean assessment of the ease of each card game over the age levels.

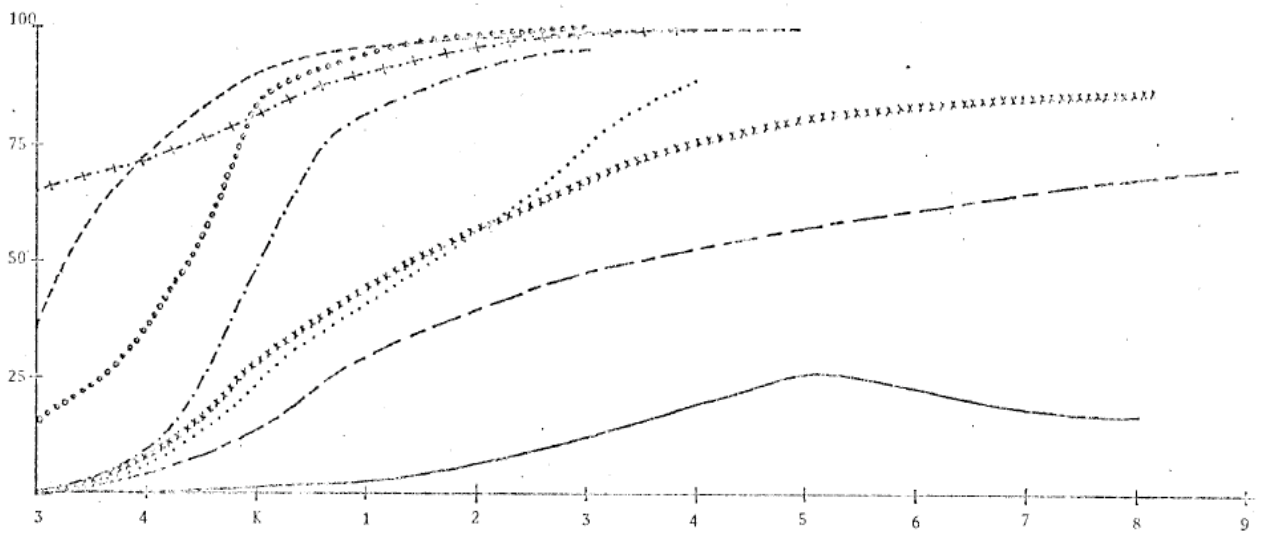


Figure 4
Mean Assessment of Ease for Play of Game Over Grade Level

Fish – – – – – – – – – – War · + · + · + · + · + · + · I Doubt It · · · · · · · · · · Hearts — – — – — – — – — Old Maid o o o o o o o o o Crazy Eights · — · — · — · — Gin Rummy x x x x x x x x x Bridge ———————

The findings revealed in Figure Four again refer only to those who have played the various games. Of the pre-school games, War, Fish and Old Maid are initially evaluated from easy to difficult in that order. While there is a good deal of alteration in the relative assessments of War, Fish and Old Maid over the course of their climb in the ease of play rating, they constitute a group being the only card games of the eight to begin with fairly high ratings for ease and to reach 100 percent ease rating over the age group surveyed. As was the case for knowledge of, play of, and preference for the games of the intermediate group, Crazy Eights is rated as easier earlier than the other games of this group. Between four year old pre-schoolers and first graders, Crazy Eights climbs sharply to an ease rating of eighty. Thereafter the rating climbs slowly until by third

grade it reaches the ninety-five mark. It is the first game to not receive a 100 ease rating in the study.

As was true in the earlier patterns, Gin Rummy and I Doubt It show steady but slower growth in their ease ratings. The patterns of the two games are very similar until the third grade when I Doubt It becomes increasingly rated as easy while Gin Rummy continues its gradual climb and tapering. I Doubt It never reaches an ease rating as high as Crazy Eights, but it peaks at fourth grade holding from there on a rating of about ninety. Gin Rummy by contrast does not reach its peak ease rating of eighty-six until the eighth grade. Hearts and Bridge are again the card games exhibiting the slowest rise in ease ratings and reaching the lowest peak ratings in the period surveyed. Hearts is given a moderate level ease rating by the fourth grade and climbs only to a rating of seventy among ninth grade players. Bridge sustains the lowest ease ratings throughout. Its ease rating reaches just twenty-five among fifth graders but then retreats to a high of eighteen among the eight graders. Clearly Bridge is seen as the most difficult of the games by children who play it.

As a whole the pattern we discover in the mean assessment of ease for the card games surveyed is in agreement with the pattern we have found for the other variables. Clearly the pre-school games form a group though the exact order among them is not clear from the findings. Among the intermediate games the order of increasing difficulty as reflected in their slower and later rise in ease ratings and their progressively lower final ratings is Crazy Eights, I Doubt It, Gin Rummy, and Hearts. From the point of view of mean ease assessment, Bridge is in a class by itself, being rated as particularly difficult by virtually all those who play it at all ages.

Synthesis of Results

Taken together, the four composite diagrams reveal the following:

1) Developmental patterns do exist for children's knowledge of, play of, preference for, and assessment of ease among the card games selected for study.
2) These patterns, though not identical, are in great measure in agreement with one another.
3) Three groups of card games emerge when the findings on play, preference and ease are brought together:
    a) Beginning card games: Fish, War, Old Maid
    These games are the first known, the ones most often played by very young children, the games that are earliest preferred and earliest to be assessed as easy to play. These are also games whose preferred status does not sustain beyond the early years of elementary school. These games have a very rapid ascendancy and an equally rapid decline, though War lingers longer than the others.
    b) Intermediate card games: Crazy Eights, I Doubt It, and Gin Rummy
    These games all reach their peak prior to the end of junior high school. They are games that grow in popularity at least into the middle years of elementary school. While Crazy Eights and I Doubt It, as the two games that mature earliest of the group, decline in popularity following their peak in contrast to Gin Rummy which sustains, these declines are not nearly so great or rapid as was the case for the earlier pre-school games. None of these games reaches a 100 rating for ease which suggests that they

retain their sense of challenge for the players, a fact which accords with their less rapid rate of decline, where decline occurs.

c) Advanced card games: Hearts and Bridge
These games show very gradual growth in play and preference through the age range surveyed. They are assessed as significantly more difficult than the others, especially Bridge. Neither game reaches a peak of play or preference in the period considered but seem to emerge from the junior high school era headed toward greater appreciation and involvement.

4) From the results on knowledge of the card games, the outstanding finding was that upper middle class children are very early aware of the nature of the social card game that is the focus of their parents' attention, Bridge. This early awareness coupled with their clear realization that Bridge is far too difficult for most of the children to play may well relate to the card games upper middle class children do elect to play in their early and middle school years. In short, this finding can be seen to help substantiate the idea that Bridge is a culmination of a series of card game explorations that do in a sense systematically lead to it.

Discussion and Interpretation

Preference and Ease - Implications for Function

A central issue in play and game research concerns whether involvement in play and game behaviors has instrumental input into children's development. In the present study a comparison of the findings on mean preference with those for mean assessment of ease produces results that bear on the matter. If it were discovered that children prefer games that they do not find easy, then it might be inferred that by pursuing the challenge of the game and mastering it, children learn the skills of the game, which are ones they carry from the game into every day life. If on the other hand it were discovered that children prefer games that they find easy, then it could be argued that children bring to the games they prefer and play most often the skills required for them, which they have already learned in every day life. Game and play behavior could then be said not to involve learning that affects development directly.

Our findings reveal that card games are preferred that are neither too easy nor too difficult. Throughout, the mean preference graph for each game relates systematically to the mean assessment of ease graph. The reference rating rises with the ease rating. The preference rating is typically slightly in the lead of the ease rating. Clearly as games become easier, they are more preferred. But this is true only to a point. So long as the ease rating does not exceed the mid-eighties, preference for a game sustains. All games whose ease ratings reach a consistent ninety show a drop off in preference within a year or two, though this drop may be gradual. Games that reach a steady ninety-five ease rating show a decline in preference that is more immediate and steeper. Games that achieve a consistent 100 ease rating exhibit relatively immediate and steep preference declines.

What the above findings from a comparison of the preference and ease graphs suggests is that children are interested in games on the one hand that are challenging and on the other hand that can be mostly mastered given the children's level of competence. The game challenge, then, is one that the child can expect to see progress toward mastering with a reasonable amount of practice or time spent in game

play. As children begin to sense more or less complete mastery or control of the game's challenge, they begin to lose interest. At this point preference shifts to another game that presents a challenge that has not yet been mastered. At any one time, a child's repertoire of card games can be envisioned as including games that are known but whose challenges are felt to have already been mastered, games that are currently highly preferred but whose challenges are nearing the point where they will be seen as mastered, and games whose challenges are more impressive and where interest and preference has not become especially prominent. Where the build up to a sense of mastery has been more gradual or the sense of mastery achieved is less complete, preference for a game will sustain longer and its decline will be more gradual.

The above findings support the idea that game involvement does result in learning as the child pursues the mastery of game challenges. At the same time these findings point to the fact that preference grows with this sense of mastery, the sense of increased ease. Moreover, games that are highly preferred are games whose skills are felt to have been mostly mastered. At any one point it is a small increment only that we have found to separate high preference for the game from the sense of mastery of its skills. In the typical lag period of continued high preference following felt mastery, it would seem to be the case that no new learning is occurring, only the solidification of what has already been mastered and the reveling in that sense of mastery. It follows that given the problem of this lag period of high preference, in order to test for learning in game involvement one must look to the games that are emerging as preferred, that is to games where the challenge or skills required by the game are felt by the players to moderately exceed their abilities.

Of course, many other variables besides ease affect game preference. Our findings suggest that assessment of ease is one variable significantly related to preference. One of the most significant oversights of the research on the relationship of game participation to the learning of skills that are instrumental in every day life has been the failure to recognize that games require the participant to manipulate several skills at once, typically perceptual, cognitive, physical and social skills. Unlike an academic test, which usually focuses on some one variable and evaluates a child's competence with respect to this variable under isolated conditions, games reflect a child's competence to generate behavior in terms of multiple inputs. In the game situation, it follows that performance on any one variable is not likely to equal that achieved in the testing situation. In light of this central difference in game and test situations, it is highly questionable whether learning in games can be assessed through comparisons of test scores and game "scores." Indeed, it may well be that what is learned in games, which are multivariate, is to integrate competencies, acquired elsewhere more or less as isolates, into a play world of multivariate behavior which is a simulation of the yet more complex world of every day behavior.

Play and Game Function: A Proposition

The integrative function of games suggested above can be fit into a more general notion of the function of play and game behavior. Drawing upon the work of Berlyne (6), Sutton-Smith has proposed in a forthcoming work that play emerges out of exploratory behavior when that behavior is abstracted and subjected to some form of conceptual reversal.(7) Sutton-Smith's proposal seems productive. My only reservation with it is that I do not see a sudden shift into play from exploratory behavior; that is, I do not see

a threshold characterized necessarily by reversal. My own view is that play behavior is an extension of exploratory behavior into a different cognitive mode. Exploratory behavior is essentially analytical; it results in the discovery of the traits or features of some object or behavior. The consequence of exploratory behavior in cognitive terms is to build a trait or feature network for the object or behavior itself and to attend to the solidification of this network or schema. Exploratory behavior so defined is a function of left brain operations, which have left brain schema consequences. As exploratory behavior moves into play, right brain functions become more important.(8) Accordingly play explores the relations between the new schema and previously existing schema, in a sense the relations of the larger cognitive network. Play tests the fit of the new within the array of the old. Like dream, play tests out the consequences of imposing or conjoining images or schema. It is in this sense that play emanates from right brain synthetic, figurative thought. The cognitive consequence of play from this perspective is to establish the productive relations of the new within the complex pattern of relations of the old, so that the new can be drawn upon in terms of the relations of the larger cognitive system.

Right brain functions are not just relational; they are also affective. In exploring relations, play also explores affect. Play tests out the affective possibilities of the new or the affective consequences of different combinations of the old. In this sense play functions to integrate the new in terms of its affective possibilities into the existing affective system. Bringing together the right brain functions of play, it can be said that as play tests out and establishes the cognitive relations among schema, it also establishes the affective tone of these relations. In this way play potentiates for both cognitive relations and the expression of affect.

Where play encourages the relational and affective exploration of schema in terms of the individual's own mental system, game tests for the adequacy of this system with respect to externally predetermined goals. Games test whether the analysis of exploration and the integration begun in play, both of which are largely determined from within, are adequate to meet demands imposed from the outside. It is the prescribed goal and process of game that make it more like real life than play. In different games the perceptual, cognitive, physical and social interactive domains are variously challenged for their individual competencies as well as for their combined competency to meet externally imposed demands. Individual or combined competencies that prove weak in the face of game challenges can grow within the play of the game or practice for the game. Game goals or challenges constitute only one source of pressure for competencies to develop in certain directions and only one arena within which development can occur. Comparable pressures arise in the challenges posed by other expressive genres and by instrumental life situations. Presumably the competence to respond adequately to the challenges of games and other expressive genres is related to the competence to respond adequately to the challenges of instrumental living. Seen in this way, the sequence of card games that is the focus of this study constitutes one expressive pattern through which upper middle class competence is engendered and expressed. A companion study explores precisely this possibility.(9)

*This article was accepted for publication in 1978, but is first published here in 2010

Footnotes

1) Elliott M. Avedon and Brian Sutton-Smith, The Study of Games, New York, 1971.
2) Brian Sutton-Smith, The Dialectics of Play, Stuttgart, Germany (forthcoming).
3) Brian Sutton-Smith, The Study of Games, pp. 429-439; and his section on “The Function of Play” in The Dialectics of Play (forthcoming).
4) Brian Sutton--Smith, "Play Preference and Play Behavior: A Validity Study," Psychological Reports,16 (1965), 65-66.
5) Other parallel features of these two upper middle class, suburban communities include their being a) almost exclusively white, b) mostly Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, with fifteen to twenty percent Jewish population, c) professional in the occupations of the husbands, d) composed of few wives and mothers working outside the home in other than volunteer roles, and e) college educated.
6) Daniel E. Berlyne, Aesthetics and Psychobiology, New York, 1971.
7) Brian Sutton-Smith, The Dialectics of Play, (forthcoming).

8) For selected essays, and discussions of the nature and potential significance to many areas of study of research into right and left cerebral cortex faculties see: Robert E. Ornstein, ed., The Nature of Human Consciousness, San Francisco, 1973; and Charles D. Laughlin, Jr. and Eugene B. D'Aquili, Biogenetic Structuralism, New York, 1974.
9) Thomas A. Burns, "Card Games: Changing Preference and Developing Competence," Southern Folklore Quarterly, 43 (1979), 291-331.

DESCRIPTION OF CARD GAMES*

FISH

Fish is a game for two to five players. A regular pack of playing cards is used. The cards are dealt one by one, and if there are two players, each receives seven cards. With more than two, five cards are dealt to each hand. The rest of the pack is placed face down in the center of the table, to become the stock. Each player in turn calls another by name, and asks for cards of a specified rank, as "Mark, give me your tens." The asker must have at least one card of this rank in his hand. If the one addressed has any other cards of this rank, he must give them up. The asker's turn lasts as long as he succeeds in getting cards. Having none of the named rank, the one addressed says, "Fish!" The asker then draws one card from the stock. If the asker draws the card he asked for from the stock, many children play that he can continue his turn. When the asker does not obtain the asked-for card either from another player or from the stock, the turn passes to the player to the left. Whenever a player gets a book, two cards of the same rank, he must show them and put them in front of himself. The one who gets the most books wins the game.

OLD MAID

Old Maid is a game for two to eight players. From a regular pack of cards one queen is discarded. The other cards are dealt out, one at a time, until all are dealt - they do not have to come out even. Each player discards, face up, all his pairs. Then each player in turn shuffles his hand and offers it face down to his left-hand neighbor, who draws one

card, discards a pair if he had drawn one, and offers his shuffled hand to the left. Eventually one player must be left with the odd queen and is the "old maid".

WAR

War is a game for two players. A regular pack is divided into halves, one for each player, face down. Each turns up a card and the higher wins the other, the two cards going face down into the winner's packet. This continues until turned cards are a pair; then there is "war". The pair is placed in the center; each player adds two cards; and each player turns a card, the high card winning all eight. If these cards are also a pair, they go in the center, each adds two more cards, and the whole group goes to the winner of the next turn. The game ends when one player wins all the cards or when a certain number of wars are won by a player or when time is called and the cards are counted - the player with the most cards winning.

CRAZY EIGHTS (EIGHTS OR SWEDISH RUMMY)

Crazy Eights is a game for two to seven players. A regular pack of 52 cards is used with five or fewer players. With more, two packs together are used. With two players, each receives seven cards, dealt one at a time. With more than two, each receives five cards. The rest of the pack is placed face down in the center of the table to form the stock. Its top card is turned face up beside it as the starter. The turn to play rotates to the left (clockwise), beginning with the opponent at the left of the dealer. A play consists of placing one card face up on the pile begun by the starter. Each card must match the previous play in either suit or rank. The eights are wild. Any eight may be played upon any preceding card, regardless of suit or rank. The owner of the eight must specify a suit (not necessarily its own) which the eight calls for, and the next player must follow with that suit or another eight. If unable to play in his turn, a player must draw a card from the stock (some play he must draw cards until he is able to discard). Play ends when any player gets rid of the last card in his hand. He scores a total of the cards remaining in all other hands: 50 for each eight, 1 for each ace, 10 for each face card, and the index value for each other card. It is usual to award the game to the one who first reaches 100 points or more.

I DOUBT IT

I Doubt It is a game for three or more persons. Two packs of regular cards are shuffled together for more than six players. The cards are dealt out as far as they will go. Any extra cards are placed in a pile face down as part of the first discard pile. Eldest hand begins by placing one or more cards face down in the center of the table, saying "Two Aces," or whatever the number of cards happens to be. He must state his number correctly, and he must say "aces," but the cards actually may be of any rank. The next player at his left must then put some cards face down in the same pile, calling "kings" and stating the number. Play continues in the same way, each in turn calling the next lower rank. After "twos" come "aces" again, the rank of the cards being circular. After each play, an other player may say, "I doubt it." The last batch of cards played is then turned face up, and if any card is not of the rank stated, the player who put them down must take up all the cards on the table. But if the cards are correct, all of the named rank, the doubter must take up all the cards on the table. If several players call "I doubt it" simultaneously, the one nearest the player's left is the official doubter. The one who first gets rid of all his cards wins the game.

GIN RUMMY

Gin Rummy is a game for two persons only. A regular pack of 52 cards is used. The cards rank K high, Ace low. Face cards count 10 each, aces 1 each, other cards their index numbers. Each player receives ten cards, dealt one at a time. The rest of the pack becomes the stock and its top card is turned over as upcard. Nondealer may begin the play by taking the upcard. If he refuses it, dealer may take it. If both refuse the upcard, nondealer draws the top card of the stock. The object of the game is to form matched sets of three or more cards, or sequences. There are two kinds of sets: three or more cards of the same rank, as 9H, 9D, 9C; three or more cards of the same suit, in sequence of rank, as 10D, JD, QD. In his turn, each player must draw one card from the top of the stock or the discard pile. He must end his turn by placing one card from his hand face up on the discard pile. Cards in a hand that are not formed in matched sets are called deadwood. A player may legally knock whenever the total of his deadwood is 10 points or less. To knock is to end the play with a showdown. The player may knock after drawing in turn, but before discarding. He spreads his ten cards face up on the table, arranged in his intended matched sets and with the deadwood clearly segregated. His opponent does the same. The opponent of the knocker is entitled to lay off what cards he can on the knocker's sets, provided the knocker has not laid down a gin hand - having no deadwood. If the knocker has a lower count of deadwood, he scores the difference. If the opponent has an equal or lower count of deadwood, he scores the difference if any plus a bonus of 25 for undercut. If the knocker lays down a gin hand, he scores all of the opponent's deadwood plus a bonus of 25 points. The player who first reaches a total of 100 or more wins a game and receives a bonus of 100. If only two cards remain in the stock and neither player has knocked, the game ends in a draw.

HEARTS - BLACK LADY VERSION

Hearts is a game for three to six players. A regular pack of 52 cards is used. With more or less than four players, enough of the lowest cards are discarded so that all players can have the same number of cards: In each suit the cards rank: A (high), K, Q, J, 10, 9 -2. The whole pack is dealt, one at a time in rotation to the left. Hearts is so called because every card in the heart suit counts "minus" one point when won in tricks. The Queen of Spades is a "minus" card additional to the hearts, counting 13. The focus of play is to avoid winning the Black lady, the hearts being less damaging. After the deal is completed, each player must pass three cards from his hand to his left neighbor. He must select his pass before looking at the cards received from his right neighbor. The player at left of the dealer leads first. A player must follow suit to a lead if able; if unable to follow suit, he may play any card. A trick is won by the highest card played of the suit led. The winner of the trick leads the next. If a player takes all thirteen hearts and the QS, all other players add 26 points to their totals. The points taken by each player are charged against him in a running total on a score sheet. A game ends when one player reaches 100.

CONTRACT BRIDGE

Bridge is a game for four players, two against two as partners. Partners sit across from one another. The regular 52-card pack is used. In each suit the cards rank: A (high), K,Q,J,10,9 -2. The suits rank: spades (high), hearts, diamonds, clubs; in bidding the rank is the same except that no-trump ranks highest, above spades. The dealer gives each player thirteen cards, one at a time in order to his left. Beginning with the dealer, each player in turn may call (pass, bid, double or redouble if appropriate) until any call

has been followed by three passes. A player may pass and then on a later turn bid, double, or redouble. A bid is an undertaking to win more than six tricks with a named suit as trump (or at no-trump); the bid must name the suit or no-trump plus the number of tricks over six that the bidder undertakes to win. For example, "one spade" is a bid to win seven tricks with spades as trumps. Each bid must be higher than the preceding bid, either by naming a greater number of tricks or by naming the same number of tricks in a higher ranking suit. Additional complications of the bidding involve doubling and redoubling of previous bids. The highest bid of the auction becomes the contract. The member of the contracting side who first bid the suit named in the contract becomes the declarer. The object of play is to win tricks, to fulfill or defeat the contract. Each trick consists of a card led by one player, and a card played by each other player in turn. The player at the declarer's left makes the first or opening lead and thereafter the winner of each trick leads the next. A player may lead any card. A player must follow suit to the card led if able, and if not able to follow suit he may play any card. A trick is won by the highest card played of the suit led, or, if the trick contains a trump, by the highest trump it contains. As soon as the opening lead is made, declarer's partner spreads his hand (called the dummy) grouped in suits face up on the table. The declarer plays the dummy's cards as well as his own, but from each hand in proper turn. The two members of a partnership score as a unit. When all thirteen tricks have been played, the result is scored. If the declarer has won at least as many tricks as his contract required, he has made his bid and the value of all the tricks he won is scored in the column of his side. If the declarer has won too few tricks, his side receives no credit for the tricks it has won and the defenders score the value of the undertricks, the tricks by which the declarer fell short of his contract. The value of the undertricks depends on whether the contract was doubled or redoubled and on whether declarer's side was vulnerable, having won one game of a two game rubber. Scoring is further complicated by points that are given for overtricks, honors, and bonuses, the values of which in most cases depend on vulnerability, and whether the contract was doubled or redoubled. If the contract is fulfilled, the amount of the bid is scored. Whenever a side accumulates 100 or more points in trick scores, it wins a game. Each side then starts on the new game from zero score. The side that first wins two of three games wins a rubber, or the contest.

* These descriptions are taken from Albert H. Morehead and Geoffrey Mott-Smith, ed. Hoyle's Rules of Games, revised edition, New York, 1958.

Play and Creativity:
Figurative Thought and Transformation
1987

Most readers will find quite radical the proposal for looking at children's play that will emerge in this article. In order to give the reader a chance to absorb the elements of this proposal at a more reflective pace, I will start out by suggesting how the works of a selected few scholars have provoked the direction of my thinking about children's play, and artistic expression in general.

Peter Berger in the Preface to his brief work, A Rumor of Angels, describes his feelings after completing his overview work on the sociology of religion, The Sacred Canopy, Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion. (1Having pursued the perspective of his discipline, Berger, who considers himself a religious man as well as a sociologist of religion, was dissatisfied with the implication that the meaning of religious phenomena could be adequately encompassed by appealing to aspects of the secular, social frame that surround these phenomena. A Rumor of Angels is Berger's apology, his attempt to step aside from his role as an outside sociological observer, and to include in his purview his recognition of the importance of the religious experience. From this insider perspective, he looks for ways to suggest the legitimacy of the religious perspective. (2) Berger's work is important for my purposes here in two ways. First, Berger's shift of perspective from observer explaining from the outside, to insider looking for ways to make the insider perspective understandable to the outside suggests a parallel move within the study of children's folklore and play in particular. The view of play from the inside and the effort to illuminate the play experience itself has been much neglected in research on play. Most investigators of play, like Berger as a sociologist, observe from the outside, seek correlations to issues outside the play experience, and attribute causality and meaning for play to these correlations. Like Berger's own sociological work, these studies are valuable, but where are the accompanying apologies?

Adults play too! As players ourselves, do we think that what we experience when we are inside a play event is very well captured by most of our theories which focus on psychological motives, framing rules of social role or interaction, or consequences in perception and cognition to the growth of rational competence? In my own research I have looked at the play of two children and discovered some of the intricacies of social interaction, and rule manipulation. I describe a fundamental reciprocity principle at work, and suggest that this principle may be the precursor of cognitively internalized debate and of full social cooperation. (3) For all I have to say, I wonder if I illuminate in any real way the play experience the two children are having? Like Berger, I doubt it, and like Berger, I feel an apology is somehow in order. It is not that what I have said in my research is wrong. Indeed, my observations may be correct, and they may be interesting, even provocative. But I do not think what I have said touches on the essence of play itself. The same is true of my work with children's card games. I have indicated all kinds of developmental sequences in the card games children play from age three to age fourteen, and I have suggested that the play is party to this developmental sequence. (4) But for all my suggestions and claims, I do not think I have begun to explain why children play card games or what they experience when they engage in this game behavior. From the inside, even as adults, I am afraid most of us

know that our research and its conclusions are usually remote from the essence of what it is that we seek to understand - the play experience.

Berger's apology is useful for my purposes here not just because he finds it necessary to focus on the religious experience itself and from a perspective within it. Berger also looks for other common experiences of man that seem to involve internal perspectives similar or related to that of the religious experience. He refers to these other "non-religious" behaviors as "signals of transcendence." For Berger, play is one of the foremost among these. Berger suggests that the perspective adopted in play with respect to the external world is akin to the transcendent viewpoint of the participant in the religious experience. Berger points out that the world of play is separated and special and exists apart from the real world. With its own time sense, spatial reference and social rules, the play world is a thing unto itself. Once inside the play world, the real world ceases to exist for the participant, much as it does for the religious person within ritual. Berger also alludes to the joy in play and the renewal that the player feels as he returns to everyday reality, again paralleling the feeling in and the sense following the religious experience. Interestingly, Berger cites instances of the shift to the play attitude just before death, not unlike the frequently reported emergence of the religious perspective at the time of death. (5) In the course of pursuing his own argument, Berger suggests interesting parallels between the play experience and the religious experience - both involving transcendence of the perspective and rules that govern the world of everyday events.

From Peter Berger, who himself relies on Johan Huizinga, I take a useful shift in research focus to the play experience itself and to a perspective from within that experience. I also take the proposition that the play and religious experiences are related in conceiving the world in a way that transcends what we hold to be everyday, empirical reality. If Berger provides a platform for my thinking, Terrance Turner suggests to me some of the mental faculties that may be operating within the experience of play. In a lengthy review of Piaget's structural theories of child development, Turner challenges Piaget's developmental scheme which requires imagaic thought to be replaced by language-mediated thought before fully mature symbolic thought can arise. Turner argues that while Piaget's sequence may represent the kind of substitution of modes that characterizes the move to mature rational thought in western culture, there is no reason to believe that this substitution is necessary to achieve the state of symbolic thought or that image based thought is limited to the kind of development witnessed as normative for western intellectuals. Turner argues for a separate line of image-based development which he refers to under the rubric of figurative thought. (6) From this perspective, the development of image-based thought need not terminate where Piaget's rationo-reductive scheme leaves it, with kinetic imagery. Figurative thought, based in image, can achieve a sophistication of its own, a sophistication that is not measured or recognized in the rational, language focused scheme of Piaget. Other cultures with other socialization processes may promote such non-rational, image rather than word based mental processing and may produce individuals of great mental sophistication and competence in this alternative mode of development.

Combining the ideas of Berger and Turner, I would argue that image, usually kinetic in nature, and not word is at the center of virtually all artistic expression, including play.

Even in the verbal arts, I suggest that words are only the vehicles to manifest the art externally and socially, not the core element that underlies the art. The artist must "see" and feel what he sees in his mind's eye, before there can be any impulse to creative expression, whether realized in kinetic, graphic, plastic or verbal representation. From this viewpoint, play as an artistic expression is mostly a manifestation of imagaic or figurative thought.

From Terrance Turner I take the importance of the alternative developmental mode, the imagaic mode, and I suggest the centrality of this mode in play and artistic expression in general. The findings of split brain research bolster this contention. From the discovery that in most adults the two halves of the cerebral cortex display differentiated mental functions, coordinated through the corpus callosum, there emerges a picture of mental abilities largely separated into two groups. (7) In the first group, the functions of the left cerebral hemisphere, are gathered the linear activities of right handedness, verbal ability and analytical, technical and logical operations based on language. In the second group, the functions of the right cerebral hemisphere, appear the positional and spatial activities of the left hand, visual abilities, and synthetic, intuitive and emotive capabilities. The functions of conscious awareness and manipulation tend to cluster in the left cerebral area, while the seat of less consciously controlled and unconscious functions seem to be in the right cerebrum. Most importantly, creativity and imagination seem to emanate primarily from right brain activity. This match of creativity and imagination with the less conscious, synthetic and visual capabilities of the right cerebrum suggests that image indeed may be at the core of artistic expression. It also suggests that we need to look to these visual mental abilities and their development if we are to understand what is occurring in the artistic experience, which includes the play experience as a generic subset. Left brain perspectives, with their outside observer viewpoint and their mechanistic-logical models and theories will probably reveal little about the essence of what art or play is or means to the participants themselves. And yet, most of our theories of art, children's folklore and children's play derive from such left brain, rationo-centric points of view.

Joseph Chilton Pearce is one of the few scholars to envision play within a conception of child development that includes, but does not reify, rational abilities. In his Magical Child, Pearce attempts to extricate play from the Piagetan view that play activity is non-consequential to the child's mental development, though it may be significant in social development. Pearce's model of development gives full expression to man's intuitive faculties, that is to what I have just discussed as man's right brain abilities. Within this domain rest not only artistic expression but also what our culture refers to as the paranormal modes of knowing (extrasensory perception) and of doing (psychokinesis). Including these intuitive abilities within his developmental scheme, Pearce suggests that under the right circumstances, internalized image can be more than a precursor to physical action, it can be instrumentally effective in itself. Put in the terms I have been using previously, right brain kinetic imagaic thought, when engaged in the appropriate state of consciousness, can interact directly with the physical world. Besides direct physical mind-reality interactions, Pearce's model of the mind, through the intuitive faculties, permits man to access knowledge of the world in ways that are fundamentally foreign to the assumptions of the left brain rationo-centric point of view. Most commonly this information is again accessed in the form of kinetic images, that is "visions."

In the above framework, Pearce sees the child's shift into a play approach to engaging the world as a move toward exploring his possibilities for interacting creatively with the world around him, not just through action, but through thought. In fantasy play the "given" world becomes flexible, open to transformation. One thing can become another. For Pearce, then, the child's instinct to play is critical to further right brain development; it represents the nascent instinct in the child to explore the creative relationship between image and reality and the role he may exercise in this relationship. Play is the precursor to more sophisticated direct mind-reality interchanges - the magic of the magical child. (8) Peter Berger suggests a relationship between the play and the religious experiences, and Pearce insists on the importance of play for creative human engagement with the world. If play and religion are linked as Berger suggests and if Pearce is correct about the creative base in play, then creativity should also be a consequence of the religious experience. We need look little further than comments by Mircea Eliade on the perspective of the religious man to discover the creative principle in this viewpoint. According to Eliade, religious man "always believes that there is an absolute reality, the sacred, which transcends this world, but manifests itself in the world ." (9) For this religious man, "every human experience is capable of being transfigured, lived on a different, a transhuman plane." (10) "Religious man lives in an open cosmos; he is open to the world ... , he is in communication with the gods ... ," and "he shares in the sanctity of the world." (11) To experience the world on a transhuman plane, to communicate on this plane, and to participate in the world on this plane is to be a party to the ongoing creation of the world at the level of mentation.

Having spent the last seven years of my career confronting the task of understanding the religious experience at the center of a Black church ritual, I return to think about children's play with the thoughts of Peter Berger, Terrance Turner, Robert Ornstein, Joseph Chilton Pearce and Mircea Eliade prominent among those shaping my perspective. Drawing upon the insights of these investigators, what I have said to this point has been all idea, proposition and extrapolation. Now I want to challenge and perhaps jolt the reader into recognizing the necessity of seeing play in the radically different way that I have been piecing together. To do this I will rely on a special description of a child at play. The description is by Lyall Watson, and it details his own encounter with a five year old child “at play." The play is most typical - the manipulation of a ball. The consequences are extraordinary. So the reader can appreciate that the description is that of a reputable scientific observer, he should be aware that Lyall Watson is a well published scholar with a doctorate in evolutionary biology from University College London.

Here is the play event Watson describes from his work, Lifetide (12):

> I have always felt that Venice was unreal.
> There is something inconsistent, a transiency like that of an image in a dream, about the combination of rich brocade and crumbling facade, soft light preposterous eighteenth-century furniture and ultramodern glass. But the features which disturb me most are those on the carved heads which glare down from every bridge and building. Wall-eyed gorgons and giants with tusks and pendulous tongues. Grotesque, hairless heads wrinkled in enjoyment of outdated jokes. Death's heads, carnival masks. And, on the wall above a first-story window not far from Santa Maria dei Miracoli, the tearful face of a child.

Across the calle, in direct sight of that head, live an unusual family: unusual for Italians in that they have only one child; and unusual by any standards in that this little girl, at the age of five, began to contradict everything we know about space, time, and causality.

I may have been partly to blame. The Italian translation of my first book about the occult was published in May of 1974. Late that autumn the girl's father, who works in one of Venice's luxury hotels, bought a copy of Supernatura to read on the vaporetto as he traveled across to the Lido early each morning to play tennis there with other off-duty friends. The season and the tennis ended, but the game had just begun. And when it did, when five-year-old Claudia invented something absolutely unique, rather than take the matter to his priest, her father wrote directly to me in a mixture of pride and panic I found impossible to ignore.

The family lives in a three-room, high-ceilinged apartment, sparsely furnished but simmering with the smells of good cooking. Dallying over a dish of fish and polenta, I had the chance to watch Claudia, and she the time to get used to me. She was small even for her age, with wispy hair, tiny and totally self-controlled, preternaturally still for a child. When her hands were not actually doing some necessary thing, they lay in her lap or on the table, at rest. She seemed to live through her eyes, which were enormous, black and disconcertingly knowing. They probed me, dissected me, sifted through the components, filed the useful bits away for future reference, and then turned inward again to the things that really mattered.

After dinner her father and I sat and talked while Claudia paged through a magazine. Then, very casually, he opened a tube of tennis balls that stood on a corner table and rolled one across the carpet so that it came to rest right on the picture she was examining. She favored him with one of her discerning looks and, almost in resignation, set the rivista aside and turned her attention to the ball. She held it to her cheek, affectionately, and then balanced the ball on her left hand while she stroked it gently with her right as though it were a small furry animal, a dormouse to be roused from untimely hibernation. It was a pretty scene, an arresting portrait of the hopes and fears of youth just as Lorenzo Lotto captured them four hundred years before in that very neighborhood. But my appreciation was cut short; and I hurtled back to the present in total terrified incomprehension, when the dormouse broke all the rules and responded.

One moment there was a tennis ball - the familiar off-white, carpeted sphere marked only by its usual meandering seam. Then it was no longer so. There was a short implosive sound, very soft, like a cork being drawn in the dark, and Claudia held in her hand something completely different: a smooth, dark, rubbery globe with only a suggestion of the old pattern on its surface - a sort of negative, through-the-looking-glass impression of a tennis ball.

Claudia seemed not to be surprised, perhaps a bit pleased, as she handed the transformed ball back to her father, who passed it on to me. I wasn't at all sure I wanted anything to do with it, until I realized what it was. It was something I had never seen before, but recognized instantly despite the unfamiliar point of view. It wasn't a bald tennis ball, deprived somehow of its hair, but an everted tennis ball, one turned inside out yet still containing a volume of air under pressure. I squeezed it and it held. I dropped it and it bounced. I picked up a knife from the dinner table and, with some difficulty, pierced the rubber and let the air hiss out. Then I cut right around the circumference and there it was, lining the interior where it had no business being, the usual furry pile apparently none the worse for wear.

> Later that evening, with some reluctance, Claudia did it again and I carried the talisman of an intact everted tennis ball off to my hotel. For two days it sat there on my baroque mantelpiece like a mandala, unmoving but nevertheless mocking me. A sphere, the classic symbol of totality and order, the very shape of the soul, but this one transformed by the child and transfigured by the knowledge that order had been interfered with, that nothing was quite what it seemed.
> …
> It still disturbs me. I know enough of physics to appreciate that you cannot turn an unbroken sphere inside out like a glove. Not in this reality.
> …
> And so my un-tennis ball has become for me a sort of symbol, the manifestation of a new, an alternative approach to life - another way of looking at things.
> …
> It is impossible to prove, in the normal scientific way, that such things do or don't happen. One is forced to take uncomfortable refuge in the notion that there are other realities, some of them far too delicate and mysterious for totally objective common sense. These systems have a way of transcending ordinary logic and language, which never seem to go quite far enough. ...
> …
> [F]or anyone touched by magic, as I was in Venice, things can never be quite the same again.
>
> I treasure the transformation and I try to find ways of making it work, of fitting it into an evolutionary view in which concepts of causation and purpose are not totally irrelevant. But it isn't easy. The search for validity through proof is fundamentally foreign to magic…
>
> I find it helps me to lose some of my illusory certainty if I close my eyes a little. It was possible for Newton to be confident that "facts" had a stable eternity outside the contaminating range of the human mind, but we can see further now and can't afford to be that dogmatic. It is becoming clear that to observe things is to alter then, and to define and understand anything is tantamount to changing it beyond all recognition…
>
> [W]e will have to look at things in a different way, as blind men and artists always have.

To the dominant perception and conception of our rationo-centric western culture, the transformative consequence of play described by Watson is miraculous. To most of us, it is impossible, and we will be inclined to attribute it to imagination, fraud, or hallucination. If we do not so "transform" the report and thereby exclude it wholesale from consideration, we will likely dismiss the event as atypical, idiosyncratic and too rare to deserve our attention. We do not want to pursue whether similar or related events have been reported or even investigated by reliable sources. In this way we isolate the anomaly and shelve it. Given the conception of reality that most of us share, we have to do this; otherwise the event is too disconcerting. To give this "play" center stage would require us to question too many of our fundamental assumptions about the world we live in and our relationship to it. For parapsychologists, who instead of withdrawing their attention from such anomalous events have chosen to focus on the array of paranormal phenomena, Claudia's everted tennis ball is unusual, but not fundamentally different from other psychokinetic phenomena. As participants in mind over matter research, much of it conducted under controlled laboratory circumstances, most parapsychologists are of the opinion that all human beings are capable of experiencing

the world paranormally and that all paranormal phenomena (telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and psychokinesis) are manifestations of some as yet undiscovered underlying principle in reality (Psi). (13) In the constellation of the parapsycholgist, Claudia's everted tennis ball is no longer impossible, just currently unexplainable. Parapsychologists accept this situation as the condition of all science when in the course of advancement it confronts phenomena that lie outside the purview of current theoretical conception – the anomalies that are to be expected.

The parapsychologist leads the way in suggesting an open-minded attitude toward the possibility of direct mind to mind and mind to material reality interchanges. If we can adopt such a position, then we can accept the challenge of Claudia's "miracle." Obviously while many children become deeply involved in fantasy play, very few are like Claudia. Claudia has discovered how to realize at least one specific fantasy (to see what the ball looks like on the inside by reversing the inside and outside). Watson's description contains several clues that Claudia approaches her "play" in a way different from most children. Watson calls attention to the fact that Claudia is an only child. It seems likely that Claudia has had the opportunity in this familial context to explore her physical world in a deeply personal, private and internalized way, without the usual external and social distractions. As Watson pictures Claudia, she is an intense observer, little given to verbal expression. Left to her own resources, Claudia seems to have greatly favored the visual over the verbal mode. The consequence of this orientation may be that Claudia's imagaic development is quite advanced. In the course of this visually focused development, it appears that Claudia discovered not just the process of image manipulation, but also the state of consciousness that opens the direct mind-matter exchange. Watson describes Claudia as unusually intense and visually intent in her focus on her play objects. She also tends to be a passive player as Watson pictures her for us. Within this passive, visually intent orientation, Claudia seems more interested in exploring what the ball as a static object can become in her own active, image-oriented mind than in discovering what the external properties of the ball are and how it can be made to act in relation to herself, others and the rest of her external world.

The manner of Claudia's play is different in the above several ways from that of most children. But like the fantasy play of other children, Claudia's play is only possible within the special "as if" frame of play which frees the individual from the ordinary restraints of everyday reality. Within this frame, the categories of everyday reality become fluid. Rocks can become tanks, balloons can become babies. For most children these play transformations are expressed and explored through action [often social] within the confines of the given external world. But Claudia's actions reveal there is another choice. The player can so internalize the objects of play that image and object become one, with the result that mental changes in the image become transformations of the physical object. Claudia's choice within play simply emphasizes the fact that all fantasy play sets the stage for exploration of reality transformation. When externally focused in imitative or social activity, play is cognitively transformational while accommodating to external reality. When internally focused in private imagaic activity and a passive state of consciousness, play is cognitively transformative and external reality can be made to accommodate to play. In this latter case, play becomes serious business, and in our usual sense of the word the activity ceases to be play and becomes paranormal, psychic or miraculous behavior.

With this view of Claudia's everted tennis ball, I can now state succinctly my perspective on play, children's or otherwise. Play research needs to focus on the play experience itself. It is my view that before we can fully understand the significance and function of play, we must determine what occurs for and to the individual within this play experience. I suggest that the "as if" frame of play facilitates a perspective on reality that releases the individual from the usual restraints of time, space and physical form. Under these conditions and with the assistance of verbal and visual metaphor, various transformations of reality can be explored. When the explorations are expressed externally in active individual and social play, the results are cognitively important but without direct consequence in physical reality. In this play mode cognitive exploration across established cultural categories (encapsulated by language) suggests new relationships, new groupings, extra-cultural possibilities. As such, play is one means through which the individual transcends cultural maps and discovers a changeable world within which the individual can be creative. Fantasy play expressed externally in active individual or social behavior is a model for individual or cooperative social action to effect change in the world - the world transformed through social or physical engagement. In this mode, play is the cognitive exploratory stage which can be followed by a technical physical and/or social manipulation stage. This is the play with which we are most familiar, because our culture encourages externalized play expression. It is also the form of play that makes the most sense for a culture that emphasizes physical and social action as the basis for change in the world.

But there is an alternative: internalized play. In this manifestation of play, the player is almost passive with respect to the external physical and social world. Instead, the focal object or concern of play is manipulated internally through kinetic imagery. In internalized play, then, imagaic or figurative thought is the exploratory mode. Operation within this mode encourages figurative thought development and increased sophistication in passive states of consciousness. With sufficient development in these two aspects of internalized play, the individual may discover that there can be a direct connection between his changing images and what he can know, where he can be in time and space, and what he can do to alter the location or form of the things in the physical world. Like Claudia, he may discover that he can have a creative effect on the world through the images he manipulates in his mind.

Because our culture does not conceive the direct mental to mental or mental to physical interactions as normal, or possible, most of us exclude such behavior as a consequence of play. Where we allow the interchange at all, we situate it outside normalcy - in the paranormal or psychic or occult or religious realms. Our cultural map makes the distinction, the very map that play in any form is designed to transcend. But for Claudia at age five, it does not matter what we call it: play, psychokinesis, magic, or miracle. Claudia is just playing - in a different way, a way that most of us are too scared to try to understand. From my current perspective, Claudia has made the "other," the non-standard choice in play. She has explored transformation cognitively through kinetic imagery, until she has realized the transformation itself - externally. To call this something other than play and to thereby divorce ourselves from its consideration is merely to accommodate our standing cultural research map on children's play. If we want to understand the full significance of play, we have to avoid this semantic con-venience and confront the other line of play and play development - internalized play

and the relation of it to both the development of figurative thought and control over altered states of consciousness. When we do, I think we will come to see the play frame as the opening to creative interaction with the world at both the external social and physical level and the internal mental level. It is the investigation of this other, internal choice in play that I think will ultimately lead us to see the interrelationship of the play experience, the artistic experience, the psychic experience, and the religious experience.

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