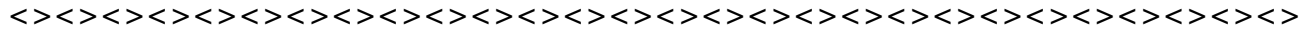


SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS: THE HUMAN ADAPTATION

HOMO spiritualis - In search of meaning



The miracle said 'I' and then was still
lost in the wing-bright sphere of his own wonder:
as if the river pause to say a river,
or thunder to self said thunder,

As once the voice had spoken, now the mind
uttered itself, and gave itself a name;
and in the instant all was changed, the world
two separate worlds became -

Conrad Aiken. Collected Poems.

The most profound evolutionary development for humans is the depth, breadth and energy of our self-consciousness. It is a manifestation of the vast enlargement of the human brain. All the systems and subsystems; all the processes and structures; all the developmental unfoldings support the existence of self-consciousness, its development and its transformations.

Our intelligences, our technologies, our cultures, our language ability, our relationships, our darkest nights, our sense of self, our spirituality, our very adaptive survival spring from and generate as well as reflect the activities of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness dramatically separates humans from all other life forms. Without the depth, breadth and energy of our self-consciousness, we may not be just another monkey, but for sure we would not be human.

Obviously, there are many other activities in the human brain. Many hierarchies of functions and processes actively maintain the human organism. Self-consciousness is our dominant mode of survival.

Self-consciousness is the process that allows the child to learn about and adapt to the most necessary, most complicated, and potentially most dangerous component of our environment - other humans. The human child must spend many years learning how to live. Most important is not the raw data of physical survival but the intricacies of social behavior and acceptance.

For adaptive survival, the eagle has the talon and keen eye sight, the porcupine

its quills; we have internal, reflective dialogues. Self-consciousness is our most important adaptive tool. It allows a flexibility of behavior not found in other animals. Early in human life, we “learn” in many ways and on multiple levels acceptable social modes of behavior. Self-consciousness is the comparative process that allows us to monitor, mediate, modify or inhibit our individual behavior to obtain social membership.

Ancient survival themes, located in older parts of the human brain, provide a framework that is filled out during early learning. The child’s active participation in learning his relationships with the world and with himself is the process that elaborates these themes. These learned patterns become inculcated and automatized in early life as ways of being and doing. Self-consciousness and its out of awareness counterparts are the mechanisms that allow this plasticity. Self-conscious processes measure ongoing behavior and experience against these socially elaborated templates. The ability to have these older survival themes shaped into various patterns provides the behavioral flexibility for our wide range of individual adaptive strategies and the broad spectrum of cultural schemes.

The human brain brings to the table all the patterns of survival of our evolutionary ancestors. At the top of the spinal cord is the “reptilian” brain and layered over it is the “paleomammalian” brain or limbic system. Expanding over these two earlier neurological developments is the cortex, sometimes called the neocortex, that finds its most elaborate expression in humans.

(These concepts have been described in many other works: See MacLean, A Triune Concept of the Brain and Behavior, 1973 and Laughlin et al., Brain, Symbol & Experience, 1990. and their respective bibliographies.)

“The organization of the reptilian brain has changed little in the higher animals. In humans this part of the nervous system dictates archaic regulatory functions such as metabolism, digestion, respiration, and the like.” (Laughlin et al. 1990.p.71)

Reptiles do reptile things. They have survival programs on what is safe and not safe. What is sex and not sex. What is to eat and what will eat. Reptiles are approach/avoidance types. They are conceptually black and white kind of creatures. Decisions are never an issue, they just do.

Snake brains are programmed with snake things such as territory, nesting, aggression, safety, and other necessities for survival. These are very basic themes and found in variation throughout life. As an example, territoriality is obvious in birds or baboons. It is also manifest by plants when they produce chemicals that inhibit other plants from growing in their area.

The later evolutionary development of the limbic system modulated and inhibited the raw responses of the reptilian programs. In fact, further developments of the central nervous system continue this theme of modulating and inhibiting more primitive responses.

“The limbic structures were added to the reptilian brain roughly a hundred million years ago . . .” In humans, “their models mediate activities such as procreation, eating, searching, fighting, fear, joy, self-defense, drinking, terror,

sadness, foreboding, empathy, and hormonal regulation.” (Laughlin et al. 1990. p.71-72). The limbic system is much involved with associating the bodily responses we call emotions with ongoing experiences. Through these associations, the social environment shapes the meanings of the developing human’s relationship to himself and the world. (see note 1)

The evolutionary development of the basic mammalian brain and subsequently the primate brain is an ongoing progression towards greater environmental flexibility and intraspecies interaction. To these ends three new, interwoven, underlying programs and structures have developed.

One is an active curiosity that demands stimulation which includes the initiation of play. The neuron is a stimulation seeking, living cell. Mammals are wonderfully curious animals. The numerous neuronal systems and subsystems of the human brain demand stimulation. Put into a sensory deprivation situation our brain will internally continue to produce its own stimulation.

A second development is a progressively greater necessity for post uterine social nurturance and learning. “Lower” animals do not have this need. Starting with the imprinting of some birds and moving up the developing neurological ladder, more and more abilities evolve that are designed for greater social adaptability. Concomitantly, this requires longer periods of postnatal dependence and is also intimately involved with play.

Third, the tour de force, is the evolutionary elaboration of more flexible, more intricate and wider ranging intraspecies communication culminating in human language. Language metaphorically becomes the genes of a new evolution. Survival information for all lifeforms is stored and available through genetic inheritance and mutation. Language adds a new dimension to this process of storage and availability. Language does not supersede the genetic information system but mediates, modifies and extends. Language with its technological extensions of writing and electronics brings whole new schemata for storage and transmission of survival information.

The “reptilian”, the “paleomammalian” brain and the broad expanse of the neocortex equip the human brain for life’s interactions. Of course, our skull does not contain a snake brain ready to strike out or a rat brain skulking in the corner (although at times there may be some debate here). We do not literally have separate, distinct brains in our head. We have one human brain with evolutionarily older areas as well as a great expansion of more recent regions with highly unique functions. We also have a brain that continues to develop its connections and the precision of these connections across the lifespan. We move from very raw earlier responses to more and more sophisticated interactions as we mature.

As noted, snake brains are programmed with the life’s necessities for survival. In the human these programs are mediated, modified, and further enhanced by the patterns of the limbic system. Together they become dispositions that attract the multiple impressions and perceptions of the developing human. These basic needs and responses provide an outline, a framework. They give organization and energy to the potentially chaotic world of the child.

These primordial themes hold sway because they are necessary for survival. The meanings and necessities of our young social life collect around the reptilian and paleomammalian frameworks and processes. The definitions and procedures coming from the child's social environment become attached to and interwoven among these survival themes.

As language develops the incoming information is symbolically filtered. The survival programs becomes fleshed out. They become clothed. In the terms of the structural anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, they move from the raw to the cooked; from primordial to cultured.

The newborn child spends much of its time in sleep and much of that in Rapid Eye Movement (REM) time which is activated from the reptilian brain formations. A few months after birth, sleeping and waking patterns gradually begin to reflect adult patterns. The raw stimulus and response reactions of the ancient schemes are actively incorporating the learnings of our young social life and our growing internal awarenesses. This allows for more time awake in the social world.

The child slowly learns to temper spontaneous behavior. The frameworks with their evolving social meanings become multiple templates. How to be safe, how to be nurtured, how to be aggressive, when to be scared and many more subtle clues become condensed and anchored as ways for the child to be and do.

Our early experiences become associated with and woven among the basic themes. Filtered through our human senses and symbols, these themes or schemata become humanized; buffered from the raw, primordial responses. Early in human life these fleshed out themes become learned models. Although the framework does not all of a sudden stop being elaborated, very early in our development the enriched patterns develop their own integrity.

The energy and organization of the humanly elaborated, primitive framework become multiple mirrors, reflecting the many and sometimes contradictory ways the child has learned to be and do. Life experiences become measured for harmony and dissonance with the newly established, socially acceptable patterns.

These proposed mirrors in the mind fascinate me and are the crux of this presentation on self-consciousness. As proposed earlier, self-consciousness allows us to prepare for and deal with the most necessary, most complicated, and potentially most dangerous component of our environment - other humans. Self-consciousness does this by being an active monitor, maintaining consistency and continuity with the automatized patterns of being and doing. This provides a fluctuating congruency of self and social environment.

Self-consciousness is organically linked with these earlier patterns. The subcortical areas of the brain are the limbic system and the "reptilian" brain. The cerebral cortex sometimes called the neocortex is the later development in the brains evolution. "The subcortical structures . . . are of particular interest insofar as they constitute the neural mechanisms through which portions of cerebral cortex are aroused and conscious attention is brought to bear on information stored at a cortical level. The precise mechanisms and circuits involved are complex, but there is strong experimental evidence indicating that sensory

information can be conveyed to the cortex via the normal primary sensory pathways - producing characteristic physiological responses (evoked potentials) at each stage along the way - but that sensory information will not reach conscious awareness unless there is sufficient neural activity within these subcortical centers." (Cook. 1986. p. 57.)

The newest evolutionary structures in the mammal brain are the frontal lobes which find their largest, most complex expression in humans. Damage to the frontal lobes brings "disturbances to motives and the absence of criticism." "Anatomical, psychological, and clinical data obtained over the past years lead to the assumption that an essential role is played by the interrelations of the brain stem apparatuses and the frontal (especially mediofrontal) cortex in the maintenance of the latter's active state." Luria, 1973. p. 4-5.

These statements underline the organic connection of early brain structures and processes with human intention, meaning and self-consciousness. The limbic system acts among other things as a switchboard connecting incoming perceptions with the socially and meaningfully (which is to say emotionally) elaborated primitive frameworks. With damage to certain subcortical areas we can perform activities without knowing we are doing them. There is simply no self awareness, no self-consciousness without going through the meaning-connected switchboard and the primitive activation areas in the human brain. Our sense of purpose and our ability to evaluate are lessened or lost if our perceptions which become linked to meaning can not inform the frontal lobes because of neurological damage.

To recap: the genetically programmed older frameworks act as the foundation of and an attractor for the information coming from the child's interaction with its environment and itself. The brain configures the incoming information in reference to these basic survival patterns. This two way interaction is vital during the early years of learning and modeling. The exchanges gathered in early life become strongly organized patterns interwoven around the basic survival programs of life. The unfolding individual is shaped in the process. As the basic patterns get fleshed out, they become automatized as ways of being and doing in the world. Through the mirror of self-conscious internal dialogue these patterns become the gauge of the harmony or dissonance of life's experiences.

The self, constructed from these social elaborated survival themes, works hard to maintain its consistency and continuity. To achieve this end, our individual conscious awareness of experiences is shaped and controlled selectively through the universal human use of psychological defense mechanisms.

For humans the primary landscape of the environment is human. Attachment and bonding is a critical beginning survival step for the developing human. Reptiles, frogs and "lower" animals do not seem to manifest the bonding needs found in some birds and many mammals. This dependence that grows to interdependence appears to be an evolutionary development of the expanded brain. Bonding is particularly necessary in the highly social human.

From the beginning of human life, membership in our social group is all important. From here we find our meaning, our value, our importance. Each

individual human is forming and evolving from the onset of life. Self-consciousness begins to clearly manifest with the child recognizing herself in the mirror by the age of 18 months old. It is certainly off and running in the two year old toddler with the developmental convergence of mobility, linguistic pronoun use of "I", "me" and "mine", and the beginnings of what Michael Lewis calls the emotions of reference; pride, guilt, shame, jealousy. These emotions are measures of the self with some social standard.

At this expression of converging developments, the basic attachment/bonding needs of the pretoddler transform to the linguistically mediated social necessity of belonging. These needs for social membership become more and more shaped not by immediate and direct proximity but by the transmitted meanings of the social environment. (see note 2)

As examples, written into the chemical processes and internal connections of the ancient brain are the reflexes we would call aggression, anger, frustration. Frustration responses are tempered by social learning. They can be guided or prohibited. They can be encouraged or threatened. This applies also to any other emotion, they may be acceptable or not; made fun of or comforted. Once shaped, new experiences will be channeled, molded, constrained, and expressed through the filter of the learned patterns thus maintaining physical safety and social acceptability. The process that facilitates this screening is self-consciousness.

The self-referential awareness function of the human brain transforms across the lifespan as we gather experiences, as we develop physiologically and as societal expectations and demands change. The self-conscious deliberations of the eight year old are different from the four year old as they are different from the fourteen or the thirty year old even though they are each rooted in the earlier elaborated survival patterns. These patterns continue to have authority as the measure of behavioral and social fit. Bringing modeled order out of possible perceptual chaos, self-conscious behavioral management functions to maintain a fluctuating and evolving stability across the lifespan for both the person and society.

There is the possibility for all humans to make a developmental shift across the lifespan from self-consciousness to self-reflection. There are psychological, sociological and organic dimensions that interact to spark this transformation. Various times in most people's lives their basic ways of being and doing in the world come under troubling, comparative consideration. Some of this is simply getting enough life under our belt to be able to compare. Some may be alterations in status or role. It may also be the result of trauma, past or present. (see note 3)

Two organic developments underwrite this process. With maturation, this shift is driven neurologically because of the continued myelination of the neocortex. Myelination is the process of insulating the network of fibers that transmit communications between nerve cells. This allows more refined and more numerous interactions between the two halves of the brain. Pattern recognition of the right hemisphere finds a voice through the language of the left hemisphere. The time analysis of the left hemisphere and the conceptual synthesis of the right

hemisphere interact more complexly and intricately.

This shift also is influenced later in life by endocrinological changes primarily in the sex related hormones. The concentrations and rhythms of these hormones shift for men and women bringing alterations in the focuses and the intensities of emotions and behaviors.

Metaphorically, the the older brain patterns are the mainland with islands of information and human neurological functions nearby such as the specialized language areas. Although there are some thin land bridges, initial communication is accomplished by way of the sea of chemicals. Beginning immediately and continuing across the lifespan many more connections are made and there is a gradual shift in the areas of influence. Mixing my metaphors, there is a shift from the vertical influence of the basic automatized patterns that script self-consciousness to the more global flexibility of personal self-reflection.

This shift of authority brings a whole, meaningful different dimension to behavior and its possibilities. Initially, the centers of processing and control are compactly and centrally located. With maturation, areas of control become diffuse and shifting. They move situationally in time and neurological space. The reflective self is not a solid, bounded entity. Human self-reflective consciousness is a dynamic interacting of meaningful information clusters.

What I speculate happens is that the authority of the expanded human brain begins to mediate and prevail over the automatized patterns established earlier. The 'I' in us comes to know itself by bringing to our awareness these patterns learned early in life. These patterns had defined what was 'me' and what was 'mine'; how to be and do. Being brought to awareness these configurations can become incorporated into the I in a new way. No longer blindly embedded in our patterns of socialization, we become reflectively aware of the conditioned responses that arise from the automatized patterns. Moving from self-consciousness to self reflection gives us a broader and deeper awareness and proactive control. In the long run we have the developmental opportunity of not becoming smarter but of becoming wiser.

This transformation is not a given and in fact is made by few. The inculcated, automatized patterns of childhood have great power and authority. These patterns are in their way the authorized mode of survival and do not give up their dominance easily. (see note 4)

Added to this potential for wisdom is the further human possibility of experiencing a oneness; a higher consciousness. This experience is not a return to primitive infantile being in the womb. It is a process of passing from the initially necessary, socially elaborated survival framework and its self-conscious monitoring to mature self-reflection to an unity-of-being experience.

The primacy of self-consciousness does not negate traditional mystical teachings that loss of self-consciousness is the ultimate path to enlightenment. Quite the contrary; self-consciousness is a necessary first condition for the socialization of the young human. It is in later life that physiological and psychological developments facilitate and drive the possibility of superseding self-

consciousness with a transformation to self reflection and then to unity.

The human child's development of self-consciousness represents the evolution of the ape; the "miracle" of the ape. Finding pathways out of and freedom from initial patterns of enculturation is the "miracle" of the human. Nirvana does not come with birth. It comes with living and toil. Metaphorically, as the child must crawl before walking; so the human must walk before walking on water. This uniquely human - species specific - possibility will be explored in greater depth later.

Consciousness and self-consciousness are often used interchangeably. This creates confusions when searching for definitions, processes and in comparing humans with other life forms. Here I make a distinction between these two ways of "knowing" even though there are no solid lines of demarcation either evolutionarily or in us individually.

Having said there are no firm lines, self-consciousness, although embedded in consciousness, is a step removed from it. Consciousness is an organism's direct interaction with its environment. The approach/avoidance behavior of bacteria is consciousness. Consciousness with its survival themes is found in all life forms. Variations on these themes are written into the ways all lifeforms interact with their environment - very much life's symphony. Consciousness is the necessary processes of life's interface with its environment.

The movement of a single cell organism away from salt water and towards nutrients is an act of consciousness; as is photosynthesis in the oak leaf. Consciousness is an organism's immediate feedback with its ongoing, in-the-flow experience. Consciousness is the direct, multi-layered expression of life's necessary structures and functions.

Self-consciousness mediates this direct interaction. Self-consciousness is feedback on this feedback. Self-consciousness is active deliberation. It modifies and even inhibits our responses so that we are acceptable in the social environment. It is the direct experience of the referential functioning of the mammalian brain.

This mirror referencing is an energized process of human social adaptation. Self-consciousness initially and for most of our life is the active experience of the consideration, comparison, and evaluation which goes on between our perceived, immediate in-the-world experiences and the meaningfully elaborated basic survival programs. Later in life, self-consciousness has the possibility of transforming and moving beyond these earlier, automatized learned patterns.

Self-consciousness is a part of human consciousness. Yet, it is a distinctive part of our humanity. It is intimately interwoven with language. As co-evolved tools, self-consciousness and language support simultaneously both social interaction and our internal dialogue. These are the distinctive functions and processes of these genetically twin activities.

Using domestic dogs as an example it is obvious that primitive reflex behaviors can be modified and constrained in other mammals. However, dogs, although they appear to have internal "self" referencing, do not have the internal dialogue unique

to human self-consciousness. The existence of and ability for internal dialogue (a discussion if you will between my here and now experience and earlier automatized patterns) is a necessary human function.

Whatever its activity in other species, this reflective ability has taken a quantum leap in the human species. What seemingly separates us from other life forms is that our adaptive specialization is an expansion of the chemical and electrical information systems of life. It is in a way an inversion and invagination of this information system. Self-consciousness is life's information systems looking back on themselves; consciousness of consciousness.

Self-consciousness does not simply keep us posted on the immediate flow of life. The truly revolutionary aspect of self-consciousness is that it allows us to step out of the moment. In essence, it allows us to alter our involvement with time and space. We can ponder and shape in our imagination the past or future and we can rearrange or recombine our mental contents in space. This will be discussed later.

Self-consciousness and other human brain processes of considering and reconsidering experiences suggest a definition of the human mind as the brain feeling itself. Of course this is shorthand for saying 'the body feeling itself'; last time I checked my brain was in my body. There are neurons as well as neurochemical release and receptor sites throughout the body not just in the brain. Although the focus of much of this essay is on the brain; consciousness and self-consciousness are expressions and experiences of the whole person.

Before moving on to two other outcomes of self-consciousness, let me make a brief statement concerning dreams. Snakes don't dream. At least they don't have REM or the other brain wave measurements that sleep researchers associate with our human kind of sleep. Snakes do rest periodically usually after a good slither just as do fish after time in the school. This rest is probably both energy conserving and internally regenerating. So after a good time of croaking your friendly frog tunes out for a little R and R.

Only creatures with more developed brains such as birds and mammals have REM and the other brain wave measurements that indicate our kind of sleep. Of course we don't know if sparrows dream. It may be one of the ways that snakes get into dreams. We certainly at times bring our "reptilian" friends to our dreamland. And it is this dreamland or the area of the brain involved in dreamland that is so curious. The area involved in activating our sleep is what was originally the reptilian brain.

Dreaming is sleep's counterpart to self-consciousness. Dreaming expresses the interaction between ongoing human experiences and the elaborated patterns. In some cases a dream may simply be static from the day's activities. In other cases it may be a search for harmony in the face of any degree and intensity of incongruities between ongoing life experiences and the original socialization patterns. Dreams may be the intrusion of traumatic material from any time in our history. In still others it may be a break through of life's raw thematic material filtered through the metaphors of language and culture and manifesting as

archetypes.

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS PLUS

Flexible social interaction and the broad range of environmental adaptations are emphasized as the primary adaptive advantage of self-consciousness. This reflective function and our other self-referential activities produce two other very human results. The first being technology. Although shared in a minimal way with other animals, technology is most highly developed in humans. The second, spirituality, might easily be noted as the defining characteristic of humanity although it may be a by-product of the referential process. It may also be our next step on the evolutionary road.

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS: TECHNOLOGY

Self-consciousness seemingly allows us to step out of the ongoing experience of time and space. Whether we ruminate over a recent slight or recall in joyful detail a long past pleasant experience, we have removed ourselves from immediate time and space. I believe the ability to as it were step out of time and space and mentally manipulate structures and functions is at the root of technological developments.

I am defining technology as a process of modifying time and/or space by structural transformations, functional analogs, and inputting energy. These modifications are usually compressions of time and/or space but may involve expansions.

As an example, gathering and hunting was a means of subsistence for 99% of human history. It required space in square miles and fluctuated with nature's rhythms across time. With the development of agriculture, space requirements became measured in acres and time was bounded by a specific growing season. Transportation technologies are also easily seen as examples of this definition of technology.

Technological development can be social or physical and usually involves both. Technology is one of the identifying characteristics of humanity and is a result of the same activities of manipulating time and space that determine self-consciousness.

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS: SPIRITUALITY

The second outcome of our self-referential process is perhaps even more challenging intellectually and emotionally. From the confluence of consciousness and self-consciousness arises our spiritual quest.

I would propose a condition for all living forms that I am calling belonging. Belonging is being-in-the-flow of life. It is immediate presence. It is timeless and spaceless. In essence, it is what I have defined as consciousness.

Belonging is also an organism's dynamic wholeness. It is being and becoming. It is the immediate living of the tadpole. It is the immediate living of the frog. To the

human observer these are a great unfolding, to the participant it simply is.

For humans, belonging consists of the active elaboration of the older frameworks through environmental informing. It is the familiarly and culturally shaped expression of these primary responses. Both of these are coincident with the unfolding of human development patterns. Thus for humans there is the necessity albeit highly plastic of belonging both to the group and to our unfolding selves.

For a highly and imperatively social animal, our lifelong development of attachment/bonding is pivotal to belonging. We have a genetically based need to find structure, process and meaning within a social context that arises from both our evolutionary path and the very composition of our information processing. It is an interplay of biology, language, family, society, culture, and cosmology. It is a dynamic, ongoing, relational process within ourselves and with others.

I choose the word belonging with its obvious anthropocentric overtones, for three reasons. First, I look out from human eyes with human concerns. Second, I wanted a word that fit the transformation of the infant's need for attachment/bonding that occurs with linguistic acquisitions around two years of age. Finally, with the adaptive function of self-consciousness having evolved to facilitate our fitting into the social setting, the word belonging with its warmth and substance seemed to capture this lifelong, dynamic process.

Humans universally form bands, clans, tribes, societies, clubs, associations, and gangs. We are not taught to be social; we are taught how to be social (and how we are not socially acceptable).

Lack of social support has been linked to cancer, heart disease, arthritis, diseases of the immune system, addictions, as well as depression and other forms of mental illness. A child in an orphanage can be given the best of physical care. He can be kept clean and well fed; but if he is not picked up and loved, he may lose weight and die. Among tribal people banishment from the tribe can mean illness and/or death. This need not be actual physical removal. Simply the loss of the social support takes away the sense of place, time and meaning.

I believe the experience that wells up when we feel we do not belong is shame. Shame is the experience of not being acceptable in the social environment; of our personhood or an intimate aspect of our humanity being ostracized.

As example, shame arises when we, especially as children, have no socially acceptable release for our natural frustration/anger. Or where our natural feelings of flight manifest as fear or terror are condemned. Shame is the feeling that arises when a behavior that is manifesting a naturally occurring internal state invokes the social response of disgust; of being cast out; of not belonging. (see note 5)

With the social response imprinted very early on our basic survival patterns, self-consciousness acts to maintain a sense of shame whenever the disallowed internal experience occurs. This is often below awareness because recognition of this aspect of our self is a threat to belonging; hence to survival.

Shame's counterpart is guilt, Guilt arises from the disapproval of our behavior

as opposed to rejection of our personhood. When guilt occurs, a way is taught for rectifying our error and for the acceptable expression (no matter how convoluted) of our experience within the social context. Guilt provides a process for continued membership in the group. In this way it provides continued support for the "traditional" patterns of socially accepted behavior.

Shame and guilt are decidedly different experiences. Guilt offers continued membership while shame banishes. The pathway to human belonging is channeled and powered by these two emotions of reference that arise through the functioning of self-consciousness. I believe these two emotions of reference are primary in the processes of personal and social change. (see note 6)

How does self-consciousness configure with belonging and subsequently generate spirituality? As noted before, self-consciousness allows us to manipulate the environment by arresting it in time and space. By 'capturing' the moment and reflecting on it, we can mentally assess, measure, envision, and manufacture situations.

Self-consciousness is experiencing the experience. If asked, "are you happy?" You must step outside whatever your particular state in order to assess that state. Self-consciousness puts us beside our self looking at our self. We interrupt and manipulate time and space. In doing this we seemingly step outside the flow of life. We live not in the moment. Using our self-consciousness we can rekindle and resentment the past or we can dream and project the future. We are the director and producer of our own dramas by manipulating the sets of events, people or things.

At the same time there is a necessary state of being for all life forms I am calling belonging: a being-in-the-flow. The very functioning of self-consciousness is seemingly outside this flow. It interrupts and manipulates time and space. Self-consciousness appears to be incompatible with belonging.

Mentally mediating time and space seemingly outside the flow of life generates at our existential core a sense of separation. The sense of separateness at this convergence of consciousness and self-consciousness is subtle. If unchallenged it is at the very most a nagging feeling - a predisposition. It is a seed of doubt. This feeling of being outside is illusory; we cannot be outside the flow and be alive.

Illusion or not, this does not keep the seed of doubt from being a main experience of all humanity. In the best of all possible worlds it would remain subtle and far from awareness. However, the necessities of socialization amplify the aloneness. The growing child can hardly avoid dissonances and contradictions in the learnings of the social environment. Parents are not necessarily consistent either individually across time or between themselves. Parental consistencies may not support the natural and culturally guided expression of basic internal responses. Depending on the individual and the environment, this illusion of disconnection is magnified in our attempts to fit into the social environment.

In the vagaries of human learning and modeling, conflicts can exist between any number of the ways of being and doing learned by the child. The expression of sadness may be incompatible with entrance and participation in the social group.

SELF CONSCIOUSNESS - THE HUMAN ADAPTATION

Each parent, each family and each culture at any particular time and space fashions the expressed behavioral patterns of the developing mind.

This feeling of separateness, of being outside, comes up against our broadly defined need to belong. Energy and tension are generated. Human life becomes a drive, a search, a quest towards being back in the flow, towards belonging, towards unity. This is the root of our spirituality. Soul is being-in-the-flow; the being and becoming of belonging.

Other forms of existence are in a state of soul all or almost all of the time. They do not manifest our spiritual need which is our outward display of this interaction of belonging and illusory separateness.

This is the crux. Belonging, filtered through language and culture, is an expression of the basic needs of all life and specifically, this very social animal we call human. Our self-consciousness is our tool for meeting this need. Our self-conscious ability supports our belonging in the social environment and in organizing our sense of self.

Self-consciousness paradoxically also brings the illusory sense of being outside the basic field of belonging because it allows us to deliberate on time and space. The meeting ground of active self-consciousness and belonging generates the defining characteristic of all humanity - spirituality and the quest for soul. (see note 7)

During times of crisis - developmental and/or traumatic; there is a feeling of disconnection and loss of continuity. This is soul loss. The amplified sense of isolation from ourself and our group turns back on itself leading us to the intrinsic core of uncertainty. In this inner space lies the dark night of the soul.

Many of us have personally encountered the dark night of the soul. Where we stood nowhere, where time was eternal pain, and any action was not even inertia. At base all human emergencies whether developmentally or traumatically induced are a crisis of soul. They are a loss of structure, meaning, and continuity. They are disengagement, disidentity, disorientation, and disenchantment. A rending in the fabric of our life. They are not belonging.

SAVING GRACE - FUTURE IMPERFECT

Ironically, this great agony of humanity that is a byproduct of our self-conscious survival tool may also be our saving grace. Diving deep into the well of nothingness and surfacing, we may bring back an experience of the unity of and humor in all things. We bring back an experience of openness and compassion.

We come full spiral. Human evolution supplants immediate in-the-flow consciousness with self-conscious monitoring to gain the power of flexible physical and cultural adaptation. An individual's early childhood experiences of acceptance, of belonging, sets in motion the processes for an encounter with the raw, utter aloneness of the dark night of the soul. Imbued with the phylogenetic traces of the consciousness of all life, the human mystical experience offers a communion, a symphonic union - a consciousness of consciousness of consciousness.

In all cultures, in all ages there have been those few who successfully navigate

this process. These journeys into the dark night of the soul can generate the great spiritual wisdom. The journeys are personal in the extreme yet they arise in a social setting. And it is in the returning into the social setting and with the metaphors of its time and place that spiritual wisdom is written.

Many of the universal expressions of spiritual wisdom have taken place in societal settings of great stress. Times of cultural transformation denoted by historians have always had underpinnings of social and ecological pressure whether we speak of the movement from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, the industrial revolution or the time of Jesus. Although all human crises are social in nature, these breakdowns have a major ecological component no matter how localized.

Now we stand at the convergence of great knowledge and as well as enormous challenge. A litany of problems that run from ozone depletion and greenhouse gases to child abuse and starvation confront us. Coincidentally, great advances in information that range from quantum mechanics and biochemistry to human relations and child development are available to us. This convergence opens the door for humanity to face itself. (see note 8)

As noted earlier, our self-consciousness has developed as our tool for working with our greatest necessity and most dire threat - ourselves. Three interrelated issues stand as challenges for our species' future. The first is accepting and imposing limitations upon ourselves. If we saw any other animal that was dying from worldwide epidemics, starvation, violence within families and communities as well as between communities; if this highly social animal was abusing and neglecting its young, raping its females, poisoning its nests, and sickening its members from stresses of adaptation demands; we would know we were seeing an animal in an ecological crisis. This is us and this is where we stand.

Major population migrations and technological advances have been precipitated by a need for energy in an environment of resource depletion. (Boyden,1992; Catton, 1980; Clark, 1975; Cohen, 1977; Green, 1978; Odum and Odum, 1976; Tuchman, 1978). Each of these changes has put off facing our own need to impose limitations both on our numbers and on our draw from the environment. The global dimension of our present situation makes this maturation of our species immanent.

A second issue facing us is related to setting mature limits yet it is so subtly powerful that it needs highlighting separately. We are an incredibly adaptable animal. This is why we are born seemingly prematurely with a need for continued incubation outside the womb. And our adaptation has spread us geographically far and wide.

There are boundaries within us to our incredible power of adaptation. The internal constraints to our adaptability are subtle since we appear on the surface so malleable. Unwittingly we have been abusing our tool of adaptability. In the western world especially, we have put small, incremental demands on our adaptability across time until the pressures have accumulated beyond the healthy. Our adaptability is designed for a generalized accommodation to various ecological environments with routines that allow for large time blocks of play and wide spaces

for exploration within these niches. Our modern life calls for internal controls and constrictions of time, space and behavioral expressions beyond the subtle and healthy functioning of the organism.

The third issue is also intimately wrapped with the first two yet poses its own and perhaps harder problem to modify. We must find new ways to satisfy the incessant and driving need for stimulation that is a core attribute of the mammalian brain. If we consider pleasure/pain experiments performed by Olds or the pay of entertainers compared to teachers or the material purchases of the world's poor, this motivation can be seen in all its power.

This demand has an addictive quality that is encouraged and magnified by the ease of immediate satisfaction available through technology. Technology seductively satisfies our drive for stimulation. Stepping away from this will be the most difficult stumbling block on the path to realizing and accepting a more gentle place in the family of earth.

The mirrors of self-consciousness are a necessary and defining condition of our species. As the natural evolution of the human self-referential function, the personal transformations generated by maturing self-reflection bring deep empathy, broader acceptance of limitations, natural means of stimulation and a realization of our connection to all life.

Self-reflection is a necessary step on the spiritual pathway to an evolved experience of unity. And mature self-reflection is the necessary state of active living for even the most enlightened of individuals. The Buddha having attained unity chose to return to the world of forms as a participant. This underscores that higher consciousness is not simply born again flashes or drug induced experiences. Heightened spirituality is an ongoing, self-reflecting, maturing life.

The convergence of perennial wisdom, growing knowledge of our universe, and the global extent of our connectedness offers the possibility for supporting our individual maturation on the scale of populations. Recognition of the multiple variables in the unfolding life of the child from conception onward, limiting our numbers and demands on the earth through wise management of ourselves, cultural promotion of the spiritual pathway through recognition that each of us is on a journey of discovery, comes at a time of unprecedented challenge to humanity.

This is no pie-in-the-sky vision. There will always be self-consciousness and the eternal seed of doubt as long as the species exists. There will always be the tendencies toward dogma and power-over. There will always be pushing the edge and the craving of stimulation. There will always be psychological defense mechanisms with its selective not knowing. These are the nature of the beast. Yet it is also the nature of the beast to seek connection, unity and belonging and in this lies our hope for the future.

NOTE TOPICS

1. EMOTIONS. PAGE 18.
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NOTE 1 (from page 2)

Emotions are the language our body uses to speak to us. They are not always intense; yet the music is always there at some level. Emotions inform our awareness of the inside and our reaction to the outside. Emotions give personal meaning to our involvement with the world. Because they are so much a part of our existence and they are shaped and controlled at such a young age, we often on the personal level do not realize their on going importance except when they are in the extreme.

Emotions are expressed essentially from the infant's first experiences of life. The brain's actual structure and development offers interesting ideas about how emotions evolve across the life span. The upper brain is divided down the middle into two parts or hemispheres. In the newborn, these two halves are poorly connected.

This poor connection is like a duplex house. In the beginning, there are only a few strands of very thin wire connecting the telephones in the two sides of the house and these fine strands of wire have little or no insulating cover. This means that there is little communication between the two halves and what communication there is is not all that good. Across time, more and more strands with better insulation are developed so that communication becomes clearer and faster.

In the newborn, studies have shown that positive emotions activate the left front part of the brain; while negative emotions activate the right front. These researchers identified these reactions by recording the electrical activities in the brains of newborns. The reaction was in response to a sweet tasting substance and a sour substance. This dual activity in the brain was also found in older infants of 10 months in response to happy or sad situations. Research on adults has also shown this division continues although not as strongly because of the increased interconnection between the two hemispheres.

Emotions have been categorized as primary emotions and emotions of reference. The primary emotions come with the package. They are our body's responses to information about the state of the body. Numerous researchers have listed these emotions. A hybrid list would be anger, sadness, disgust, interest, joy, and distress or fear. These grow and mature across time and become more shaped by the external environment. At base, these are our body speaking to

us.

Emotions of reference emerge with the development of the self-consciousness of the self. It is that time spoken of earlier where the mobile, verbal toddler is letting the I, Me, and Mine fly around.

My social environment teaches me the what, how, when, why, where, and who of referencing my self. When a perceived need arises to compare myself by looking at the advantages that age or sex or hair color have in my family, my envy develops. I accomplish the spelling of a word with great applause from my grandmother, my feelings and the incoming messages converge into pride. These experiences and the experience of all emotions of reference are my feelings of how I fit into my social environment.

Another way of dividing emotions is possible. Although not mutually exclusive, emotions can also be seen as expressions of conflict or of bonding. Emotions of conflict describe situations that need changing; situations that are threatening. We feel fear at finding a snake in our path or perhaps we feel anger at having been passed over for a promotion. The emotions of conflict are designed in the body to persist until we change the situation. The persistence of conflict emotions until removal of the conflict originally had high survival value. In the modern world so condensed in time and space and with no safe outlets for these conflict emotions, this persistence represents a serious problem of adaptation and health.

Excitement, joy, curiosity are examples of emotions of bonding. These emotions are designed not to persist. They occur with nursing, with play, with laughter, with intimacy. For a highly social animal, the need to regenerate bonding emotions by seeking situations that elicit them also has survival value.

There is a further corollary involving emotions of conflict and bonding. Most of us have known the persistence of fear, sadness or anger in our life. These emotions were originally designed to persist. They may persist in humans because of psychohistorical events. Then when we feel joy and it does not persist there is a tendency to blame ourselves and feel like we are failures. We are being unfair to ourselves. We are comparing apples to oranges.

Emotions are timeless. When we tap into our sadness, we tap into all the sadness we have ever or will ever feel. This is a hard one for cause/effect types like myself. It is easier to appreciate by separating the content of a sad event from the unique bodily experience of sadness. The content of sad events will vary in the future; not our personal, internal domain of sadness.

We have joy within us as a natural response. When we experience joyfulness, we move into a sensual mind field that is neurological and biochemical. Within this field we move outside the realm of clock time. When we feel joy we open ourselves to our universe of joy.

In the broadest sense, our emotional reactions to the continuing events of our life are the thread that give us a personal sense of history. Emotions give meaning to experience in the moment and connect us to our memories. Our memories gives us our history. Emotions shape our experience of the self.

Let me add one final point. Love is not one emotion; it is all emotions. A white

light when passed through a prism becomes a rainbow of colors. Metaphorically, love is the white light of emotions. When passing through us, love is the many hues and blends of the various feelings socially shaped and expressed as emotions.

This perhaps gives us some clarity as to why it is so difficult to love ourselves and others. Love is all the emotions. Emotions are timeless. With love, we tap into not only our joy but also our fear and sadness from now, before, and in the future. At times this makes it painful to have love for ourselves and/or others.

When our emotions are affirmed, nurtured and guided, the structures and meanings of the developing self are connected internally and socially. There is belonging.

Love is the energy of life speaking to itself. We are the crystal and love comes from within us and through us. Love, as all the emotions, as the white light, stands as the grail of human spiritual endeavors. To love is to celebrate living. It takes great courage.

NOTE 2 (from page 6)

There is a learning that takes place in the movement from infancy to toddlerhood. The newly emerging self-conscious self experiences its first transition.

This is not the first human transition. Certainly birth qualifies as a dramatic change that leaves a deep impression on the mind. For my purposes the self-conscious self is not yet available for the birth passage. It is the transformation to self-consciousness that interests me.

Who has not seen the toddler run off a safe distance exploring the world? Or in the throes of rage at the limits of its body or at the boundaries set by the social environment? Or climb into the mother's lap reseeking the nurture of the infant?

The child climbing on to his mother's lap is betwixt and between. He is emerging. This is not to say a two year old should not seek his mother for comfort. It is attitudinal in the example I am giving. Perhaps in the moment, he seeks to thwart his onward developmental movement out of fear of the unknown.

Reassurance and comfort with the mother keeps the 'control' in his hands and his development can continue to unfold. If the lap is not accessible, if told "Big boys don't do that," or if he is shoved away or a look of disgust darkens the mother's face, this is a teaching in the process of developmental transitions. Or perhaps instead, he is metaphorically kept in the mother's lap for her own dependency needs. Here also, he learns the ways and means of transitions.

With this first self-conscious transition, we learn how the environment will accept and facilitate our changing and emerging self. We learn there are limitations and losses and the ways that are safe and acceptable to respond to them. We learn how the old and the new are met by the social environment. We develop our personal awarenesses of and adaptations to change. How our emerging self experiences these first limitations and losses begins our pattern for grief and mourning. The reception and facilitation of these expressions at the boundary of the self-conscious self's first transition give shape and acceptance to how we move through change.

The child is not simply naming the world. The child is in a powerful state of meaning making, naming the world and assigning significance to the named objects or events. When this formation has developed a broad range, the child will move into a matrix of made meaning; knowing a world and how to feel about that world.

The healthy incorporation of the child into the group is the facilitation of her emotional responses to the leaving of the old (infancy), of the transition process itself, and of the attainment of the new (toddlerhood). When these emotional responses are facilitated through affirmation, nurturance and guidance, the emerging self develops a sense of wholeness that is a connection between internal reactions and the social environment. We learn both to belong to ourselves and to the group.

This process reoccurs throughout our life. We mature and change physiologically; we also assimilate more and more inner and outer information developmentally until we are driven into a demanding state of accommodation. This accommodation occurs when the previous assimilations and the incoming information go beyond the existing boundaries of our 'world'; of our wholeness. (This state can also arise out of trauma at any time in life, when our unfolding sense of wholeness, our meaning and structure, the shape and shaping of our self is broken.)

Our lives are an ongoing process of embeddedness and emergence. The self-conscious self's first encounter with the transition from infancy to toddlerhood sets a template for the future.

NOTE 3 (from page 7)

Trauma is a break in our 'wholeness'. The ongoing, dynamic processes of genetic unfolding and the culturally shaped expression of our internal states are part of the being and becoming for each of us. When these processes are deemed unacceptable by the social environment; when expressing them threatens our social membership; when even the experiencing of them generates shame; an internal and an external trauma occurs. The internal trauma occurs when as children we learn to disavow these natural processes. This affects our belonging to ourselves. The external trauma is the threat to our belonging to the 'group'. Both senses of belonging are necessary for the 'wholeness' of the person.

The break in 'wholeness' can range from shock traumata to cumulative traumata. A shock trauma is usually much clearer as an event. It can be boxed by time and space: on August 9, 1953, my uncle molested me in the garage while everyone else was in the house; on the fifth of September 1961, the first day of school my mother died. These events are focused and explicit.

Cumulative traumata are more subtle and consequently much harder to pin down. They are acts of casting the child in a role the parent is producing and directing. Brazelton has listed some of these. Some examples are raising the child in an opposite way from how the parent was raised or the child acting as parent to give nurturance, support, and criticism or the child being shaped in the parent's image of the ideal person.

Each of these actions toward the child is an imposing of the parents' thoughts

and emotions on the child. Usually even if the acts are within the awareness of the parent the design is not ill intended. Few, very few parents begin their child's life by considering how deeply they might be able to wound the child. Regardless of awareness or intent, it is still traumatizing for the child because it denies the child's natural uniqueness and developmental unfolding. It is a misuse of the parents' power.

The core of trauma is helplessness and hopelessness. It is helplessness in that we are unable to act. We do not even have the luxury of being ineffectual. Helplessness is being frozen in space.

It is hopelessness because the past offers no solution and the future has no design. Hopelessness is being frozen in time. Together they are powerlessness. The trauma of trauma is powerlessness. It is an interruption of our belonging both to ourself and to the group.

The healing of trauma requires a social environment of nurturance, protection and guidance as we grieve the loss of our 'wholeness'. If the social support gives the message, "yes, we humans experience losses and have emotional reactions to these losses. Your anger, fear, and sadness are natural. This is part of what being human is and you are okay in being human," a new sense of 'wholeness' arises. When the source of the trauma is the very social environment that is also the only source for healing, powerlessness continues and the wound endures.

As Arno Gruen wrote in The Betrayal of the Self, "To be born human is to be born in danger, because everything we come to know and do as human beings we must learn from others. Furthermore, because we are the most impressionable, flexible, and malleable of all creatures, we are capable of being taught; learning not only more that is sound but also more that is unsound than any other living creature."

NOTE 4 (from page 8)

The transformation of the automatized, early learned patterns to self reflective awareness is often not an easy one. Paul Kegan using the Piaget model speaks of being embedded in relationships to ourselves and the world.

Within this embeddedness, using William Bridges' categories we are engaged, identified, oriented, and enchanted. Engagement is the multiple ways we meet the world and the world meets us; our network of kin, friends, work mates, intimates, places, things. The inner aspect of engagement is our identity. Identity is the working image we form of our self through outer feedback and inner self-consciousness across time. Orientation is the interaction of engagement and identity giving us a social and physical sense in time and space. Enchantment is the cloth of engagement, identity and orientation with the threads that 'this is the way the world works' as the border. These four processes are another way of looking at the early automatized patterns.

Kegan speaks of embeddedness as a way of being in which there is a process of internal and external information being assimilated a la Piaget. Information is assimilated into the existent framework (read enchantment).

When the information no longer fits the established schemes then an

accommodation must take place. This demands an emergence to a new level of organization or an entrenchment and rigidity in the old pattern. During the time of emergence, the person becomes disengaged, disidentified, disoriented and disenchanting. These transitional states do not need to be monumental or disastrous. This depends on the incongruence between incoming information and the present embeddedness. The adjustment is highly affected by the social support during this particular experience and as well as the learnings from experiences of earlier transitions.

Usually the demand for transition results in a retreat or more of the same in a new guise. Bridges distinguishes between disenchantment and disillusionment. As an example, we often find it curious if not disconcerting that people in abusive relationships move out of one and into another.

Sally is in an abusive relationship with Tom. She finally leaves only to begin a relationship with Sam that ultimately becomes abusive. She leaves Sam for Joe and so on. Sally has become disillusioned with Tom then Sam then Joe. She is dealing with the content. She focuses on the person and not the pattern of her relationships; not the enchantment. Disillusionment is content; disenchantment is pattern. Her way of engagement, identity, orientation, and enchantment remains unchanged.

Depending on the range and intensity of the early wounds of shame, making developmental transitions can be very, very difficult. Crises arise, therapy may even be sought; but as the discomfort level is diminished the person often returns to the original enchantment. It takes many crises if change is to be negotiated at all.

It is simply too scary. The doors to our historical experience of the timeless emotions are thrown wide open when we begin to emerge out of embeddedness. The emergence time is an emergency of not belonging. Disengagement, disidentification, disorientation, disenchantment do not feel safe. There are echoes of abandonment and death.

Mature self-reflection is very difficult because the automatized patterns are just that - automatized. They developed young as ways to be and do; as ways to survive in the particular social environment. These patterns with their supporting defenses will try to maintain their dominance. They are especially persistent depending on the perceived and expressed degree of unsafeness in the earlier environment.

Addictions are ritualized ways to avoid letting go of our automatized patterns. They cloak the terror of early rejection and abandonment. They arise out of our feelings of shame. They are means paradoxically of both excitation and numbing. Addictions generate an illusion of belonging. Through obsessive and compulsive focusing, addictions allow for a false sense of structure and meaning and deter the passage through developmental transitions or life's traumas.

If the environment does not affirm and welcome the emotions displayed during transitions, there is a disconnection and disavowal of the named world and our feelings about our world. We do not have a sense of belonging and shame arises in

our gut. We learn poorly if at all how to pass through changes, limitations, losses. We do not learn the grieving process. Addictions allow us to hide from and in our disconnections and our disavowal because of our inability to process and experience change. Addictions deter natural psychosocial development further inhibiting belonging to the greater group and reinforcing shame. Not belonging becomes self fulfilling and shame, self promoting.

From Alice Miller: "That probably greatest of narcissistic wounds - not to have been loved just as one truly was - cannot heal without the work of mourning. It can either be more or less successfully resisted and covered up . . . , or constantly torn open again in the compulsion to repeat." Miller. 1990. p.

NOTE 5 (from page 13)

I have defined shame as the emotion that arises when our sense of belonging is threatened. Through self-conscious monitoring, shame is the experience of a conflict between learned social and personal acceptance and natural responses.

In a facilitating environment, the child's natural unfoldings are allowed and shaped along an acceptable cultural path. Models are introjected as mirrors. Self-conscious monitoring labors to maintain behavior within the acceptable bounds of social expectations.

With a rigid, inconsistent and threatening early learning environment, facets and expressions of a child's natural development are disdained and prohibited. In disallowing an aspect of the person, there is no model. The body learns to disavow itself. The flow of natural human development is fragmented. The sense of belonging is under continual threat for fear of exposing our unacceptable features.

Because belonging is a biological imperative, the human mind counteracts this danger by compartmentalizing those socially objectionable aspects of ourselves. As an example, a child's expression of anger may be proscribed by the social environment and/or the anger model provided may not be congruent with our developing self image.

The bodily experience and subsequent expression of anger becomes inhibited as part of the early automatized patterns. To experience our self as whole we still need a sense of belonging. To accomplish this we isolate the prohibited component of our being into its own sphere. We 'inference' it. This bounded and isolated part I call a 'group-of-one'. A 'group-of-one' has its own rules, its own associations of meaning, its own energy, its own pathways to expression in our body and in our social interaction. (What doesn't come out straight comes out sideways!)

The 'group-of-one' is a metaphor for the sense of isolation arising from internal disconnection and the subsequent sense of shame. The 'group-of-one' is a component of the self that adaptively needs to be psychically isolated from ongoing social activity and awareness in the face of environmental demands. It is a natural defense mechanism for the maintenance of social well-being; the protective response to shaming. It is the path the developing self needs to take.

The self-focused, self-generated 'group-of-one' is based on poorly developed and halted emotional growth. Because of its early formation and insulation, the I in the

'group-of-one' remains emotionally immature and has poor flexibility. The energy, breadth and boundary permeability of the 'group-of-one' are dependent on the degree of shaming, personal temperament, the social environment, developmental timing, and place.

These isolated aspects of the self, 'groups-of-one', are powerful forces in maintaining the automatized patterns. In essence they are embedded in the learned ways to be and do. Their experience and expression represent highly charged dangers to belonging. Consequently, they are even less accessible to awareness and self-reflection.

NOTE 6 (from page 13)

The nexus of belonging and self-consciousness is a motive force in social evolution. When a society is doing 'well' guilt is the mode of operation. Guilt is felt when a person breaks a rule and is given information on how to repair the 'damage' done by breaking the rule. By following the social prescription for atoning (at one), the person knows how to belong and continues to belong. In knowing and accepting the rules, the existing greater meanings and structures (family patterns, society, culture) are reinforced and continued. When a society is stable then the guilt process underlies, maintains, and reifies the traditions.

Where guilt is the primary mode, the individual proceeds through life's changes in prescribed ways. He remains embedded in his familial and cultural rules. These rules define the processes for meeting developmental transitions and ambiguities. The time and space of emergence are bounded by the culture either explicitly or implicitly. These transitions can certainly cause deep emotions. It is, however, dynamically different from the shame based transitions.

When a society is breaking down, when it is under physical and social ecological threat, adults have little or no sense of continuity. The confusions of changing values and threats to physical well-being undercut the social structures and meanings. These adults do not know how they belong. Not having their own human belonging needs satisfied, these adults have a poor ability to meet the emotional needs of their children. Their children develop a limited and poor sense of belonging. Traditions become fragmented and shame becomes the order (or disorder) of the day.

With shame as the underlying sense, the person is an outsider and does not easily go through developmental transitions. There are no socially approved road maps available. The isolated, alienated, internal components, I have called 'groups-of-one', are defended and immature. The outsider has poorly learned, if at all, that transitions can be made safely and with social support. Yet living continues to put demands on the person, developmental tugs continue to confront and early adaptations continue to prove themselves discomfoting.

During social (ecological) crisis, this lostness, this alienation happens from family to family. As this snowballs within the society, shame becomes a ubiquitous feeling. Alienated individuals multiply geometrically hastening social breakdown.

Some of these people form associations of alienation that are narrow and inflexible because they arise out of their immature and defended positions; for example, street gangs, Klu Klux Klan and skin heads. There are those who retreat to the black and white of fundamentalism; there they find solace and belonging. Others explore new, modified or radical forms of structure and meaning seeking new ways of belonging. In our world, new age and self-help movements proliferate and search.

Within these gatherings or in solo, there are also those who face the dark night of the soul. Enter the emergency. They endure disengagement, disidentification, disorientation, and disenchantment. They see their reflection and their shadow. They endure their dismemberment and chaos. And they live with and objectify their earlier patterns and the experience of their emotions.

Leaving the no person land of emergence, leaving the dark night of the soul, these courageous sojourners rise with new forms of structure and meaning. Not those designed by the traditional setting but new ways of belonging, new ways of spirituality.

These persons can become beacons. They also can become dangerous to traditional ways and to those who are in retreat or disillusionment. They threaten made-meaning ways of belonging. They stand as a way and a demand to change; to evolve. This then becomes the tension for social evolution.

Amongst any of these sometimes peripheral if not isolated models of meaning and structure, life-giving forms do arise giving a pathway to new, more adapted ways of being; to new ways of belonging. This is a primary process in social evolution.

Guilt allows for first order change within the existing structures and meanings. (Watzlawick et al, 1974). The social use of guilt provides a somewhat fenced pathway that guides and channels the way to belonging, the way to pass through life's transitions, the way to spiritual unity.

Shame through the socially accumulating effects of 'groups-of-one' generates new forms of meaning and structure. Out of social breakdown, second order changes arise bringing new adaptations to the social and physical environment.

NOTE 7 (from page 15)

The creation myth in the Old Testament is a beautiful metaphor for the spiritual quest that self-consciousness brings to us. With the eating from the tree of knowledge, we come to know of ourselves. We see our nakedness. We are beside ourselves. We are banished from the garden. This is the ultimate not belonging. This is descriptive of the existential and illusory separateness that is particularly human. This has been called original sin.

Adam and Eve are exiled before finding and eating from the tree of immortality, eternal continuity. Humans are forced to face limitations, losses and death. The unfolding, evolving self can become and may continue to become more self-aware as we learn to pass through life's transitions and changes.

Not belonging with its painful feeling of shame is both bane and blessing. Shame is both hurtful and hurting, often destructive. Arising from our very human need

for belonging, shame can create new forms of belonging, supporting our survival and continuity.

In a relevant and soulful statement, John Lee Hooker, the blues singer and musician, said that the blues began when God told Adam and Eve to get out of the garden. Thus begins our search; a uniquely personal and human quest towards unity, towards soul.

NOTE 8 (from page 16)

The door is open in a broader way than ever before because of historical processes of alienation of the individual. When I say historical, I don't mean formal written history; I mean development of our species through our history.

In her book On Shame and the Search for Identity, Lynd searches early Greek and Biblical literary sources for the mention of shame. Her finding is that shame is connected to the concept of honor. Examining the contextual use of honor in the sources; an affront to or destruction of a person's honor in the earlier times affected not simply an individual's identity but, more importantly, the identity of his or her group. This is not to say that our ancestors were not self-aware or aware of personal boundaries, there is too much written evidence to the contrary. What it implies is that the self was nested into and identified with a greater, organic, social whole.

The domain of the self for prehistoric and even early historic humanity was configured beyond the bounds of the body. It included the extended family including ancestors, perhaps totem lifeforms and other aspects of the greater ecological setting. The internal dialogue of self-consciousness, as it sometimes is today, was attributed to external powers.

Historically, the divine and godly have become more and more abstract. The "divine" has become abstracted from the sensible and the sensual; from the immediate and the ecological. Symmetrically, a corresponding isolation of the self has ensued to the point modern society finds itself in today. Generated by geometrically increasing populations and greater social (ecological) stresses, this process shows an increasing tendency towards social disruptions of greater magnitude and greater frequency.

Baumeister traces the recognition and development of personal identity in the western world beginning slowly in the middle ages and accelerating down to the present (Baumeister, 1986). Together, the works of Lynd and Baumeister, imply a gradual historical separation of the person from his or her organic physical and social environment. This isolation and perhaps alienation altered our human relationship with both the physical and social environment.

A brief example of this may help to clarify. For 99% of the time we have been on the face of the earth we were hunters and gatherers. This is the social and physical environment into which we evolved. It is this social and physical environment that has been changing for the last ten thousand years.

If the !Kung of the Kalahari desert are any example, life originally for us was quite different. They spend about 15 hours a week getting what they need for sustenance. The rest of the time is spent in play. Their children are nursed on

demand as the composition of mother's milk would seem to indicate. This allows protection and bonding and deters conception until the child is weaned at 4 years of age.

Children are cared for by a wide age range of people freeing the parents from the stress of constant care and providing multiple role models for the developing child. Children learn toilet training in a natural way and have no chores until into their teen years. People live intimately with their organic environment as a part of the web. Individuals, families, clans are all embedded in the greater natural family of their particular piece of the earth.

Some 10,000 years ago population pressures brought on a tremendous revolution in energy use. The agricultural revolution occurred in a short span of time worldwide. The new agricultural technology added human labor to the energy of the sun and soil. And it changed human communities. Women could not nurse as long, children were born closer together, permanent housing arose putting walls between people, toilet training within walls was more demanding, and children literally became sources of energy.

In a relatively few generations, we have adapted to the agricultural revolution, to the industrial revolution, to human communities growing in a short hundred years to cities of megasize, to access to sources of energy that emulate the sun itself. In the process, the individual self has been shaken out of the fold and become more highlighted. As painful and potentially violent as this alienation is, each individual has the possible opportunity for developing mature self-reflection and a personal spirituality.

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