• Mind • Emotion • Body • World • Time •

by

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Sonoma State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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MASTER OF ARTS

in

Psychology

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Purpose of the Study:

This study sets out to offer itself as an accessible primer for the new student of the history of consciousness who wishes an introduction to past, present, and future philosophy, psychology, and consciousness by way of five forces which appear to significantly shape what consciousness has been, what it is, and what it may become.

Procedure:

The study is based in the author's reflections on meaning and begins with speculation about consciousness among life's species long before the human, long before mammals. The study briefly considers the sweep of historical thinking and consciousness from the earliest times up through the present. It then considers five facets in the consciousness of the present and raises a question about who inhabits the now in which we live. The study finally considers possible shapes of psychological characteristics of the future.

The study uses five methods to make the reading more accessible to new students of the subject.
Findings:

The study hypothesizes that consciousness has existed from very early in the history of life on the planet. It observes very early evidence of human activity and describes mind-emotion-body-world-time aspects of consciousness which can be deduced from limited evidence. It reviews a number of stairsteps in the development of thought and comprehension in the period leading up to recent movements in thought. The study explains that mind, emotion, body, world, and time are five facets of a single integrated experience of life. The study hypothesizes that conscious life surrounds us in the present and that much of the body referred to in the Gaia hypothesis exhibits consciousness. The study completes its journey through time by showing that fifteen characteristics of psychological process in the present are actually good candidates for continuation into the near and remote future and can significantly help humans develop and maintain a viable future.

Chair:________________________
Signature

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Acknowledgements

This project was first conceived in Dr. Art Warmoth's History of Consciousness psychology class, Spring Semester 1993. Students of the Spring Semester 1994 History of Consciousness psychology class used this book-in-progress as one of the class texts and made generous and useful assessments about its use in their own initial study of the subject.

This study is dedicated to all those in the past who have reflected on the nature of consciousness, to all those who do so in the future, and to the future's children who learn to make their lives whole.
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Some Things This Book Hopes To Be

The author seeks to think and to feel his own personal way through the times and issues he reflects upon and to report on what he sees in a way to invoke the reader's emotions as well as mind.

Although it is primarily written in a somewhat logical, sequential prose form, it is not entirely an essay. A number of the author's poems are included at those places in the text where a particular poem has the chance to make a point or invoke an experience better than the prose form.

In a separate publication for students in the SSU Spring Semester 1994 class, Psychology 463, History of Consciousness, the author has included written pieces on which his role has been that of editor, one by His Holiness The Dalai Lama and the other by the Reverend Thomas Berry. These are to be read in conjunction with this book and are included as an appendix.

This book before you sets out to offer itself as one idiosyncratic primer for the new student of the history of consciousness who wishes an introduction to five "forces" which appear to primordially shape what we have been, who we are, and who we can become. It starts with speculation about consciousness among life's species long before the human, long in fact before mammals at all. Coming in from considering the past, the book takes one individual walk through five facets of the present and the intriguing question of who inhabits the now in which we live. The book then stands at the doorway between present and future and ponders. Finally, it speculates about certain mental characteristics of the future.

Mind, emotion, body, world, and time are five different faces of a single integrated phenomenon, a web of which we are made and within which we live and breathe and have our being.
Mind • Emotion • Body • World • Time

A Personal Reflection on Five Forces in Psychology and Learning

Speculations about conscious life from the beginning of sentient time to its end

In Essays and Poetry

Brief, Pitiful
Idiosyncratic
Introductory Chartings
And Ruminations
About Five Forces
Through Time in the
History of Psychology
in Consciousness

One Introduction
for Students of the
History of Consciousness

Skip Robinson
The time and concept chart used in conjunction with this book has been developed in consultation and collaboration with Thomas Joseph, Ph.D.
"ontogeny recapitulates philogeny"

Before our spine grows, during the second month of our life in pregnancy, our fetus grows a cartilagenous spine called a notocord, just like the cartilagenous spines in all fish; we human fetuses at that embryonic point also have gills.

Above Portuguese Beach on the Pacific just North of Bodega Bay

the sun is down we are in afterlight
white water foams up around eighteen black rocks just off the coast

here at Portuguese Beach, the sound of their meetings a continuous soft rising and falling roar; a pickup goes by on Highway 1,

which winds along the cliffs above the water; the trailer the pickup is towing is empty; motor hums level, tires a soft hiss. Bodega sailed

into the bay sometime around 1775 and invested in two acre plots which have retired him, so he's writing post-modern novels in the
countryside, green all around, above San Jose, Costa Rica, sky all blue. Here the blue waves and sky, white foam out from this beach,

ancient gray cliffs forty feet high, the beach sand a dark gray as if basalt had been pulverized long before Bodega and his crew

came slicing sails full and billowing around this tossing emerald green turn; we swim we swim we swim; we slide through the water

we see it all from the point of view of an air-breathing fish on land we swim we swim

Bodega stares out across the moving waters, the leaping white foam, writes down a first word

The ocean says it is all
a kind of swimming
Mind-Emotion-Body-World-Time

A Personal Reflection on Five Errors in Psychology and Learning
Mind  Emotion  Body  World  Time

A Personal Reflection on Five Forces in Psychology and Learning

Brief, Fitful  Idiosyncratic  Introductory Chartings  And Ruminations About Five Forces Through Time in the History of Psychology in Consciousness

speculations about conscious life from the beginning of sentient time to its end

with some poems
The chapter on future edge is an edited version of a speech given to 
the first-day intensive of a year-long study of non-profit 
management by mid-career Interns at the Institute on Non-Profit 
Management, University of San Francisco, 1992.

The poem "George IV Prepares for War • Om Namo Bhagavate 
Muktanandaya" was issued as a Special Supplement by the magazine 
Poetry USA just before the Gulf War broke out. It was audiotaped by 
Allemagne Productions and broadcast over KPFA, Berkeley, and by 
RFPI, a world short-wave radio station on the grounds of the U.N. 
University for Peace, San Jose, Costa Rica.

Some of the poetry included here has been published in The Eye 
Staring Straight into Mine or in small periodicals, or is to be 
included in When Einstein, Dreaming, Rides A Beam of Light, which 
will be published in 1994.
About the author

Skip Robinson teaches, writes, and finishes his graduate work in psychology at Sonoma State University. He is planning doctoral work with the Saybrook Institute. He also maintains a consulting practice for public jurisdictions and non-profits and lives in the country above Bodega Bay.


His published books of poetry include *The Eye Staring Straight into Mine* and *Standing on a Whale Fishing for Minnows*. He has just completed a new book of poetry, *When Einstein, Dreaming, Rides a Beam of Light*, which will be published in 1994. His poetry and essays have also been published in a number of periodicals.

He acted as editor of the book of readings, *Student Community Involvement*, about the philosophical basis underlying student social action, and *Walking Together Away From the Brink*, a Ram Dass-Daniel Ellsburg dialogue about some roots of the nuclear and ecological crises, done in conjunction with what became a TV series.

He has been primary consultant to two television series, *How Then Shall We Live?* and *Wordcast: Poetry*, and has consulted on two television works currently in development on compassion, inner work, and social action.

He has taught at the University of San Francisco, the University of California, Berkeley and San Francisco Extensions, the University of Missouri, Seattle University, Merritt College, and in Bay Area public and private schools. He was the President of the Board of California Poets in the Schools, the nation's largest poet-teacher residency program. He has done research and teaching on foundation grants from the San Francisco Foundation, the Vanguard Foundation, the Meadows Foundation, the Foundation for Social Innovation - USA, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
Jack Kornfield tells the following story in his new book, "A Path With Heart..."

"Once when Kalu Rinpoche, an eighty-year-old Tibetan master visited in Boston, he was taken to the New England Aquarium, which is filled with colorful sea creatures. Kalu Rinpoche enjoyed seeing all these wonderful forms of life, and before he left each tank, he would tap very softly on the glass because he could not read the sign in English that told him not to. Then he would recite a sacred mantra, 'Om Mani Padme Hum,' and peer into the tank for one last time before moving on to the next tank of creatures. After some time a student asked him, 'What are you doing, Rinpoche, when you tap on tanks like that?' and he smiled and said, 'I'm trying to get the attention of the beings within, and then I bless them that they, too, may be liberated.' "
"But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; And the fowls of the air, and they shall teach thee; Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee."
Mind
Emotion
Body
World
Time
A Brief Introduction

The gaia and the cosmos

This small book briefly considers five main forces which propel our lives and the consciousness in and surrounding us. It touches on the conscious early glimmerings of life; it looks at who inhabits the present, at our ecological crossroads, and at the near and distant future.

Before psychology as a field there was the psychology inherent in life - of whatever stage, level, and inhabitation. By inherent psychology, I mean the individual's thought, feeling, and choice-making by which every organism chooses what it can about how to live its life.

By "the consciousness ... surrounding us," I mean how surrounding us entirely is conscious life operating within incredibly vast numbers of life forms, most of which we never see.

Life forms even interpenetrate our own individual existences, coming in and going out with our breath, sweat, chemistry, blood, food. Our own consciousness is interwoven, coupled with other life in the environment within our every molecule and within the total web of life binding you and me to this planet's overall ocean of life. This ocean of life is a vast network in constant metamorphosis, pulsing and swirling through time, and upon which web and ocean of life we utterly depend for the basics which allow our life at all.

The cosmos within which all of us organisms live - plus every ancestor and every future life - is without end. Time is without end.
Space is without end. Within all this, life has begun and is continuing to consider its existence.

On only one planet are we positive that sentient (self-aware) life exists, at all. We speculate that life is widespread. But we cannot be sure. Earth life is all the life we know. By this recognition, we are reminded why life on this tiny, fragile world is so infinitely precious.

In our psychological living and contacts, we alive now bear much responsibility for the process by which life can continue and thrive.

As ecologically-economically-psychologically complex as our times are, we can if we choose have hope through which to act and a quietness within which to live, the present to be experienced here now, and, chugging along in the background behind the Wizard of Oz's curtain, a relating with nature and action over the long haul consistent with a habitable, steady-state, recycling, conserving vibrant future for all life for all the future.

What is our own capacity for change? What is our capacity for self-healing and for other-healing? Who are our predecessors and who are our potential heirs?

We can learn.

A long future at peace with ourselves, each other, and with the creatures of the earth, after all.

One gaia indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Past-present-future

There was past. Here is present. As we look at it now, the future of life, of sentience, is obscured in fog among mirrors. But what if we imagine?

How do all the species move? Toward where? Can and will we evolve enough (meaning what?) in time? Will we develop more foresight capacity? Will it matter?
John Seed reminds us that we are that very species that was a fish in the ocean and developed limbs to climb out of the water and walk upon the land. Such a species, says Seed, is capable of miracles.

What characterizes the past-present-future? What, in spite of our grasping, will help us see?

Theater

Imagine that this book briefly puts past, present, and future on a stage.

The "past", charts and echoes, hovering, at the left side of the stage (as you would view it from the audience), slightly off the ground, in the air, in fog generated backstage, with a cranking machine - from ropes (hanging down from the rafters above the stage);

then the "present" right in the middle of the stage (the only real stuff there, by the way);

then the "future" to the right side of the stage, a kind of gossimer (a scrim, a gauze curtain) hanging down, the right-most parts of the future entirely hidden behind the heavy green far right-stage curtain, patterned with green leaves and suns.

Consciousness through time

Most briefly, this manuscript squints momentarily at the march/dance (and swim and flutter) of conscious life forward through time, through some periods for which we have landmarks.

The manuscript then touches on moments during the last hundred plus years during which a movement calling itself psychology (study method on the "psyche", the mind) has focused and intensified the study of mind-emotion-body-world-time in ways different from and extending beyond general philosophy and other old and ancient methods, though tied to them all.

The present

When focused on the present, the manuscript considers these five main forces which propel lives and the consciousness in and surrounding us.
The future

The manuscript most briefly considers implications for a future, both near - at the coming turn of century and millineum - and farther along, speculating about extensions/expansions of currently operating psychological forces and energies by the time life reaches 10,000 A.D. together, one family, at peace, renewable, steady state.

The manuscript ends with brief notes about the time 250,000 A.D. and 3 million A.D., at which time the last of our-current-generation-produced poisonous radiation is now estimated to have expired, they hope and pray. At that long-from-now new day dawning, our negative karma <from the impact of our generation's radiation and other poisons> will hopefully finally be at an end and this gaia we love may begin a new birth of freedom.
Chapter 1

The Past
Our Earth's
pre-human and human past
and a note on
who is the present

From the beginning of sentient time until now

Hindus speak of time going back infinitely, categorized into immense Yugas and Kalpas of time during which the universe organizes anew. While we can imagine this, we have very strong evidence that at some incredible moment perhaps fifteen billion years ago, after matter had compressed to an insufferable point, a cataclysmic explosion apparently blasted out with such monumental force that it abruptly flung our universe into the convulsive birth of being.

Given this material heritage, our story of life begins on our own planet circling our own sun billions of years after this first "big bang". Things have cooled and congealed. Our earth has its own proto-atmosphere.

Imagine that you are standing in a chemistry laboratory at Harvard a few years ago. The primary researcher has set up an experiment. In a large sterile glass container he has carefully set up what he considers to be the physical conditions immediately before organic life began on our planet millions and billions of years ago. Rocky soil. Liquids. Proto-atmosphere - more methane, less oxygen, etc. He gets ready. He releases a switch which shoots a small bolt of lightning through the chamber. He waits. You wait with him. After a long time, he checks. Simple life is there.

We don't know for sure how life started. But it could have started this way. When this experiment is carried out, if the experiment is
allowed to continue for a couple of weeks, researchers find our building blocks, amino acids, have arrived.

At a fundamental level, everything begins only with first life.

(If that experiment is not to the point, perhaps amino acids blew down with a meteor from the sky, accidental gift from another world. New volcanic findings offer yet another scenario. In whatever kind of genesis, we have arrived.)

We don't know what early life form first looked out and saw. But (in our perhaps 5 billion years of co-evolution, our perhaps 150 millions in the rain forests) we did look out and see and be confused and amazed. Imagine life's very first sights.

"Ontogeny recapitulates philogeny"

Ontogeny is embryological development; philogeny is the study of the characteristics, appearance, structure of the life forms, of the fish, reptiles, mammals, and all.

Each human fetus goes physically through a number of earlier developmental stages (starting as a single-celled being) until developing into the fully human toward the end of the fetal stage. As an example, before the fetus' spine forms, a "notochord" spine forms. This is a cartilagenous spine which the fetus outgrows into our full spine bones as the "notocord" spine disappears, as the bones form into place. Cartilagenous spine is the spine of the our obvious cousin, the fish. Where we came from.

In the third month of the mother's pregnancy, the fetus has gill clefts in the neck, where fish gills would be. Rarely, they are even still present at birth. Where we came from.

All ancient sentient history prior to humans

Imagine what we would find if we directed speculation on the meaning of brain components' relative antiquity and character. What if we looked at the sequence of brains (and brain configurations) we (as one kind of representative species of sentient life) have had - the basal ganglia, reptilian brain, cerebral cortex
pre-frontal lobes? What if we were to deduce some dimensions of pre-human sentient life history from this inquiry? What can our brain roots tell us? What if we traced the earlier brain types backwards toward deep utterly antique recesses of sentient time?

I talked to Dr. David Watts. He shook his head gently up and down. "The 'old' brain," he said.

In the lower brain, the reticular activating system sends up volleys of activating stimuli, as needed. When it stops, you sleep. The basal ganglia guide respiration, blood pressure, heart beat, pulse rate, bladder and rectal signals - a biochemical feedback loop.

Reptilian brain - early. Rapid eye movement. A sudden light flash causes an involuntary turn of the head and rapid eye movements to occur. It's down there deep. Terror. Rage. Hunger. The antique involuntary fight or flight or feed.

The past moves toward the present. Each sentient generation raises its young, provides the nest from which the future can emerge.

Imagine ancient sea sentience. Imagine the brain-nature of their watery curiosity about light rays coming down from above.

Earth's earliest life self-aware

I imagine that, broadly defined, even simple life forms were and are self-aware. (Continue to remember that "science" has not proved the contrary at all.) Why not assume <and safely test for, as we will> simple life to be conscious and aware of life, rather than "sentience-less machines". Such a "machine-only" premise has no more basis than what I have just asserted.) I believe that, no matter how subtly, both simple and complex life forms may strive to live with meaning and may have the basis for the experience of terror and glory. I believe they do not wish to suffer or die.

What was consciousness like for the simplest pre-humans in the beginning of sentient (self-aware) time? Has life been "self-aware" from the beginning? What perceptions guided the earliest life forms beneath the sea? What did it feel like to experiment with looking up and coming up out of the water onto the land?
To Amy, leaving for college; I think of you as

I'm driving the Volkswagen up
the Ashby hill, passing the tower of the
white Claremont Hotel, rising above where
the Avenue becomes Tunnel Road.

Shafts of strong late afternoon sun's
light fall down through the open sunroof
and paint bright white the turning wheel,
white my hands upon it.

Suddenly, I am thinking how the sun must
have looked to the original animals on
their first days below the waters upon
the earth, how they must have long looked up

through the deep and ancient waters and seen
something light flickering above, how, on that first
morning as they climbed, one foot after another,
up onto the dry land, how the sun must have warmed them,

how they must have felt the dazzling yellow above shined
just for them (and they were right), how they
saw the grasses raise their green arms to the light.
I find tears now streaming down my face. I am crying

loudly as I wind up the hill. Sun light floats in this
front window. Bright green bushes flow by on either side.
You begin in your mind to pack with your favorite things the
first suitcases. Some birds rise from the tree branches

and begin to wing toward you with white flowers in their beaks.
Other birds, bright green, blue, red, begin singing for you in the
tall trees, for it is morning and, again, the first day of the world.
These life forms

Let us imagine simple life forms. Imagine some of the earliest-simpest. Imagine that their evolved simple progeny are still with us and operating all these millions of years later, a pyramid of life forms as one.

Imagine how much sentience (self-awareness) is operating altogether in this current moment - on this planet - including all the non-human but conscious life forms.

Think about the perceptions and self-awareness of the simplest creatures, as they swim, crawl around and fly. See them as the foundation of a vast live mountain of life forms - all seeking food and meaning - all alive at once right now - even as you read this word.

Upon the foundation of simple creatures that you can imagine, consider the self-awareness of these creatures. There are many levels.

What is it like, in your mind's-eye?

Add to this your sense of the self-awareness of the most complex non-human creatures. (Remember that 99.6% of the chimp's DNA is the same as humans.) Using sign language taught her by her scientist-friends, KoKo, the gorilla, tells her human colleague one day: "Gorilla Fine Animal."

Then, add us humans.

What total do you come to? What vast networks and continuums?

Let's play that the Audubon Society did the first census of all living creatures on the planet right now. What total life would it be?

What is life like this minute for all sentience on this blue and green planet?

Life surrounds you and me at many levels, many levels in every moment in every direction. Imagine that every single life around you is magnificent and holy - and awake.
We don't know what early life form first looked out and saw. But (in our perhaps 5 billion years of co-evolution, our perhaps 150 million years in the rain forests, as John Seed speculates it) we did it. Somewhere deep down in our not-yet-discovered DNA memories, we probably remember it all.

What shall we do with this eden out of which we are emerging? In our best renewable deep ecological visions for our future, can we clean up what we have dirtied, remerge with the earth's natural and beautiful order intact and learn/remember how to be a long-term good and sustaining family member among our fellow creatures, all family of the grand biospheric web in which (in-common) we share?

the gods are in the deer

the gods are in the deer
because at nights

the deer walk silently to the
end of the grass on the promotory above the beach

and stare out, in their own ways, at the ocean
the gods are in the deer

because the deer have never sneered
because they live and feel and run in silence

the gods are in the deer
because when a child deer

is out walking through the grass
with the family, three family members

walk beside the child, on three sides of it, keeping eye on all directions. the gods, in silence, are in the deer
Ancient - human

When I was a child, we were told that humans may have established themselves 4000 years ago, at most perhaps 10,000 years ago. Everything before that was animal.

These days, because scientists have found clear evidence of the remains of campfires three million years old, we now surmise that our very distant ancestors spent time sitting around those campfires at night millions of years ago. Can you imagine that so long ago? Can you feel it - feel yourself there looking up? How many human generations? Can you imagine your own lineage going back that far, already in early human form, thought, and feeling, late at night staring up at the stars.

What must these early people have thought about? Even then their brains must have been evolving, perhaps stimulated by the life and death need for successful hunting and gathering. How to deal with the day-to-day issues of family and pack, how to find, protect, and prepare safe food, how to prepare for winter, how to more adequately defend against animal attack, how to cope with illness, how to make sense of aging and death - on and on the issues must have occupied the minds of these early ones - challenging them continually and stimulating new synaptic links, new developments of mind.

We can speculate that these early people felt feelings similar to our own. After all, we can see a range of feelings and early thinking in upper primates now. It seems reasonable to presume that these early humans were further developed than that then. It makes sense that happiness and sadness, anger and fear were emotional music they lived within. We can imagine the movement of energy through their sentient bodies. Can we fathom their emotional realm?

Their bodies made the campfires, walked and ran the hunt, reached for earth bounty to gather, sought out mates, made love, procreated and raised their young, who led forward through time they must
have measured from the sun and moon, day and season, gestation, inexorable, each generation shocked by how brief life has been. Self-awareness, however defined, dealt with a culture of life, as complex and compelling in its own way as ours. How would our personal lives, family lives, and community lives be under the spare conditions of three million years ago?

Can we imagine? As time passed, how did thinking, customs, balance of feelings change? How can we begin to think about and empathize with these early ones? Our family comes forward from the dawn of sentient time. These are grandmothers, grandmothers, family, in just the same way as we think about recent generations before us. Recent grandfolk are a chain link we can almost touch; perhaps we have their pictures even if they were dead before we were born. Grandfolk from the dawn of time, although they are in shadow, are a link in the chain of our being just as concrete as recent links, and without which we would not be. If we close our eyes or if we look in the mirror we can sometimes see the ancient ones, their memories stored in our genes.

I stop for a minute from this writing, on the telephone call my daughter 75 miles away, tell her I'll take her out to breakfast tomorrow morning. I'll get on the road about 7:30 am - whizzing along at 50 and 65. How far away from our ancestors. I mention my writing to my daughter. She says maybe then I could have ridden an antelope to her, so far away.

Over recent decades, in Africa, the Leakey family has found one early human fossil after another, from skull to other body parts, to other artifacts, stretching the period of the dawn of human back farther and farther. "Eve" is the name of a young female whose skull they recently found - over two million years old, they estimate. This gives a concreteness we may need to launch our imaginations back to early family.

In Europe, the oldest known European human fossil so far is dated about 500,000 years ago. John Noble Wilford recently noted: "In research on a poorly understood early period of human evolution in Europe, Spanish palentologists have found evidence that archaic people were beginning to resemble Neanderthals as early as 300,000 years ago, long before the time they have been clearly recognized as a distinct people in the fossil record."
It is black dark out. I go out to get today's mail and the paper. Since I live in the country now, I have to walk down the road in the blackness. I look up and see the stars, imagine I am back then and that rather than a warm house to return to, I imagine I don't know what that is and know cold at night better than warm. In the neighborhood of country here in the present, we have a fox, rabbits, deer. I imagine under this dark sky, bright stars, I am walking knowing I cannot see myself becoming prey, may not see the stalker until its eyes shine to near for me to run. But mail is in the country mail box; newspaper is in its tube; it is the present. Yet, something in me feels echoes of midnight past beyond words.

The Lasceau caves

The cave walls of Lasceau in France tell a 26,000 year old story. Up on the cave walls, multi-colored bison and other animals run, flex their muscles, pause, as if they suddenly become aware of the cave painters or us. Without question, these human cave painters already showed a masterful artistic aesthetic, highly developed artistic body skill. When we imagine very old times, we needn't see only hunting. The Lasceau walls tell of love of beauty.

In America, our scientists have discovered human habitation sites between 12,800 and 50,000-years-old. There is heated controversy over the evidence of the older sites but a growing dialogue toward agreement about the 12,000 year old evidence at "Clovis". The trail is bringing us concrete evidence of earlier humans and their ways.

15,000-year-old Pacific Ocean cliff site

High on a cliff in the Pacific Northwest is a relatively flat area of some size standing on which one sees the Pacific Ocean churning far below against the base of the cliff. Just offshore, waves hit the big rocks jutting up above the water throwing the waves' whitecaps spray high up into the air; this white changes into fine mist and disappears; new waves boom against the rocks and the cycle begins again. It is here that searchers recently found a very old human burial site which they were able to date at about 15,000 years ago. Uncovered, in a thick 15,000-year-old circle around the remains, the searchers found a ring of flower petals. The burial mound set above the ocean touched my mind; the flowers from loved ones touched my heart, for here, to me, begins the unmistakable evidence of human love.
When I first met with Randall Starkey, M.D., the neurologist, I asked him about the evidence in the structure of the human brain to suggest our human and pre-human evolutionary history. On the subject of emotion, he described how the limbic system, the seat of the emotions, appears ancient and is found in much simpler creatures whose ancestors have been feeling life on earth for vast time going back.

We can sit at this Pacific Ocean spot high on the cliff, look out at the ocean with the eyes of this dead person's loved ones, how the day is exquisitely beautiful even as it is filled with deep sadness. We can lay the flowers out with our hands around our loved one.

We lay the yellow, blue, red, and white petals near the unmoving body, we can connect the circle of flowers both forward to us writing and reading this and our own rituals of love. If we stretch ourselves, we can; and we can also connect this deep sadness at the loss of a loved one back into past times, ancient beyond reckoning: we can feel ourselves as older, simpler life forms with whom we didn't, until now, feel family kinship. Now we do. We have all loved and lost those we loved. For aeons back into the mists, sitting with the dead must have knitted together the community of mourning. It must have reminded the mourners through all time and through all life forms of their limitations and of their own mortal ends.

At one level, everything begins with family and family love. Everything begins with a knowledge of ends.

As we return to the cliffside 15,000 years ago and sit back down, we can look around us at that wind-blown clearing, imagine how ancient our family of feeling is, and watch the ocean before us disappearing beyond the horizon and leaping toward us in the whitecap spray flying up for an instant high into the air.

Scandanavia - 10,000 years ago

In recent years, researchers have found the foundation remains of small groups of houses together and related artifacts. When I heard of this, I could intuit the cogent thinking process which must have gone into these buildings, to give the foundations the capacity to last 10,000 years. I could also see in these foundations that, because hunter-gatherers would not be building such permanent
structures, the agriculture and trade bases of community must have been successfully advancing at that time. Evidence is also growing that the city of Jerico in the Middle East was taking root at that time. So, after staggering time distance of developing consciousness, mind was now digging long-term material and symbolic foundations for the body and community to be safe and to grow.

Maslow reminds us: "Assured safety permits higher needs and impulses to emerge and grow towards mastery." These foundations appear to me such a pivotal turning point. Rather than perpetuating the ephemeral floating over the surface of the earth, the human began to settle down and by settling down could begin to grow up.

At one level, everything begins with putting down foundations.

5000 years ago

In Latin America, four- to five-thousand-year-old Mayan astronomical observatories stand silent in the hot mid-day sunlight. At the solstice, in England north of London, an ancient Druidic astronomical structure, Stonehenge, catches and focuses the sun's rays precisely among its stones.

It should not be surprising that an outgrowth of the "settling in" process would be the development of written records. Its immediate practical use in measuring and noting volumes of goods in trade and recording trade and civil agreements answers what would have been a compelling need. But, as is true in so much of life, tools developed for practical use may be turned upward to the use and needs of the mind and soul. So the primitive writing developed around 8000 B.C. became coherent around 3500 BC in a script related to Sumerian.

Among our very earliest records is The Book of the Dead inquiring into the fate of the person after death. As Avey puts the first problem: "As the individual's destiny is dependent upon his conduct in this life, the question 'What ought I to do?' is of paramount importance and has application in both the social and the individual senses." The second problem is of human fate after death, a question undoubtedly asked back in time, perhaps to our family sitting around that campfire three million years ago. Both these questions are, being asked in writing 5500 years ago, utterly tangible to us, not speculation but concrete. We can read the translation of their
words. The questing of the human mind, the asking of the huge questions, emerges from the shadows and engages us directly. Our bonds of family with them fall into place. Yes, these are our kin.

Without doubt, our human family's quest after the immense questions is proven to have begun.

Records of the priest of Seneferu, burial stones of kings in the Mayans, Ptahhotep, Babylonian and Nippurian tablets, the Gilgamesh Epic, the Admonitions of Ipuwer, and on and on -- dialogue, exhortations, letters about the infinite issues appear one after another. A quantum leap in dialogue was taking place. In the 5000-year-old Malini Vijaya Tantra we are invited to join all:

105. "Enter the sound of your name and, through this sound, all sounds."

In these earliest of preserved and so-far-discovered written records, mind has cast out its nets, hidden by such emotions as fear, love, and awe; in the early written speculations, we can see mind and emotion directing the body in the world. The quests have clearly been set in motion, spurred on by the ticking call of time.

At one level, everything starts with the writing down of words.

The 5000-year-old astronomical observatories lying silent in Latin America offer very concrete proof of sophisticated mind work on the nature of the sky and stars, and by implication the nature of the mind. The ancient Hindu masters imagined utterly vast time and utterly vast space, beyond reckoning, such that only symbolic stories could point toward the vastnesses outside, paralleled by vast spaces inside the human which were equally part of the search going on.

Cultures in Greece and the East were increasingly recording their reflections on paper, creating a growing stream of words, exponentially increasing toward the avalanche of words and concepts that we know.
Socrates

Plato's stories of Socrates (469-399 BC) show him questioning with unique power, "seeking the conceptions which are common to the positions of those who disagree", when he reportedly said "the unexamined life is not worth living", he identified mind in the "examined life" as the only basis for full human life, and thinking well as life's central virtue.

At one level, everything starts with the examined life.

Plato and Socrates philosophize on and on, in our readings, about the nature of reality - Plato assuming that all reality was ultimately already inside you, if you could only apprehend it, in great abstract Platonic forms, which are the perfect abstract versions of thoughts.

Part of the time, Aristotle began to directly explore experiences, as his theories arose.

Pagan scientists and Eastern experimenters began work early in proto-empirical fashions, followed by proto-chemist astrologers whose observation glasses, while still foggy with the mists of preconception, began to develop the rituals which could develop later into more precise and measured experimentation.

The crude empirical quest would eventually lead directly to science.

The Allegory of Plato's Cave

Metaphorically, in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," we sit down in the cave of existence next to a man who is fascinated by the images of events flickering before him. He is transfixed with watching. After a while, he becomes aware of others sitting there with him watching in interesting flickers in front of them. He turns. He finds that everyone is face forward watching a wall on which all the flickers are projected. He sees that, at the back of what appears to be a cavern they are in, administrators of the experience have a fire going, in front of which they move their hands, creating the flickering images on the wall of the cave everyone is watching in rapt fascination. In essence, having lost faith in the flickering on the wall he had heretofore believed to be reality, Plato's character gets up and goes to the back of the cave and begins insisting on going out and is escorted up a cavern stairway. When he reaches the surface,
he bursts out; but, because the brightness of the real sun is so totally greater than any mental "light" he has seen before, he is initially blinded by the light and must begin by crawling, flat on the ground, looking only at those ground phenomena directly below his shaded gaze. Only with time can he stand up and directly begin to perceive the incredible real world.

By such stories, we see that the ancients had already begun to systematically consider how mind can offer us illusion as well as reality and that we must condition mind and body through time to begin to accurately perceive world.

In one of the most significant moments in the history of world literature, this character, having at last perceived the truth about the nature of reality and having reached the direct experience of the beauties of this real world, realizes with the emotions of his heart that he chooses now to go back down the stairs into the cave again, no matter what it costs him, to try to tell the inhabitants of the cave, watching the flickerings on the cave wall, that there is a brilliant reality above them that they can grasp. He knows only dimly how hard people hang on to the "comfort zone" of their beliefs, how challenging of their beliefs may provoke disbelief and rage, knowing only that to be fully human he must seek to share this priceless prize.

At one level, everything starts at the door of Plato's Cave, one's mind-emotions-body awakening into the real world, into the time-abiding light.

Siddhartha Gautama

At almost exactly Socrate's time, and that of Lao Tzu and Confucius, and only the distance from Greece to India, I see a very old man walking quietly and slowly along a dusty Indian country road. He is talking with his followers as they slowly walk. They nod their heads and talk back and forth as they go.

He had been very beloved in his family, that of the ruler of an area. To protect him, his father, so the story goes, had not allowed him to see poverty, sickness, and death. As a young man, riding his horse out one day, he had seen an old man, one very ill, and a corpse. This had begun to awaken him to suffering and mortality.
As he came to understand that these conditions, suffering and mortality, were everywhere, he dedicated himself to understanding them and finding a way of liberation. To do so, he left family and headed for the woods and mountains to become a penitent hermit, a "sadhu" or holy man. For years he practiced all that was known to the holy of his day, seeking liberation but came away from each experience feeling unfulfilled and still enmeshed in suffering.

Finally, in utter determination bordering on despair, he sat down under a tree to meditate, vowing not to get up until he understood and was liberated.

He "awakened" (the term Buddha means "one who is awake") from his illusions and, rising from under the Boddhi tree, went out and was met by other sadhus. He told them: The cause of suffering is attachment (desire/craving/greed); as you give up attachment, suffering can fall away. Then he outlined methods for giving up attachment.

In his meditation alone and with his followers, he and they would practice and experience ways that one can let go of goals, desires, images, and perception and life itself to go to states of emptiness and finally non-states entirely, freed at last from all attachment.

Jack Kornfield and Joseph Goldstein remind us, in The Path of Insight Meditation, how he believed that, in addition to humans, all sentient beings live lives of meaning and are capable of enlightenment and that it is the human being's task to not harm them, family all, so they can seek out their lives in meaning, too. In so doing, he honors the entire line of the family of sentient life from its beginnings to the present. Since without the simpler, earlier life forms we could not possibly exist now, we are allowed through our mind-emotion-body to understand and repay our "existence" debt, through honoring and time, to the other life-forms of this world.

Finally, we can see the old man lying down in the grass by the side of the road, dying, whispering a last message to his friends: "Do not cling. Let it go."

After all these centuries, Buddha still sits, empty but in-being, under the Boddhi tree; and his teachings upon arising are as fresh as this moment's flower. His gaze penetrates mind and its activity down to the level at which all phenomena fade and disappear into a non-
materiality as contemporary as today's physics. (Can we see the yellow flower he hold up to us in his hand? Can we see it and his hand disappear into its subatomic waves which we now know are there <and not-there>? ) His recognition and articulation of the causes of suffering and their alleviation speak to us as directly as a beloved brother whispering in our ear as we weep for what we have lost.

At one level, everything begins with suffering; then everything begins with release.

Then everything begins with the empty. Then, in this moment, life is so vividly full.

2000 years ago - Jesus

At one level, everything begins with love.

Stories continue to emerge that perhaps during the period from age 30 to age 33, the young woodcarver from Nazareth may have gone on a long pilgrimage through Asia during which he may have stayed at old monasteries, as a hermit student and possibly teaching about even-then-ancient teachings. We probably will never be sure. A 2000-year-old story uncovered at an ancient monastery tells of a wise young man who had traveled there from far away. While this can be deeply evocative, it remains unsure.

Whether or not he studied there, whether or not he ever left the area of his birth, his teachings carry harmonies with those of the Buddha, Siddhārma Gautama, and those Indian wisdom traditions even older in time.

As a foundation stone, the Buddha had taught that everyone contains the "Buddha (awakened)-nature" within. Jesus taught that "the kingdom of God is within you."

One analyst reviewing the language Jesus spoke (Aramaic) considers the 'within' to be potentially 'among'. From these two exemplars, and from even more ancient Indian teachings, we find a perpetual reminder for us that within us, among us, around us, this moment is luminous, the moment (and the universe) wholly alive.
Thus, any instant, (this instant, the next instant, any instant) we may "wake up" to find clouds gone from mind, heart, soul, and the full light. A yellow flower is always right before our eyes.

Buddha talked of and practiced love and compassion - 'non-harming,' feeling about and acting toward the liberation of all sentient beings. Jesus said to love the universe's god with everything one has and to love one's neighbor as one's self. Both men understand that the boundaries between us are illusory, in crucial senses, both true and not true.

As Ram Dass puts it, part of the time we love each other; part of the time we realize we really are each other. Hanuman, a figure in Indian Hindu mythology and reality, loves his god Ram with all his soul; he serves him day and night, without ceasing. Speaking to Ram, Hanuman says: "When I am asleep I serve you; when I am awake I am you."

Jesus, the young man, may have spent a few years away from home. Whether this young carpenter visited Asian hermitages, whether he talked to the old teachers of Judaism, or whether he just sat and watched the clouds float by, his way of putting the old wisdom did not end with his blood.

Ancient religion and philosophy, perennial as the green spring grass, taking on the new into the old, through the centuries the new flashes alive.

A.D.

The sweep of history moves forward with the inevitability and force of big winter waves.

Fourteen hundred years ago, Mohammed was teaching the revelations he had had about the necessity for submitting to truth, the necessity for love and fairness, while Bodhidharma, the first patriarch of zen Buddhism, was trudging across India, the vivid intensity of each moment of his zen punctuating his walking step by step to China, to witness the zen revelations that have come to him, to begin Buddhism in China.

At one level, everything begins with revelation.
The Magna Carta shook the world as citizen leaders enforced their right to share power with the king, setting off chain reactions of citizen power which are still growing.

At one level, everything begins with the ongoing fight for citizen rights and guaranteed liberties.

What must have gone through Gutenberg's mind as he set up his moveable type printing machine? Could he have even dimly foreseen the revolution he was about to bring forth? Could he have imagined all humans as readers, cementing their power and facilitating their self-actualization? Could he have imagined that, by one of earth's grand serendipities, early printers with multilingual capacity then used his machine for producing newly rediscovered and translated classics from ancient Greece and Rome? And this learning and information revolution began exploding out in tandem with industrial and other revolutions.

The external revolutions were being matched by internal revolutions. Rene Descartes sat quietly day after day, trying to get his thought clear, precise, and right. He wanted to prove his own existence, which he was doubting. Was it all illusion? No one could satisfy him with the existing arguments. He sat inside his large cold fireplace area and quieted. On what could he count? Everything seemed potentially illusory. After days and days of contemplation, what came to him set a foundation for the Western mind ever since: "I think, therefore I am!" ("Cogito, ergo sum!")

Whatever else was illusion, the very fact that he could experience his own thinking gave him the stone on which he could build his world.

And this foundation stone in rational thinking proved equally strong for Newton in his *Principia*, which "imbued the succeeding age<s> with the idea that mechanical principles <revealed to the human mind> ruled the world" and for Francis Bacon who faced his thinking process and swept out "the ghosts of the mind" to think more clearly. What rational thought combined with what mechanical principles could give rise to a more precise way of thinking, testing, and working in the world, which kept evolving into the revolutions of modern science.
Thomas Hobbes' in *The Leviathan* imagined that before human social order and community were established, life tended to be "nasty, brutish, and short" and that to end that fear and vulnerability, humans had joined together into social compacts, trading a certain amount of freedom of choice in return for safety and reasonable reciprocity. He imagined how the social order could grow to help humans fulfill their capacities.

The early societies had often degenerated into singularly despotic rule which gave the leader nearly total power to destroy individuals as well as groups. Now, in the heady renaissance of thought and experimentation, the balance toward the potential for human freedom within the social order was beginning to assert itself.

Revolution after revolution across Europe in thinking, science, and citizen participation provided the kindling and logs which caught fire in the political revolutions in England, America, and France.

The great success of these social revolutions facilitated great advances in both science and social thinking. Quantum leaps in human development were coming into being, one after another through the years.

I imagine Wilhelm Wundt sitting in his lab. It is late 19th century A.D., a late winter afternoon. The night is just beginning to fall. He is completing a psychological experiment, about which he is particularly pleased. He reflects on early scientists, the Greeks, early physicians, the astronomers, the chemists, the inventors of the huge industrial engines now transforming manufacture and labor. He knew that the study of the human mind deserved as much. He knew that the scientific method he was applying with his testing could itself be studied and built upon. He sat back in his chair. He realized he would be late for dinner, but he wanted to finish this experiment. And this was so much of his life; dinner could wait. As Wundt worked into dinnertime, his lab was becoming the touchstone for psychology's scientific testing. Psychologists shake their heads and say, yes, in the 1870's, in Wundt's lab, the science of psychology was rooting and beginning.
In the 1890's, Freud, for his part, became more and more convinced that mental states he was experiencing in patients were not adequately understood or explained. His intuitions told him that the dreams he was hearing (and experiencing) were like a language asking to be heard. The human unconscious was beginning to swim up near the surface for him, like a huge brown fish treading water near the water's surface that is asking to be known. Over and over, Freud was risking rejection among his peers, but the issues were too compelling. Ideas of all sorts were clarifying in his mind; hunches were begging to be followed. He discovered how earliest child learning progresses step by developmental step and speculated on how child learning trauma and the tornadic pressures of early life could continue to profoundly affect the person into and through adulthood. And with his curiosusity, courage, and brilliance, the depth-seeking of modern psychology was being born.

At one level, everything begins with the diving into the depths of the mind.

Jung, and other protoges of Freud, began their own courageous explorations of the nature of mind and soul. Jung probed the unconscious and found a collective function which had primordial symbols of human nature and development, as well as a mysterious "collective" function which seemed to connect the species in a communion.

D. T. Suzuki came to this country as a young man attending, as an assistant to a famous Japanese Buddhist delegate, the World Congress of Religions in Chicago. By his translations and teachings, he became intimately involved with bringing zen into America's consciousness. Although a subsidiary chord of thought until recent decades in American thought, it's planting in the 1890's might be seen as like Boddhidharma walking toward China bringing zen, like light, as a simple gift to the future.

As the 20th century began, and approaching matters of psychology from an entirely different perspective, Professor Pavlov in Russia discovered that when a bell was rung when his dogs were being given their food that, after a while, when the bell was rung alone, the dogs would salivate anyway. Thus began the study of conditioning. Pavlov's studies interested B. F. Skinner at Harvard whose further researches in other methods of conditioning led to the the field of behaviorism, which forced psychological thinking to focus on
physiological connections and, in the process, virtually began capturing university study of psychology, with endless rat mazes in endless studies occupying endless graduate students who, themselves, began to grow tails.

Meanwhile, Einstein, as Jeremy Rifkin states it in *Algeny* (p. 184), "was the first to formalize the idea that what we perceive in the world around us depends on how fast we are going in relation to the things we are observing." This recognition of our relativity affected simply everything.

The explosion of the Russian Revolution brought into the social sphere the spirit of revolution circling the globe in dozens of other spheres. Convinced that individuals would gain the most in a worker’s state, and clear that peasants were starving for lack of bread in the old state, another chapter in the history of transformation was begun. That it was betrayed by the totalitarianism of Stalin and his successors does not take away from the vision and courage of those who began the experiment.

As the years passed, Wilhelm Reich was becoming clearer and clearer that the human body was built to be a flowing energy system up and down the spine (not unlike the Chi and the Chakras of the ancients) which had the capacity, when fully functioning, to stimulate a sense of full, vital life. A revolution in thought that had the capacity to confer greater intensity and fullness of experience to those whose bodies were able to experience the free flow. Too often, Reich found, life trauma and inhibition had caused the natural flow of the energy system to be stifled/blocked/bottlenecked, resulting in diminished experiencing. He developed methods for freeing the body from this slow strangulation.

At one level, everything begins with full energy flowing through the body.

A.S. Neill, who believed that every child would learn much better if given freedom in which to discover his or her deepest desires for learning, found Reich’s teachings directly applicable and began a life-long friendship and collaboration, focused on how humans learn to learn and to experience life fully.

Piaget was watching his children and began noticing how their perceptions seemed to work. He watched them closely, went off by
himself to reflect on what he'd seen, tried simple experiements with them to test whether he was right, then built what he was learning into a framework. He was finding that a child's perceptions and capacities have common developmental patterns, which can be predicted and observed, and which build, like blocks, into larger, more complex learning and knowing structures of thought and perception over developmental time. While children do not all develop at the same rate, they all share similar sequences of development. By understanding child development patterns and timing, educators can vastly increase the effectiveness of the formal schooling process, while lessening the pain inflicted on children by inappropriate expectations.

And then came Erik Erikson. Partly because Freud focused his intense analytic energy primarily on the volcanic turbulence of childhood, many of us have grown up believing that, as adults, our developmental processes are essentially completed. We carry the illusion that growing was for back then as a school kid, that when we graduated, we graduated. Then we would become adults, characterized by permanence and sameness and constancy. In 1950, Erikson published a milestone, Childhood and Society, which, although it shared with Freud (and Piaget) a focus on child development, took one chapter to focus on development through the life cycle. He saw eight stages of development necessary to full life meaning completion by the time of old age and death, some developmental challenges not appearing until the 40s, the 60s, or the 70s and 80s.

Abraham Maslow added the vertical dimension. He conjectured that "in this never-ending series of choices of which life consists, the choice may generally be schematized as between safety (or, more broadly, defensiveness) and growth, and since only that child doesn't need safety who already has it, we may expect the growth choice to be made by the safety-need-gratified child; only he can afford to be bold." In essence, as Erikson imagined the developmental challenges of life's longitude - over the lifespan - Maslow imagined the developmental challenges vertically, from the most primitive needs we share with all life forms - food/shelter/basic safety, to the upper reaches of potential human experience, which are most available for exploration to those whose basic needs are squared away. When you take Maslow's vertical needs and Erikson's needs over the lifespan, you find a life-meaning grid which moves the understanding of human capacity a step further.
At one level, everything begins with an understanding of needs and capacities.

Rachel Carson, in *Silent Spring*, pointed toward a phenomenon creeping in below everyone's perceptions - a potentially lethal "stealth" chemical crisis - the potentially cataclysmic poisoning of the very nature upon which we must make our lives. Whether recognized or not, this discovery has changed the nature of every transaction happening.

In psychology, in economics, in politics, in everything. A large recent banner in Europe: "If it's not ecological, it's not economic." Whole fields have sprung up. And follow-up discoveries have emerged on every side, including one that the earth itself appears to be one immense integrated life-system, now being referred to by the ancient term: "Gaia".

At one level, everything begins with the recognition of the ecosphere on which we are utterly dependent, which we disregard at our utter peril, and potentially offers renewable abundance for our heirs.

Alan Watts, Richard Alpert (Ram Dass), Timothy Leary, and Ralph Metzner spearheaded recognitions of the relationship between our normal conscious mind and that which as Huxley said "is separated from it by the filmiest of screens". Through experimentation with psychedelic chemicals, Alpert, Leary, and Metzner stumbled upon altered states of mind consistent with modern physics and echoing of ancient Eastern meditation states about which Alan Watts had been talking and teaching.

Much more important than the mental rush was the being brought into meditative states. The West has been full of thought, bursting with thought. As Ram Dass has pointed out, Vivekananda, the great Eastern teacher, likened our minds to drunken monkeys.

He saw the need for us to re-organize our entire thought process, to change our perceptual viewpoint. If, indeed, we were able to simplify and empty our consciousness, and, paradoxically, thereby increase it,...

And if we further empowered ourselves with growing skill at this process, we might be able to take off chains binding us and
experience a deeper freedom. As Ram Dass and similar seekers, in particular, focused further on the wisdom of the East, spending meditation time in India, Tibet, and other centers, a radically new and radically old alternative to the Western branch of the development of consciousness began to assert itself here. When these seekers returned to the United States, they found the seeds planted here and growing since the turn of the century (by Suzuki and many colleagues) particularly after the World Congress of Religions in Chicago in 1893. Now bursting up from our own native soil.

On one level, everything going forward begins with the joining of Eastern and Western thought, Northern and Southern thought.

E. F. Schumacher managed with his little book, *Small is Beautiful*, to weave together East with West, ecology with common practice, social order needs with the needs of the individual to grow toward capacity and choice. First passed hand to hand and then selling by the tens of thousands, it changed the directions of a wide range of thinking as it challenged the giganticist tendencies of Western developmental thinking toward the idea that small scale and simplicity may be more humane, infinitely more sustainable, and can be quieter. Grassroots can grow.

Frances Moore Lappe managed with her little book *Diet for a Small Planet* to turn the debates on world food development from dead ends which would deplete all resources to options for feeding the world that could be done sustainably and with better nutrition and health effects for all concerned. Not strictly and explicitly philosophical or psychological, her thought focuses us on the quintessential power of food policy on health and ecological sustainability, both basic to any future and presently full of implications for philosophy and for the placed where psychological and ecological "tires touch the road".

Joanna Macy and John Seed are focusing where the past is meeting the present; and the present is creating a future, exploring a heart path beyond the seventh generation.
Macy carries an ancient Buddhist path into the present; John carries the history of humans descended from 175 million years as inhabitants of the rain forests. The two bring from past to present a ritual which they call "The Council of All Beings" in which people come and take the roles of the life forms of the earth, who then sit in council, reflecting on and talking about the past, the present, and the future, crying for what is being lost and what is already irretrievably gone, experiencing the phenomenal feelings of a present poised (precariously as always) on the edge of the cliff of existence, and talking of a future teeming with free life which all life forms pray may come to be.
Chapter 2
THE PRESENT

*From Bindu to Ojas*, Ram Dass:

"You're standing on a bridge watching yourself go by"
Basketball at 48

(at a Thic Nhat Hahn mountain retreat)

Joseph and I shoot baskets before Thursday dinner.

Trying a jumpshot after many years' absence,
    I notice the spring in my legs is gone.

Concentrating on aiming a long shot, I rediscover my decades-old empty minded meditation, still focusing, without ever having ceased, on the hoop.

Young priests still burn in the broken Saigon streets;
    Jesus still stares down from the cross;
    Siddhartha Gautama still lifts a yellow flower into the morning air.
Seagulls

Overlooking the Inner Harbor, Victoria,
British Columbia, before my 50th birthday

We sit on balconies
watching gulls in flight.
Every creature fathoms time and space.

We hear caws, see stroking
wings, watch floating clouds.
Eternity and universe are feelings in each heart.

Swimming through the moment tells us
how the shimmering Inner Harbor shows the sky.
All breathe in stars. All exhale galaxies.

All around us, the morning fog rolls in.
All boundaries fade and disappear:
Just luminous light gray all around, just boundless light.
There is no room - 5 notes

1.
Once when I was young
and afraid there would be no bottom to my fall,
I lay down, disconsolate, upon the morning grass.
To my body's shock, I did not sink.
Lying there, I could let go every muscle, every thought
and did.
I settled into a state of quiet bliss, like going to sleep.
But I was awake, beneath the summer sun, held in the arms
of the green.

2.
I find myself standing next to a desk in the
dark wood library room of a great house.
Varicolored books of poetry fill every bookcase,
cover all the walls.
A word deep blue carpet sleeps on the floor.
I look up and find the poetry book-lined walls are so high
that clouds floating there obscure the ceiling.
Wing feathers held wide, a black and yellow bird pushes off
from an upper shelf and flies up into the mist
and disappears with a cry.

3.
I turn around and around, still stunned by the number
of pages of print in this room.
Mine will add nothing.
I feel exhausted and sit down at the old desk.
A red fountain pen on the desk top sits up,
walks over to me on its fountain pen legs,
and climbs up into my waiting hand.

4.
Thirty sitting wordsmiths, rhymesters line the silent shadowed
evening zendo's walls.
There is nothing in the room.

5.
There is no room.
The present

The Loma Prieta earthquake still shakes us in the Bay Area to our roots. For those it throttled, what had been taken for granted is no longer taken for granted. A colleague Sarahjane and I were thrown to the floor in our seventh floor offices in our downtown Oakland office building near City Hall and the Cypress freeway. Our building heaved up and down, to and fro as if it would tear apart; things falling in every direction, all fifteen floors of window glass flying out at once and falling to the pavement with the sound of a glass bomb. We still shake. Later, many of us were also in the Montclair hills when the Oakland hills firestorm threw us running from our homes. We found out what of our possessions were most important because we could probably only save what would fit in the car in five minutes, looking over our shoulders as we drove away at our beloved neighborhood trees who we feared we would never see alive again.

The Berlin Wall falling in the night, bonfires and spotlights catching profiles of revelers dancing on the top of the wall; social systems across thousands of miles falling with great crashes which are still reverberating through us and our part of this tiny, fragile planet, whose protective ozone layers are melting around the poles and headed for the dangerously increased radiation of our latitudes and our minds. Violence rising on every side of us, the bodies in the cities. A three trillion dollar deficit fast becoming four; a world population doubling before our eyes. This present, this strange present, even as the earthquake shakes and the fire burns and the bodies in cities and towns fall, as does the sky’s protection. We owe it to our shaking selves, to our shaking families and loved ones, to become more conscious of who we are, what we have done, and what we may yet do.
This writing focuses on five interweaving factors - mind, emotion, body, world, time - which are involved in each of our lives at all times. In times of great stress, shock, and change, or in cases of meditation or other centering, these factors and others can share priorities, lock onto each other for cooperation, and operate a little like a single engine with five pistons, like different facets of a single wave.

Mind and emotion act together as a synthesis of the mirror-imaging the two would set in motion. May this be true in perpetuity?

The body and its nervous system provide the neural and sense envelope in which mind and emotion are to be experienced by the person, by you and me.

As the Berlin Wall fell, our community armoring could begin to fall along with it. The world touches us.

The mind and emotions can experience an increase in energy flow through the body system when the muscles begin to relax.

The nuclear targeting is coming undone. Nuclear dangers are becoming less eminent in people's minds.

In the Oakland hills and Montclair, time looks down certain hillsides and sees the rough rows of concrete foundations all down the hill, some basic foundations all that's left in the rubble still smoking in my mind. Along certain hillside streets and blocks, all that I remember is gone.

And in the East Bay, with the earthquake, freeway collapse, and then the firestorm in the hills, everything was happening at once.
Mind
Emotion
Body
World
Time
The Present of
Mind-Emotion-Body-World-Time

Mind and emotion are the great diad. Out of this emerges our stereoscopic, stereophonic sense of life and our place in it. Mind thinks; emotion feels; the two synthesize and, from this, the synthesis guides the body through world and time. The mind-emotion synthesis grounds in the body. The body is the ocean in which people live. Mind-Emotion-Body-World-Time weave with us our lives, the aspects joining into an embodied whole.

Mind

For thousands upon thousands of years of reflection and introspection, humans have questioned what mind is. Our brief notes on the past touch on ways people have tried to grasp its essence and find freedom.

In Plato's allegory of the cave, mind develops, breaks free from the illusions of the flickering cave wall, and climbs up into reality's light. Descarte's "I think; therefore I am" lives in every generation, perhaps unconsciously in every mind.

We think our way through life. My mind guides my hand as I write down this word, as I imagine this fabulous world. You read this with your mind.

Whether we use our minds actively in thinking or quietly in meditation, whether in silence or in reflection and interpretation of our sense experiences of our world, we are dancing a dance we share with all those ancestors who have gone before us, with all those who are to come, and with all the other awake life forms we now share within the present gaia.

The industrial revolution comes from allowing the mind to think through inventions and plans, communicate with others, and then to take action with the body on the conclusions. How strange that such great ideas, plans, and actions can contain within them the seeds of
poison and destruction we now find in our environment as a direct result of such extraordinary earlier ideas. What need we learn?

Part of the problem, as Ram Dass reminds us, is that Vivikananda likened the mind on its own to a barrel of drunken monkeys.

Our thoughts are going every direction and are not focused on one clear point.

Crucial matters may be lost and the most important may never be seen in the cacophony.

"Hubris", pride, is what the Greeks recognized brings about tragedy, in this case that the mind conceives something and declares it complete, not recognizing that, in the mind's pride, it has neglected to include aspects in the analysis which can bring its downfall in degradation, personal, social, or ecological. In the case of the industrial revolution, the tragedy has taken several hundred years to begin to completely unwind. Humility is a crucial antidote. Better we learn to ecologically steady-state the planet and do it. There is no reason why the tragedy needs to wind all the way out and we be lost.

Cognitive, humanistic, and other research can tell us more with time about how our mind seems actually to function and experience its integrity. This can help us direct our efforts and to communicate. (If we are careful and the cognitive research itself in not too filled with hubris.)

What if we continue humility and simplicity and quietness on matters of the mind?

Here and now is really all our mind has to work with. Concepts of past and future can be no more than concepts, kicking off desires, emotions, webs of thought some of which can keep us in the head and out of the vitality directly in front of us and in us.

Our existence is right here, mental-emotional-body perceptions that can keep us in touch with the moments of our real lives, firmly rooted in each present moment, the present focus helping us let go of past and future fantasy - those cold and hot phantasms which try to keep us from life, or fear of the vicissitudes that real life may bring. The exercise of mind to focus on the reality of the present,
then, brings along courage about what the present moment means to our lives. The mind may understand this; it takes the emotions to sum up the courage for the organism to experience and gestalt the feelings that will come.

In the process, these two, mind and emotion working together, can lead to the waking into each moment.

**Emotion**

Emotion and intuition have been around for at least hundreds of millions of years - happiness, sadness, fear, anger - a range of feelings which whisper to us about the nature of truly ancient history of all life.

Emotions have been on the earth so long before us that it is difficult for us to even begin to comprehend.

Emotion/feelings may have grown up in the most ancient of life and time - guiding choice with antique pushes and pulls - a timeless magnetism of intuitive attraction and repulsion - yes/no - come closer/run away - fight/flight. Neurologists attest to emotions' ancientness and to its presence in lower life forms now as well as in humans, as well as in the ancient past.

emotion the ancient,  
the undulating earth on which mind  
and thinking stand and  
into which earth mind sinks  
when regression pulls all down  
toward the more primitive.

From emotion's ancient lair,  
the reptilian brain  
and primitive centers even beneath that  
grab and twist and kill and run  
and shout in awe.

From this place, too, the sword is drawn and thrust;  
the Pershing II missile is targeted,  
with a feeling of pride of purpose,  
and cocked against the monstrous shadow  
felt growing at the gate,
now at the door, now at our side.

In emotion's ancient lair,
here, too, ancient, strong passion, love.
In the country, singing voices,
a feeling inside and around us of family,
music of mathematics and moon.

We both do and do not understand the depths of these ancient
intuitive firings in our bodies, these emotions. We constantly move
toward this emerging experience or that. Waves of feeling tumble
through us. And we live. We feel; therefore we are.

By the paradoxes with which our lives are filled, these ancient
roots, these emotions, driven by blood-brain chemical released
which fill us up, the ecstasies which transport us into the all (of
emptiness, of another, of the world) tell us this: Yes, yes, this
feeling is why we were born. Yes.

Body

It is in the body that the mind and emotions do their constant dance,
thinking and feeling forming a stereophonic experience which,
through our body, holds a key to being here.

Our body bonds thought and feeling into home, walking-talking-
sensate. We can reach with a hand for what we desire. (With its
delicate tentacles, the octopus gathers pretty stones to stack inside
its shelter.)

I write this word. Your eyes-mind-body read this and respond or put
it down. What's for dinner?

Only with a body can we think and feel. It takes a brain and nervous
system. It is the body's five and more senses - eyes to see, skin to
feel, nose to smell, ears to hear, mouth to taste, and on and on.

From the most ancient of times comes deep knowledge of an energy
field at work in the body. The "chi" energy radiates through the body,
especially effectively the less hampered by blocks to the energy's
flow, by rigidities, by walls. Wilhelm Reich in his body-oriented work observed directly how basic body energy flows. He saw how the energy can markedly improve and grow after focus and work. The energy from blockage caused by trauma in the past can be released.

Fortunately for our century, whole fields of body-oriented psychology have been opening up - pointed toward moving the center of experience to a point that incorporates the wisdom of the emotions and body and their needs. Dozens of study areas are opening up and flourishing, some new and some developments of ancient teachings.

Personal problems, family problems, and social problems emerge from meaning-emotion-body needs not being met, by neglect, power, and unconsciousness to their necessity. Unrecognized, these needs can split off from the person's consciousness and cause mental and behavior patterns the individual, family, culture do not understand.

The combination of body work, physiological psychology, gestalt, humanistic psychology, Eastern studies, and meditation can bring life to a fullness unavailable to the mind alone.

World

We used to think this body of ours, this "bag of bones", this "sack of blood" was all - that our reality was most essentially, was totally as a single individual.

Virginia Satir and family therapy practice have show us how the individual psyche is inextricably webbed into the organism of the family system and needs to be healed in relationship to that larger whole. Social psychology has begun to show us how whole social systems behave and how they interact with the individuals - families - neighborhoods - communities they contain. The related studies such as sociology, political science, architecture, law, and others enrich and shed more light on the individual's sense of life and meaning. And studies are growing, linking psycho-ecological issues with the levels of life through the gaia.
More data is coming in and spreading around, from new physics, new biology, deep ecology, and all, where the jigsaw pieces are adding together.

We as individuals are also inextricably facets of a larger life. We are inseparably bonded into the gigantic network of life systems which are truly a single operating world-wide whole life, the gala.

Let me put it another way. Our body, if taken from the ecological life web in which we live (good air, soil, water, co-evolutionary life forms) dies. The appearance of total independence was an illusion, a result of ego and a lack of knowledge. From subatomic physics, from organic chemistry, from systems theory, from simple logic with the new puzzle pieces in hand, it clarifies: We are inextricably linked into this world-life; we preserve the world-life for itself and to preserve our own - and to preserve the opportunity for those lives of our loved ones and family yet to come to be lived.

Gestalt saw that to understand our life, we must look at the whole of our perceptual realm. What is now in the foreground of our consciousness? What is more in the background? It is all one reality - we must see background and foreground together as one whole. How do foreground and background change? How and when do our foregrounds and backgrounds reverse polarities? How does this gestalt ocean flow? One Webster’s says: "the theory or doctrine that physiological or psychological phenomena do not occur through the summation of individual elements as reflexes or sensation but through gestalts functioning separately or interrelatedly." To understand the world, we must take it in and perceive it as a total gestalt.

And as ancient tribal religions have held for millinea that the world is a total alive mother of which we, as each being, form a part, the western gestalt formulation catches how eventually it would be possible for the western mind also to develop a recognition of its whole living world - its gala.

In new physics, we are found to be, at bottom, made up of wavicles, particles in some ways, waves in other ways. As such we are truly verbs as well as nouns, perpetual processes as well as concrete things which move and watch concrete cats and trees. Field theory-systems theory-family therapy theory all bind us from the wavicle
to the gaia into an amazing whole, *one world deeper than we had ever imagined.*

Holden Caulfield, in *Catcher in the Rye,* bewails the schools, crying "and they seldom say a word about wisdom!" Now is the time, even as Mickey Mouse meets Murphy's Law. In this world doubling in population, tipping beyond its carrying capacity, losing more of its ozone shield, poisoning its water, air, and soil, shredding with violence its social orders,

yet in this world singing, crying from loss, touching in love, writing poetry, blessing its children, working shoulders at the wheel of change, planning amazing dreams, we have this incredible, this unique, fragile, beautiful world - from wavicle to gaia - our only home.

For us, today, this links ecology and psychology. It feels natural and ancient. Ancient indians developed a wisdom practice they applied to the development of all social policy. What is done now must not harm the future - and its effect must be as good through the "seventh generation" yet to come, a policy planning method and a native American love practice.

Students like Roszak, Macy, Seed, Anderson, Metzner, and others are joining the two disciplines of Ecology and Psychology into a likely permanent union, uniting to find our way home.

We can see the need to develop a steady state - renewable world social-economical-ecological process. Linking these two key driving forces can focus time on the common challenge.

Increasing eco-consciousness is spreading at a great rate. A fast-increasing proportion of the world's population (some say as much as 80% of the world population) consider themselves ecology movement supporters - thus almost everyone works in certain shades of green.

Experts from different fields find each other, study, and link up.
New physics - all of us as wavicles

We are all, at the physiological depths, wavicles. Add one part matter and one part energy. Shake. As the biologists at their phenomenal microscopes tell us, at a certain sub-atomic level, the phenomena being observed show characteristics of each - both matter and energy.

As such, we are verbs as much as nouns.

Consider the verbish. Consider a verbish gaia.

Time

I write with pen and paper on a wooden bridge over a flowing creek. I hear a continuous rushing sound, as water darts and falls over rocks - the water is moving - now at the rocks and now a moment later on past them.

I look up and notice that this is my fourth page of writing since I sat down. Those past pages sit without motion - covered with my dark blue scratchings, the paper held down by a coffee cup now only 1/4 full, a cup completely full a moment ago.

At least ever since campfires late at night those millions of years ago, we can imagine human-like people have looked at stars and wondered about the veiled mystery of time. As we still do this late at night in the quiet, are we so different from them after all?

Now another page is full. Here and gone. Our fathers and mothers, here a moment ago, asleep now in the ground.

If my car is almost out of gas and if I then fill it up with gas today before I go home for the night, then tomorrow morning when I am in a hurry and jump into the car, I will notice that this shadowy character who was me today has given the me-of-tomorrow a gift. In my body-emotions-mind, how does yesterday become today become tomorrow? And what continuity balances with what absolute differences and flows to be the me who walks through time?
Time walks the long distance. After years of life so far, I still think and feel that now, this present moment, is really all.

Past and future are shadowy dancers -- they can be mistaken for present reality; but they are really insubstantial ghosts, imposters, for all their worth and practicality. Now I write this word. Now I write this word. Now you read. Now a bird peeps its song note. Now the creek calls. Now. And now. now. and now.

now

Now I sit at a Mac editing this in Microsoft Word 4.0. I am outside and hear a number of birds singing at the same time, each different, all a very quiet green chorus. (Now, I make a follow-up edit by hand, three thousand miles away and a month past that last sentence.)

(Now, in a late edit, a morning flight of hundreds of crows just flew up from the lawn and headed out toward the ocean.)

And, this very moment, what do you think is time?

(and now the crows swoop back down, land, take up walking the yard, beaks down, waddling like hundreds of little black groucho marxs with beaks, looking for breakfast.)

and now?

We know from our lives, from the existentialists, from Be Here Now, this moment is what there is. We flow along the river of consecutive experience in which we find ourselves swimming. My dying friend says life goes so fast. Time. He snaps his fingers. Like this, he says.

(I look up and the birds are gone again.)
10 Moments

1.

It is a summer night. I am a small child in Chicago, walking with my mother along Sheridan Road, just up from our apartment. We are passing a huge billboard by the side of the road. All around the rim are the brightest light bulbs lighting the billboard's advertising. Fluttering all around each bright light are tiny creatures flapping tiny wings, swooping up and down, circling the gleaming lights over and over and over, like miniature butterflies. My mother tells me that these are mayflies, that they only live one day and this is the night of that day. I can't understand. How could something live only one day. How could this be? They flutter.

2.

I am ten years old, walking one cold winter afternoon by our church. I had almost died at 6. Suddenly, I am struck by the idea that life only lasts 30, 40, 60, 70, 80 years, at most, so short.... And I am suddenly convinced that there is no life after death, that when I die I'm gone. I feel so brief. I feel so very sad, then empty. Just as suddenly, I look around and see that everything I look at is transformed, so beautiful, beautiful. Since life is brief, just so every sight, every moment is so vivid, so exquisite, if I'm not asleep. I look around and find myself in joy.

3.

Last Monday morning, as I'm waking up, the telephone rings by my bed. Hello? It is my sister, Pat. "Curtis' lung cancer is worse. I just saw him. He is asking to see you." I am on the phone with the airline. My birthday is this Friday. I can get ready and get a flight out then.

4.

Years ago, I'm driving down Grand Avenue in Oakland, early evening dusk, my new wife and I are on the way home from buying the provisions for our wedding celebration for family and friends. Suddenly we and our car are hurtling through the air, smashing into a car ahead of us, my wife and I thrown forward and back in our seatbelts like rag dolls. No control. A car racing down Grand at 70 has hit us from behind. Our gas tank ruptures and throws all the gas into the air. I notice out the front windshield that it is suddenly raining, heavily, on the front hood. Strange, the sky has been clear.
Then it ignites; the red and yellow flickers, then roars. I reach around and try both doors. Jammed shut; no give at all. I guess I have only seconds to live. My wife is knocked unconscious. I'm trying what I can. I look out the front windshield. I feel very quiet inside, though I am moving around, trying to get out. The colors of the flames, somehow, are beautiful.

5.

I am calling the airline to get a Friday ticket to St. Louis, near Centralia, Illinois, our family home. I live on a bluff above a beach next to the ocean in the Northern California countryside, north of a hamlet of 950. Out my window, as I talk with the airline, I notice that an ambulance has pulled into a little cutout, then another pulls in then a little firetruck, then a police car; uniformed men disappear over the bluff's edge, evidently climbing down to the beach, apparently another swimmer gone under the strong blue waves. (Late news report: The body of a male probably in his 40s had just floated ashore onto Portuguese Beach that morning.)

6.

Victor Frankl survives the Nazi death camps, discovering meaning even where everything, everything is gone.

7.

Existence.
Existential "angst"/despair/life so brief.
Existential commitment:
amidst the emptiness
I stand for this, for you.
Joy, burningly alive - this moment.
herenow.
flame,
lights in the dark room.

8.

Two empty chairs in the middle of our room, one for me; one for Curtis. What do we have to say? I am getting on the plane. "It's so brief," he says. "It seems like it's over in the snap of my fingers." He looks out the sunlit window, breathes deeply in on the oxygen tube. We talk. We sit silently together. I hold his hand, his arm. I go rake leaves, move the air-conditioner
An old zen story tells of a man running along a mountain cliff edge, chased by a big and ravenously hungry tiger. He sees a thick vine going down over the edge of the cliff and, grabbing it, climbs quickly down below the cliff's edge far enough to be out of the reach of the tiger. Panting, holding on to the vine, he looks up. The tiger is looking down, waiting. He looks down. Far below him is another hungry tiger looking up at him, waiting, mouth open wide. Able to go neither forward nor backward, he hangs there. Above him, he sees a mouse chewing through the vine he hangs from. He looks to his left, sees a wild strawberry. Holding on with his right hand and arm, with the other he picks the red strawberry and puts it in his mouth. It is so sweet.

10.
We are mayflies.
And this is our day.
Chapter 3
The Gaia, the Ecos, and the Cosmos

A brief guided meditation

Let's think about how you individually and we collectively are linked by family ties with the most distant living space.

What forces propel our lives and the consciousness in and surrounding us? Conscious life is operating within incredibly vast webs of life forms surrounding and interpenetrating our personal singular existence, our own consciousness interwoven within our every molecule and within the total web of life binding you and me to this planet's overall ocean of life, which remains rolling waves through time immemorial, in constant metamorphosis.

Time is without end. The cosmos is without end. And here we are now.

On only one planet are we positive that sentient (self-aware) life exists, at all. So here we are. In our psychological living and contacts, we alive now take our turn working for the process by which life can continue and thrive - the individual and the "gala".

Gaia is a recently evolved term (incorporating ancient and contemporary knowledge) pointing to how all sentient beings on this one known living planet are interconnected, interdependent, and a single united living web, a single pulsing life - life within life within life - life among life among life - an "interbeing".

If there are other planets or bodies which now host or will host life in the future, then each such place, by definition, is its own gala, its own world living eco-net of interrelated being.
Considering that all life is ultimately one family, it is appropriate to imagine the combination of each and every planet’s own experience of life into the experiencing of all gaias in the universe at this moment. Think of that total as the entire cosmos’ living web. Imagine it as one grand living-universe-wide interconnected being, a grand multi-gaia - let’s call it, for now, the universe’s "ecos".

The present ecos, understood as the aggregate of all gaias in the cosmos at the present moment, could be seen as one universal living being of which we are each and all a living part. Put it another way: imagine this universal living being, seen as made up of all the life there is everywhere in the universe.

And even this, the ecos, is within the larger totality of all that is.

The ecos is the totality of life within an even vaster realm of rocks and empty space, space perhaps without edge.

What does it mean? Sense yourself, you as an individual. Sense with you all your loved ones. Sense yourselves woven within every minute within all this earth’s gaia. You are centering yourself inside your own gaia. When you are centered, look out into the sky and sense living gaias which exist elsewhere in the cosmos, along with yours. Then, imagine all the gaias in the cosmos as a single total living being, now, a total ecos of life.

And all the sparkle of these splendid fleeting facets rooted in the folds of unending space and time.
Chapter 4
At the Future's Edge

Some months ago, I was asked to join a non-profit organization managers convention advisory committee made up of about a dozen people all of whom have been working in and with 501(c)(3) organizations for many years. At the first meeting, we were sitting together as a planning committee doing the usual new advisory committee howdys, talking about how best to develop this year's national nonprofit management conference. Since all the people were experienced workers in the field, everybody was tossing in interesting and different ideas about how the conference could best be done. Somebody came in late, sat down, listened for a couple of minutes, then asked from the back of the room: “How could this non-profit management conference be different from any other?”

First, the person on my right noted that the question was like the beginning of the Passover dinner celebration, “How is this night different from any other?” Then I thought, no, this conference is not explicitly spiritual and, what is more, this conference will be no different; it will be one more conference in an endless chain of essentially similar conferences.
When Hindus think about vast time, they sometimes think about vast distances of time. They have a story in which a bird flying over a huge mountain with a silk handkerchief in its beak just touches the top of the mountain with the silk handkerchief. It flies over this mountain trailing the silk handkerchief once every ten thousand years. A great space of time is to be measured, they say, when, by this method, the mountain is all worn down, worn away.

In an endless series of conferences, this would be just one more conference I repeated to myself feeling some sadness. Then I thought: All right. At one level, it's like all other conferences; and yet, at another level, what a time this is! In this chapter, that's where I want to start.

Several factors keep coming back into my mind whatever I'm doing these days. I'll start with crises. It's becoming commonplace now that we talk about how we're on the verge of a new century, just right on the verge. That's important, and it's a time for reflection. Some people are talking seriously about how we're also right at the edge of an entirely new millennium - a new 1000-year marking period. So at least in A.D. time (which isn't the only way to calculate time, you need to keep in mind), we're actually starting--we're on the verge of starting--we're a few breaths of starting a new thousand-year period. We have such crises that, at this juncture, it's like the Gods really piled up an amazing take-home final for us (to keep us busy), so that by the time we hit Midnight and then 12:01 am, January 1, AD 2000, (the January 1st of this new thousand-year marker period), we really can have worked out a lot of issues; and we'll be ready to more consciously start the new period.
I'm thinking that to really understand, to have some sense of what's coming up, we ought to go back in our memories and understandings at least 1000 years -- that far if not farther. The first part of this book, in particular, is my starting to think more about this myself. I encourage you, as part of your own thinking and reflection, to go back over the last thousand years to look at the crises that have come up, the incredible movements forward and some movements backward that have taken place in the last not only hundred-year period but the last thousand-year period and use those crucial events and processes as stepping stones (or, to use another analogy kind of like a sling shot), to help you get at the feeling for the momentum and structure of what comes next, what we are getting into next, as the new millennium gets ready to unfold.

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I realized it could be a different conference in the very abstract sense that we are right on the cusp of major turning points in history. I thought about how the conference would occur within a few months of the start of the Clinton administration, seeking how to "reinvent" government.

We're right in this cusp and it's just not one thing.

It's not just the turn of government or the turn of the century; it's not just the turn of the millennium.

How could this conference be different from any other conference? It's occurring just as we are walking away from our TV
visions of the Berlin wall coming down and the Soviet government coming down and the USSR evaporating as an entity -- and on and on -- The cold war ending its fixation which has had us for decades feeling that this moment may be our last, that our loved ones are in the most profound sense of risk, Persian II missiles always only on hair trigger -- might go around Germany and evaporate the Russian control systems in Moscow within five minutes of taking off; we understood very well that there were computer errors and other errors being made; there were glitches in the computers and that there was a certain amount of feeling how we’re in the roulette game going on all the time. All that’s just begun to fade away. What a time.

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How could this conference be different? I thought. How could my life, our lives be different? What grand transitions and transformations are we in the midst of anyway.

When the Berlin Wall fell and the rest fell, many of us who were working actively in the peace movement who were also involved in the ecological movement turned around and found (all the more, with a joyous perspective of “My God the cold war is ending,”) that our planet’s very life is in ecological danger, and in ways more complex than we'd imagined. It’s like, “Oh God, we just got done with one crisis (the terrifying cold war). Come on, give us a break! Not another.” There is no break.
So, in addition to all the other transformations we need to make sense of, we must look at the state of mother earth. We must. Look at the state of the poisons that are being put into so much of the water, the tons and tons of poisons that are being put into the air and the ground, about which poisons-combinations-downstream-effects we know so little about as to know virtually nothing. We have an ecological crisis building up that is historical in its magnitude. Is it not time we get some context, some sense and understanding of this incredible web that we’re in the midst of?

Listen to Thomas Berry: "The issue now is of a much greater order of magnitude for we have changed in a dilatorius manner, not simply the structure and functioning of human society. We have changed the very chemistry of the planet. We have altered the biosystems. We have changed the topography and even the geological structure of the planet - structures and functions that have taken hundreds of millions and even billions of years to bring into existence. Such an order of change in its nature and in its order of magnitude has never before entered either into earth history or into human consciousness."

What a time it is that we are in. What challenges! What a time for this non-profit conference to take place. What a juncture. When you think about what Thomas Berry is saying here, when you think about what the last thousand years were about, please begin to reflect on what the next thousand years are going to be about - what they must be about - what they will mean for the future of your family.
In the whole, we’re talking about the past and future history of the earth, about all future for all species, all health of all life forms in the future. (And at the same time, we are capable of thinking about how humans can branch forth off the earth and go out, we’re talking about the potential of life as we know it, once it’s made peace, carbon-based life forms going out into the solar system, going out into the galaxy, and over vast time going out into other parts of the universe.) If the ecosphere dies, the potential of all time in the future, utterly beyond our reckoning, could come to a stop. And we have choices. All of our organizations, our arts organizations, our health organizations, our ecological organizations, and on and on - we have choices. It’s not just the governments and public officials who are going to do what comes next.

This list of crises, issues, and opportunities inside these transformations can challenge everything we know and are and can become. We think, oh, we’ve got problems, and we look up and notice: what is that big hole in our sky? The ozone hole has become a symbol for me of what’s gone wrong, a tangible representation of our hubris, our folly. I think about this continent-size hole opening up over our heads -- a hole in our understanding, a hole in our future, a hole to ponder with all our seriousness. (Note what is happening to human, mammal, aquatic, and plant life forms directly underneath the diminishing and emptying ozone hole over Tierra del Fuego. I recommend you learn about that.)

If that weren’t enough, in California and in the country and, as I understand it, throughout the world, we’re in the midst of a
serious economic depression; Russia and many other countries are virtually bankrupt, a crushing kind of depression. Here in California, almost 10% of our people (much higher percentages of certain minorities) are out of work. Awful economic times. Public jurisdictions and nonprofits are flat. Well we’ve been through awful economic times before, but this is a particularly poignant bad one. This depression lowers revenues, raises and broadens human needs unserved, lowers federal and state grants, lowers (because inflation has been knocked over) philanthropic income to disburse, while requests for grants to donors and foundations have increased by 1000% to 2000%. I get a sense of staggering challenges and burdens and terrors and needs right now. Because they are staggering, they require a fundamental rethinking and refueling of how it is that we’re going to approach our work and our lives.

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Look at what “now” means in the larger context of these tremendous forces that are moving across our eyes. You know the Chinese character for crisis is inextricably also the character for opportunity. I look at it at first and it seems impossible. Then I look at it again and say: It’s impossible, but it’s not impossible.

I’ve listed crises. I want to mention for a moment about the idea of vision.

We are capable of developing a vision of what kind of world we want ourselves, our children, the future, our loved ones to inhabit. The next chapter lists 15 currently used mental
characteristics potentially helpful to working with and living in the future.

Someone noted the other day that some scientists had been working and were checking genealogical lines and biological connections and all; and they finally concluded (and I love this) that everyone on earth appears to be at least 1/15th cousins. So as it turns out, it is all family after all. So what is the world that we want for our family? It turns out that everybody is family.

(From my point of view, to take this a step further, it's not only the human beings who are family but it's also all sentient beings who are family. This is one big web; and if we destroy one part of the web, we all fall out of the bottom and there is no floor.)

This large family of all species and of our own species who are all cousins: For this great family, what is it that we want?

When we explore our individual life, our organization, and our network of working organizations, we are defining the work and beingness within this large network, large framework, large vision of what kind of world we want it to become, what kind of world it is by nature, and what kind of world it could become, and what steps we can take.

After all, public policy needs to be grounded in something basic. A sustainable world is the only way that we allow movement into the future. What does it mean to be sustainable? How can art be sustainable? How can health be sustainable? How can the social order be sustainable? How can our ecosphere? And how can we learn?
Thomas Hobbes in *The Leviathan*, back in the 1700's, said, "Before the social contract was the state of nature. In the state of nature, life is nasty, brutish, and short." We can see on our street that life again for some people has become just that: nasty, brutish, and short. What that tells me is that the social concept and the social contract are cracking, and what do we do when the entire social contract is cracking and we are allowing people to sicken and die, when we're allowing Hobbes' state of nature to reimpose itself? The volume of viciousness is growing at levels that I think strike at most of us with awe. (To what degree may the toxification of our environment chemically stimulate some of the destructiveness and psychopathology that's growing? How can we best find out?)

In the need for an idea of vision, we start with a crisis. We face the crisis. Then another. Then another. Then we say, all right, if we're going to deal with all these crises in a reasonable way, we've got to develop visions of where we want to go and be.

All right, we don't want it this way, how would we want it? What would it be like? What can we imagine and how do we start to walk there and who can we walk there with? What can we do? How can we sustain ourselves in the present because we’re not in that “there” now? Since we've got to live our present in a state that's "somewhat other" than our visions, how can we get sustenance for ourselves even in this “other” state? How can we thrive in this challenging present?
Susan Langer at the beginning of *Philosophy in a New Key*, said: "If you ask the wrong questions, you are destined to get the wrong answers." If we are going to develop visions, we've got to get clear.

Then we can begin also to say: how do we get there? How do we set our foundations?

How do we ask questions? What are the questions that will penetrate to the core? What are the radical questions? What are the fundamental questions? How do the questions fit into a framework of inquiry? What would be optimum? And then we begin to develop answers -- ones which, over time, we can act on together, the largest family we've ever known.

∞ ∞ ∞

In nonprofit work, we may find a staff in great pain and turning over and at low effectiveness. What is the process by which we go where we go to strengthen an organization? I challenge you to think of process as well as content.

In Buddhist economics, the aim is not to increase what you have and to increase your desires and the scope of your desires but to simplify and do more with less (and do less with less my friend Running Grass reminds me). And I think in this system of thinking that we develop, that's one of the things we are going to have to do, because the budgets are not going to get bigger anytime soon. I think the economics are going to get even harder before they improve.
So, how are we going to do more with less? And how are we going to do it humanely so people feel good about it, the people you’re serving feel good about it? How are you going to use the brilliance that you and your staffs have and your boards and your providers to find out how to do that?

Finally, I think we need to become more systematic. What is it that we’re trying to do? Who is it that we’re trying to serve? How can we serve them better with less? What can we do about this? What can we do about that? What about meaning issues? What about psychological satisfaction issues?

A lot of work has been done to better understand our human lifecycles. Erick Erickson years ago painted out a number of critical issues-in-common which appear throughout the individual’s life cycle. If we want our work to continue and thrive, we can do more with less by understanding the psychology of lifecycles better and seek to design and provide fulfilling structures and processes at succeeding stages of our lifecycles. Look at lifecycle studies, how your needs and your colleague’s needs will change through time. How can we anticipate this and the critical meaning struggles we are entering or are enmeshed in. (How can our organizations be supportive?)

You can go back to Maslow and look at the hierarchy of needs that Maslow outlined and see how that hierarchy of needs parallels a lot of economic and psychological need issues within the
organization and see how we can more accurately and more systematically calibrate the way what we’re doing, the processes we’re using to be more satisfying to people, and then use good group process to develop what must be planned and done.

We’re getting into a deeper recognition of diversity—both animal and human—as one-living-entity issues. Think about ourselves and our co-workers and clients and about how cultural diversity issues have been somehow swept under the rug. Somehow we’ve had so much under the rug that the rug has become like a great hill. If we pull the rug back and all the issues begin to come out from under it, we say, oh God, we’ve got crisis, but we can also say, what an incredible opportunity we have. What a time to be alive.

Potentially, we can move forward in a reasonable time. The issues are out. In the convention-planning meeting, there was a wonderful moment when we got to a place in talking about reconceptualizing what a non-profit organization itself is, by getting a feeling for what’s really going on in the world and what needs and opportunities that will bring. One person stressed how urgent this is; and somebody else called out, recalling the ancient Romans, recalling Saul Bellow, recalling The Dead Poet’s Society, “Seize the day!”.

Consider the vast things which have happened in the past, vast momenta that have brought us where we are, and incredible things that are taking shape and beginning to move forward into the great unknown virtually uncharted future with us. Amazing. And right in the middle, right in the middle is this incredible “now” that we
inhabit, you are right at the beginning of dream-building your own future, the future of family, more widely defined, and I'm happy for you.
Glass

I see you at 70 staring at me over coffee
I hold up a clear crystal water glass
and look through it toward the lace window curtain's muted white. A hundred years from now ground to sand, the glass shows our eyes on each other in this morning light.
The year 2000 A.D.

Excerpt from THE BRIEF DICTIONARY OF ANCIENT HISTORY

"GROWING EARTH PEACE - Year 2000 AD (Anno Domino, Latin) according to one old human-oriented calendar, Year 5760 according to another; about year 5 billion of the planet, the Modern Yuga.

The human species had populated itself around this unique small water planet, evolved to a primordial crossroads, and then gathered (as the year 2000 AD approached) and sat down together for great councils of peace.

Noone was to be allowed to starve. All children were to be properly inoculated. All persons on the planet were to have safe drinking water, food, and shelter from the cold. The treatable blind were to be allowed to see. Education on food-growing, health, literacy, self-support, meaning were to be developed with all for all.

The years after 2000 AD came in with strong celebration, and the following period came to be remembered as a long time of great peace, increasing fulfillment. As the common bonds arose, the old forms and armoring could begin to loosen hold and fall away."
The future. The next generation. And what then? What can we offer? What can they take? Zen lights, travels well, and heals. Freud's thought, Jung, Rogers, Maslow, Erickson, and others are still vitally alive. So many are seeking wakening processes. We may assume this desire is perpetual. We can humbly seek to measure what we do. Psychotherapy and group work are vital. Cognitive and behavioral research continues. Some sense of how research/teaching/application go together can be passed on.

Expression of feeling has filled the twentieth century and will pass on to the next, expanded by the somatics field and by the success of expressiveness in a variety of therapies. Devotional processes and searchings have been widening the therapeutic network to include spirit. Reich, Perls, the Gestaltists, and the Somaticists have expanded our framework for experiencing. Erickson measures our lifespans. Maslow points to the measures of our hierarchies of being. Rogers gives the royal jewels back to the client. Clients will seek out experiences - from short-term crisis-intervention to life-long treatment and psychoanalysis.

Tai Chi and martial arts continue. The Chi life energy flows through this generation. The future can decide who threw what in the window. Mind-body work is growing. Health psychology joins exercise/stress management studies. Compassionate action processes end the decade, the century, the A.D. millineum. Meditation measures with silence.

Our earth system moves toward a possible Ecozoic Age. To envision this is to be envisioning a long-sustainable future. Deep ecopsychology can facilitate conflict-resolutions. Here will come some strange Cyber-Turbo-Funk. Here go intergenerational transfers. What's in your mind's eye for the next 50 years or so? What do you think it will be like?

The words on the poster below a sitting meditator: "You have to be present to win."
Here comes a new century and a new millineum in six (6) years. How shall we prepare? What, after all, shall we celebrate?

Future generations give gifts to and get gifts from the past.

2100 A.D.

Although we won't still be alive in the year 2100 A.D., our children's children and their children will be. Our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will be alive then. What will it be like?

If you decide to look, you can see scenarios for the year 2100 A.D. In developments in such fields as psychology, deep ecology and forestry, spiritual practice, philosophy, public policy, co-evolution, green technology, win-win conflict resolution, and on, we can see a conscious and unconscious transformation going on of such dimensions that the year 2100 could be very good, indeed.

The following outlines a possible scenario in certain dimensions of psychology. In the field of psychology, we can anticipate some shapes.

Mind

Mind stilling

I never get up early. Seldom. But this morning I got up at 5:15 am and sat for twenty minutes. I had been talking with a zen center about its sitting practices and found they sit together every morning at that time. I didn't actually mean to wake up then this morning, but I did.

I am writing this about 6:20. I've been up for a while. Sitting was very quieting at that hour. Watching dawn come into the sky.

I'm sitting at my Mac outside the house, listening to birds call as I write.
Consider that quieting practices may be a central part of living then: The day passing more slowly. Perhaps more consciousness of present moments as they flow by.

Visioning

This extended essay envisions certain aspects of how things have been or may become.

Anytime I sit down with people to talk about such matters, I find among them not only some tentative visioning of the future, but a lot of detail. As in green technology, much of what processes could contribute to a positive psychological future are already being taught or discovered or re-confirmed.

Mind and macro/micro-cosmos

I also find an increasing number of people who have individually begun to encounter wider perspectives - looking at the tinier and the tinier; looking at the more and more gigantic. Microscopes and observatories and satellites map us all farther toward the astounding and the unfathomable.

A researcher was recently looking down through a very powerful microscope at a extremely, extremely tiny mite creature. Someone taking a turn at the microscope noted a speck on the tiny creature's right forehead. The researcher carefully further focused the microscope and found a yet-smaller mite on the larger mite's forehead.

Worldbrain

I went to a meeting one recent Friday night in San Francisco which discussed how a world computer link of ecological, conflict-resolution, arms-race-abating, public-good organizations were coming on-line with each other through the widely installed local link-ups - PeaceNet, EcoNet, ConflictNet, Internet, and others.

In many levels of distribution, the many categories of relatively mass media are increasing the sense of global village that Buckminster Fuller and Marshall McLuhan have postulated and observed the early stages of. On TV, a while ago, over a billion of our five billion people saw some forgetable entertainment program - all at one time.
Deep ecology can fathom a world as a single organic working life, with operating facets, and absolutely unknown future variables.

In this super-saturated environment, five psychological dimensions and more (ways of looking at the field, oneself, and others) work as central power/generation points for future psychological preparation and work: the mind, the body/action, emotion/intuition, world/gaia, and process/time.

10,000 A.D.

I imagine that in everyday life, psychology will still be relevant and perhaps even flourishing at the year 10,000 A.D. In fact, I imagine the factors below will have provided one scenario to imagine our species having reached there.

I imagine these psychological factors in an earth/world setting which includes very advanced green technology, conflict-resolution-based democracies and republics, interplanetary travel, and deep personal inner quieting right here.

Imagine the year 10,000 A.D.

1. Wakening

It is human destiny to have the opportunity to wake up and be and develop what we are. Plato's allegory of the cave is for all time. We seek life fully lived. Why should we not? We are brief, but we can be deep and wide.

Effective wakening practices have been practiced for thousands and thousands of years. The antiquity and efficacy of Hindu meditative practice is a guide for our long futures....

2. Mind stilling

The mind needs to quiet itself. Quiet mind. A million years from now, perhaps stillness among quiet minds for ages
3. Deepening

Eric Ericson and others have led us through concrete stages of life-meaning development. Life lived deepens and expands. As we accept our stages, as one ancient Buddhist prayer exhorts, "I pray that the wheel of the Dhamma to be turned."

4. Cyber

Computer intelligence and communication, biofeedback, computer and multi-media network connectivity, all kinds of technical development roars forward, stimulating us in ways we have never known before - expanding our mental capacities in the present and over time, the size and capacity of our minds beyond expectation.

Without question, the explosive momentum forward in technology development is likely to continue. In fact, quantum changes may always be nearby.

This expansion of mental functioning and connection to technoworld-brain will be a gateway for expanded functioning, even in cerebrally connecting the gaia, even in the dim future living way beyond our sight.

5. Empirical research

We have no substitute now for a certain amount of scientific exploration and settling of questions and asking of new ones. I doubt that we will have a substitute in the future. Scientific method, with its requirements, offers us certain insights and likehoods that we are likely to get by no other method than to open the horse's mouth and count the teeth.

Each future we can imagine will need precision as well as peace and light.

6. Conflict-resolution

"Win-win" cooperative conflict-resolution techniques are working and spreading. The techniques are readily transferable, even from language to language and culture to culture.
World population and culture-differences-interpenetration-press will necessitate successful results with conflict-resolution techniques refined and practiced over long successful time.

How thoroughly at peace is our species capable of seeking, reaching, and maintaining if we refined and practiced these tasks as an honoring of each other, over long successful time.

7. Transparency

Sidney Jouard, in the Transparent Self, pictured the individual who is willing to open his or her blinds and be seen. Life is to be lived known. If one is transparent, one will know that the responses that he or she gives out to others will really be about him or her. We would then have the opportunity to know each other and live real (rather than fancied) lives together.

This characteristic can allow the members of this populous world to get closer to the life's honest core in experiencing of the real.

8. Transcendence

Everyone has had some kind of break-through experience. The lid comes off. The vibrance of the day breaks in. The cosmos is intuited. The person and the green field and distant ocean are at one.

Why should those of the future be different? They will want their lives vivid. They will want to peel down the layers of the onion of their perceptions and strike through to the gold and the wild.

Chekhov's short story characters would often break through to the next level of perception of seeing, of joy in life, just before death, dying but fully alive in the midst of it. We might be able to live whole lives this way.

Those of the future can arise from Plato's cave, eyes opening.

For the finite, every day is a dying; every day is new birth, new life.
9. Balancing

Complex factors and impulses are to be weighed and balanced, day in, day out through a whole life.

The practice of Tai Chi is a symbol now of what can be done in the future: In daily practice, everything utterly silent, in motion, in changing dynamic and serene balance - always now.

10. Chi

A surging energy pulses back and forth from head to toe, from stem to stern, from snout to tail.

Found by pre-historic ancients, maintenance of the Chi's flowing improves our fate and our experience of each new now.

11. Eco-Econ

In Europe recently, a slogan has become common: "If it's not ecological, it's not economical." Just as ecology and psychology are striking a vital balance/synthesis, so too ecology and economics are essentially become parts of one grand practice.

The "bottom line" in traditional capitalism is "profit". But the Bay Area knows that the bottom line is in the streets, that the bottom line is the continuing robust habitability of the planet. There could be no profit on the day a bay dies.

The bottom line is the very earth itself.

As we seek to ease the ecological crisis, one method begins by counting the main categories of destructiveness to the environment, then we can look for their functions and their relationships to the interdisciplinary cores of the diseases. Even though the overall ecological disease is systemic, one can "fractionate". To fractionate is to break the problem into sensible parts and look for methods to solve the component problems in each part, one by one. Perhaps combining a set of suggested and structurally-related and balanced proposed solutions can help build consensus for moving ahead together.
The Gross National Product is capable of going into perpetual balancing - with concentration on and improvements in the Net National Resource Assets. First, all the debt will need to be paid off. How will we finally begin?

12. Gaia-Ecos

We must meet family; we must get to know the most distant cousins. In our thoughts, we expand attention, compassion, and kinship with the other animal forms of life. In fact, plants share around 30% of their genetic structure with us. It is inescapable. The towering redwood under which we stand is family. We all will stand awake under our in-common sun.

13. The Long Sustainable

Social forms of conflict-resolution, justice, and all can be interwoven with ecologically sound economic methods, which allow quieting social forms to operate with and through benign material process.

14. Now experienced

Here, this moment, is all we know, is all that is really present, ever, luminous and full.

Past and future hover just outside the East and West windows of the present, displaying their shadowy forms and movements. Dwelling in the non-feeling recesses of the mind is a cool prison alternative to hot life as this moment of light glistens and dances.

15. Not - then Here - then Gone

No matter how far we imagine into the future, the species homo sapiens will probably be a brief-lived creature, embedded within an incredibly complex eco-web of life. The humans will note a time before which he and she were absolutely not. Here in that future present, he and she will dance-fly through the brief moments. Then each generation of he and she will be gone, new generations of flowers will fill the future sunlight fields.
250,000 to 3 million A.D.

We can probably not fathom the character of human and other life at such great time (and probably space) distances, except that we will share common genes - and mind, emotion, body, world, and time. We do know that down the uncounted centuries, seminal movements, formulations, and people will have gathered and moved, brought together and in process, like rain down the mountain forming streams gathering into rivers running together toward the sea.

We do know that, during this extremely future period, the last of the radioactive decay poison danger our generation put into the ground should complete and expire. Hopefully, our poisons will be gone by then too.

Perhaps if we utterly stop poisoning over the next single generation, that period in the future will be (finally, finally) rid of the denial, unconsciousness, ill will and non-caring which have set up this incredibly long penance period in the first place. We have set out bad presents (ozone hole, acid rain, desertification, rainforest decimation, and on and on) toward the future; with luck, before our present generations are all gone, we will still have time to take much of it back and help consider how to cap the rest over time.

(Joanna Macy envisions a nuclear guardianship, during which time, all the years from now until that day, 250,000 A.D. or more, when the meters show that the radioactivity is gone, no longer dangerous to life, humans will stand guard around the waste disposal sites - constant reminders to future generations.)

Perhaps our current generation's penance will then, at last, be done.
The Long Future beyond 3 million years from now

When the old karma is stilled, when the needs of the ancient brain come into harmony with the new, when the pulse of life allows the energy to come through, when we are awake to the incredible web of life around us, when we float still in the midst of the brief time of our life existence, the long futures will lay out before our distant heirs with the beauty of a road well worth traveling, with the beauty of a call.

What good presents for them have we time, love, and will to prepare?

Each of us, then, is an individual with loved ones, enmeshed in the incredible life web of the earth; it may also be so that the total ecos in the cosmos, if other life exists, is, with us, a single grand universe being, a universal ecos, and all these myriad jeweled facets rooted in unending time.

From the now until - imagine the end of sentient time

At a time in the future vast way beyond our reckoning, on some particular date, hour, minute, millisecond on some particular planet, galaxy, position, the last of the light of life will probably go out. Perhaps when the universe is beginning its new rush to come together unto itself again, to crush inward, to prepare for the next "big bang" yet to come.

After that, in some unknown future Yuga, some future time and space beyond our ken, who knows, perhaps nothing will be remembered of this present by those forms of life which will have evolved by then up toward some utterly future and all-warming sun.
Gaia, Ecos, and Cosmos

This manuscript has considered five main forces which propel our lives and the consciousness in and surrounding us. It has begun to touch the conscious early glimmerings of life and has looked at our current ecological crossroads and, in pure speculation, at an aspect of a distant future.

The incredibly vast numbers of life forms surrounding and interpenetrating our personal singular existence call to us if we would listen. Even if we don't, they remain as webbed to us as breathing out and breathing in.

As we have explored, our own consciousness has been interwoven within our every molecule and within the total web of life -- binding you and me to this planet's ocean of life, which remains in constant metamorphosis, in shape and motion through time.

The cosmos is without end. Time is without end. Life has begun and is considering the conditions for its existence.

On only one planet are we positive that sentient (self-aware) life exists, at all, although we imagine life through the universe. In our psychological living and contacts, we alive now can care for the process by which it can naturally continue and thrive.

All sentient beings on this one known life planet are interconnected, interdependent, and, in truth, a single web, a single pulsing life - an "interbeing", sharing unique but in-common fate.

If there are other planets or bodies which now host or will host life in the future, then each is its own Gaia, its own world living eco-net of interrelated being. Consider that all life is ultimately one and by combining all experience of life from all sources in the cosmos, all Gaias in the universe are one grand living-cosmos-wide interconnected being, a grand multi-gaia - the universe's "ecos".
And how may it be through all time and within the totality of the cosmos, within the all -- one vast grand life - within an even vaster realm of rocks and empty space, time and space perhaps without edge ever?

Until, finally, the end of sentient time

Some particular date, hour, minute, on some particular planet, galaxy, position, the last of the light of life will probably go out. Perhaps when the universe is beginning its new rush to come together unto itself again, may out in the incredibly distant future, to crush inward, to prepare for the next "big bang" to come.

Perhaps, someday long, long after that, in some totally unknown future, in some time framework totally beyond our ken, when life has arisen again, perhaps nothing will be remembered of this present, by those future forms of life which will have evolved by then up toward some utterly future and all-warming sun.
Three poems to close on

Eight Wilbur Stanzas
from the 20-stanza poem
"George IV Prepares for War •
Om Namo Bhagavate Muktanandaya"

1.

November Sunday morning. so barely audible, so like the rustling in this cool morning breeze of the leaves on this gently swaying hillside of trees, the sound coming over the hill; but it rises and falls a pitch or two, like music.

I've finished teaching the morning session of the writing seminar held by the bridge over the little, slow-moving creek.

I walk along the creek toward the hot springs. The sounds of the creek flowing around rocks mix with the other soft sound rising, falling.

2.

I've been coming to these hot springs for ten years. I sit in the hot water
until every care and thought falls away.
Then, winter-spring-summer-fall,

I climb out dripping hot sulphur water,
walk out and sit down on the wooden back deck
to watch across the creek the hillside stillness,
perhaps a single bird in flight.

3.

At the foot of the hillside
at the very edge of the creek
stands a huge oak. A dark gnarl
the size of a plate ten feet up

the trunk looks like an eye.
Twenty feet up the trunk
is a long thick branch
down from which hangs an

indeterminably old oak swing,
two thin gray chains
each hanging down to a metal
holder on a side of the wooden seat,

the seat always empty in the ten years
I've been coming here. For a decade,
I have sat with the same silent scene,
under sun and moon, parched in heat and

under a powder of snow covering the
sloping creekside, the swing seat,
the tree limbs, the hillside -
all white.

4.

Earlier this morning, I approach
the big group kitchen at the back
of the hotel where guests prepare
their own food. I hear very soft
high notes: "Om Namo Bhagavate Muktanandaya". As I come through the kitchen door I see her pushing her mop back and forth across the kitchen floor in time with her singing, "Om Namo Bhagavate Muktanandaya", a song chant to her deceased teacher, soft young face like that in an early Rembrandt, moving this very moment through a beam of sunlight coming in the Eastern window. "Om Namo Bhagavate Muktanandaya."

5.

Stream to my left, as I come over the hill to the hot springs, the musical sound is soft and clearer. Across the creek, the young woman from this morning's kitchen is leaned back in the Oak swing, kicking her feet up and forward, swinging back and forth singing, long brown hair swaying behind her, the swing turning very slowly clockwise as it swings her back and forth, over the creek, back over the creekbank, over the creek, back over the land:

"Om Namo Bhagavate Muktanandaya."

6.

I settle down into the hot water and close my eyes. I hear the sweet high sounds: "Om Namo Bhagavate Muktanandaya." The seminar falls away. My loneliness falls away. My plans fall away. Fall away. Only the heat and the smell of sulphur.
I hear my heart beating in my chest and listen to it. Sweat breaks out on my forehead. I open my eyes and see across the creek the young woman swing forward and back through the air, her hair flowing out in the breeze: "Om Namo Bhagavate Muktanandaya."

7.

Even in this beginning of the 21st Century, this new thousand-year saga, more cows than people live in this county, Colusa.

White shirt with light blue stripes, blue denim skirt, she is swinging in the light breeze, in the sunlight, singing quietly.

It's about 11:30 am, holding onto the gray swing chains at her sides with her hands and arms as she leans back, swinging back and forth over the blue creek, over the land, over the water: "Om Namo Bhagavate Muktanandaya... Om Namo Bhagavate Muktanandaya."

Swinging forward, swinging back -- left-hand fingers now absently rubbing her soft open mouth, breath fragile, in, then out, horizon coming toward her, flowing away, coming toward her, flowing
away, trees, hills, blue sky, 
small white clouds 
almost still, as far 
as the eye can see.

8.

"Om Namo Bhagavate Muktanandaya."
Trees, hills, blue sky, small white 
clouds almost still, as far as the 
eye can see, as far as the eye can see.
White, white

1. The Marin hills woods

The dancers turn and turn
in a circle, the party guests
at Sat Santokh's 50th birthday.
(I join in and remember with a sigh,
I will be fifty in a few weeks.)
In the white and yellow light,
sweat shows on the dancers' foreheads.
The Sufi song ends. Shams takes a breath,
has been beating the drum,
announces a new dance.

In white turban, long beard,
white clothes, Sat Santokh beams.
"This next is one of my favorites,"
he says. "One night, years ago,
when we were dancing this next dance,
I was doing the dance with my eyes closed.
While we danced, I found myself in a circle of
ancient elders. It was night. In the darkness,
we began dancing to the right
in a circle together around and
around a bonfire, bending down together
and raising up together, everyone
flickering in the light."

2. Juneau, Alaska

Falling all about me,
snowflakes the size of
pure white half-dollars,
white, white falling before my eyes,
riding up and down the icy wind,
mounds of white loading evergreen
tree branches, white trees in
thick stands in every direction
covering the surrounding mountains rising,
from the nearby edges of the small town,
rising almost straight up into the freezing early evening air.

3. Oakland downtown, not far from the Cypress Structure

I sit silently at my desk looking out over the city, The end-of-the-day glancing sunlight is almost white against the ornate high wall of the 1906 building across the street and almost green against the fall hills in the distance. The earthquake begins like any other. Sarahjane and I say to each other "oh, an earthquake", as we turn to go on with our work. This one begins to shake the building harder ("this one is big," we say, turning back to each other), then still harder, and harder. Our seventh-floor office has begun leaping up and down, throttling us awake like children from our beds, then, growing beyond bounds, a raging giant thrashing back and forth as if frenzied to shake off its clothes and come apart.

4. Leaving Juneau

The silver and white airplane hurdles us up into the morning air, rising above the white-laden mountain forest that disappears quickly below banks of billowing white clouds. Below the airplane, the clouds part and snow-capped mountains one after another appear. A white land, punctuated by white-on-gray jutting mountains, stretches as far as I can see. A huge bay of light blue and white water reflecting the sky and clouds floats by below before the clouds close their curtains again, then open again. Dozens, then literally
hundreds of white-capped mountains appear
like vast unmoving herds of granite moose
and elk in counsel. A glacier pours
without motion from their midst,
its mile-wide ice flow held still
by the white-gloved hand of time.
"Not now," it whispers. "Not now."

Multi-veined waterways appear
criss-crossing the landscape below with
white ice and blue. A long river-width
waterway runs toward the horizon and
disappears among the mountain-after-
mountain-after-mountain track.

5.

The giant's frenzy thrashes our
fifteen-story building up and down,
back and forth, mad to get out of its cage
of brick and steel and blast in every direction.
Sarahjane and I dive for the floor in a doorway
by the hall and hold each other tight, covering
each other's heads with our hands.

6.

My plane dips down toward Cordova.
Miles and miles of pure white,
mountain upon mountain --
Out my window, miles long, a huge
slap of absolute black against the white,
then another, like some immense
black paint river has washed over the lower
altitudes of these mountains-after-mountains:
everything else white, but for these
vast poison rivers of black.

7.

Our windows explode as we hear
fifteen floors of glass crash out at once.
The mountain of glass flies down
toward the pavement below and hits like a huge glass bomb. Stories of stairway walls are breaking apart and falling down the hall. We captives are heaved wildly about. The building can't possibly shake any harder or must surely collapse around us. Huddled on the floor, we hold on tight as we know how.

8.

A young woman from Cordova, writing about what she sees right after the oil spill: "(Mom), the entire ecosystem has died (here) or is dying. The deer and bear (are gone)....

Ninety percent of the vast natural area around me is as silent as death."

9.

The wild thrashing continues but begins to slow, then slows some more. Then, for a few minutes, the floor vibrates like a huge bell, then quiets to a halt. The room becomes very, very still.

10.

In a small wooden house just up the snowy street from the State Capitol, an ecological defense fund lawyer describes her work coordinating law suits. She is very tired but precise, determined, animated.
11.

Over lunch later, a young man and woman, two leaders of Alaskan environmental organizations, weave their study plans, their Greenprint, their vision of pure ancient and future mountains, forests, animals, waters.

12.

While it is zero outside, the Chair of the Alaska Oil Spill Commission sits at a plain folding table on a folding chair in his unadorned white conference room at the end of our meeting and contemplates the outline of his impending Report to the legislature, weighs points in silence. We shake hands again and begin putting on our heavy outer wraps. I thank him for his unsung work. I know of those outside Alaska who counting on his Commission's impact for their safety and that of their future generations. He smiles, jokes about other things, like what he'd have otherwise liked to do with his Christmas, then says goodbye and shuffles away slowly toward his office, his back a little bent, his coat collar up on one side. His eyes appear to be somewhere else, maybe up some white mountain pass way above the city.

13.

As early morning light slants across a makeshift room, an already oily worker leans against the wall, stares across the long room at the rows upon rows of open-mouthed dead bodies of wide-eyed blackened animals and begins to cry for souls.

14.

The pilot, panting, steers the fireboat toward the raging Marina shoreline. A fireman crawls inch by inch under the crumbling house
to hold a terrified woman in his arms until 
she is freed just before it crashes down with a roar.

15.

People climb the Cypress structure 
like a mountain, then quickly crawl 
under the concrete into the debris 
even as the gas fumes begin to fill 
the crushing space, calling out, calling out.

Human chains lift people up, carry people down. All around, people are standing 
in shock, holding each other, 
searching for loved ones, 
staring in disbelief at the ruins.

16.

It is late, time to go home. 
I am tired. So much has happened; 
so much to do. I close Sat Santokh's 
front door behind me. In the deep darkness, 
I and a new friend walk down the long 
row of fragrant wooden steps, 
the music above and behind me, 
then walk carefully down the 
steep longer driveway. 
As I reach the road in the blackness, I turn 
toward Sham's drumbeat one last time. 
In the upper room, soft yellow light 
suffuses out the windows 
into the night air, like mist.

I can see the dancers near the windows, still in a circle, 
their line bobbing, moving slowly to the right together, 
bending down together, singing "Yah," then 
raising up in unison, all arms and hands reaching up, 
pointing up past Sat Santokh's painted ceiling, 
singing "Allah!" stepping together to the right again,
in unison bending down, "Yah",
the yellow mist of light almost white
against the dark green night trees,
all bodies, all hands, movements

framed in the windows together reaching up,
all singing "Allah!"
Blue, green, yellow, white

It is said that on the night before Einstein realized his theory of general relativity, he dreamed about a beam of light which he climbed onto, like onto a horse, and rode.

John Seed: "Give yourself bearing as with the authority of our five billion years of co-evolution."

(Just how many beings, do you think, are alive altogether on this Earth right now?)

Talmud, Hagigah 21: "Whoever reflects on four things, it were better he had never been born: that which is above, that which is below, that which is before, and that which is after."

THE PAST

neitheronecould
notfromthestart
thepastthepast

1. Brugge, Belgium

Caw, caw.

Shapes of the late summer afternoon blue sky light show, in the moving water surface,
gray tan stone bridge
large brown tree full of green leaves
a small bird leaping up from the branches
a steep-roofed red brick house
white trim high chimney
old house after house on the right side of the canal
as the canal turns slowly to the left
in the distance going out of sight.

On the pathway to the Brugge railroad station:
Layers of sun and shaded
green sunny and shady grass very close
the undulating blue-green-brown patterns in the moving canal water
the lush green of the far bank for a ways
an old walking path lined with grass and trees
bikes and scooters flowing along their own path
trees, very very old houses, late afternoon.

In flowing colors of the surface of the canal
accurate blue of the sky
accurate greens of the surrounding lush grass and vines
the brown trunks and branches of the overhanging trees
reflecting, like looking out through window glass in the rain
the blue texture of the water as it runs, rippling the mirror.

Along the far side of the canal, two couples walking arm in arm,
both women's blouses white.

Some bicycling along the far side
in their own bike lane: Japanese, German, French, Dutch, Belgian,
Russian, some local kids
moving slowly in the lushness
feet circling silver wheels almost in tandem

Ducks on the shore watching the moving blue and green water, their
ducklings in the grass huddled furry near the shore watching the big
ducks watching the water.

2.

Last week, we went to the St. Peterbourg war memorial with mass
graves left from Hitler's 900-day seige on the City: In my mind I still
see mass grave mounds one after another after another, each about
fifty feet wide by 100 feet long, about 2500 townspeople to a
mound, some mounds marked civilian, some soldier, some mounds
marked 1941, some 1942, some 1943, rows upon rows, upon rows; I
counted up to 100,000 civilian mass graves in one area (the
counting took only a minute), then stopped and sat down, did
nothing for a long while.

"Hero-City" says a main metal memorial held in stone across the
front of the last rows of mounds, "Mother, Leningrad".

Beyond the mass grave mounds headed in one direction, the older
St. Peterbourg grave yard going back some more...

3.

Morning lights the pages: dark curved library up then down the
careful DNA staircase, the oval stair wells, volumes, archives,
computers, echoes just like in a white marble building, at the main
dark wood rolltop desk, gray and white marble you find the wall
around you, large plants all around and paintings yellow and green,
white and blue, red, Einstein to sleep.

Some summer morning sunlight: Worlds share our sun, our Milky
Way, all beyond all, way smaller than the atom, smaller than sub-
atomic particles, where we and all are verbs not nouns (in the
darkness great unknown Jupiters swim through space)... The tired
mind, eyes closing, drops everything, everything at all -- over and
over, over and over.

In this skin of time, lumps of light arise, then burn, as so do we,
while Einstein closed eyed raises up. Einstein is dreaming. Newton
sees the apple fall; he sees the dancing, the undulations of the
hooded neuteranks, the lightning, then Einstein...

4.

Underwater valleys and hills for long distances, swimming, the sun's
rays muted under water in morning light greens, light blue and cold.
Other fish forms on both sides cast deep shadows, swim in
shadowed parallel.

Above, tiny ducklings sleeping together on lighted Brugge grass; the
moving water sounds, the shade.

5.

Coming up from sleep into the waking, looking out the back window
seeing everything speed away behind and disappear.

6.

I came out of Leningrad becoming-St. Petersburg a week ago this
afternoon. Then Amsterdam by train direct to Brugge. Walking with
my daughter who's in from Paris, sitting under a striped canopy in
the sudden rain in the ancient town square, myriad tiny falling
streaks covering the 600, the 800 year old walls, centuries caught in
stone. Then the trains Utrecht to Roosdal to Amsterdam back again,
back to the canals (the "grachts" the Dutch call them).
Reguliersgracht at Kaisersgracht is my corner now. Here are seven
old stone bridges for the intersecting blue-green grachts surface in
perpetual change. I get out of the grey cab. The green water in the
Kaisersgracht shimmers up the image for me of vertical white shimmering detailing, the old brick canal-front houses on the other side.

7.
How to ask all the past to come together? So difficult to call just my own past together, one place, one time? Species disappearing so fast, so much faster than before.

Rain late last night pattering above my sleep.

John Seed: "This rainforest was the place we've evolved for the last one hundred and thirty million years of our existence." Mostly gone. These are the years of our watch over these resources.

"About eighty percent of Czechoslovakia's forests are dying from acid rain," says The European, on July 11, 1991. "Radio broadcasts warn school children to wear breathing masks outside."

Czechoslovakia now.

Russians tell the story of an American fisherman. Americans tell the same story of a Russian fisherman. In each case, the fisherman gets up early, goes to his regular river fishing place, takes out a smoke, inhales, throws the lighted match into the water, and the river water catches fire and explodes.

Sometimes when Zalman would try to become silent to meditate during the years of the thermonuclear crisis, he would find something, some kind of static or crying, coming back this way along the pipe of time from the future. It's as if, Zalman said, they were calling back to us pleading with us to stop the way we were doing things now...

8.

old frameworks dissolve; concepts reduce to sand

Monday and canals, cars and boat horns. It's one pm. Sunshine. I look away. The clock jumps to 2:35. let canal go, let grasses go just let it all go the clock jumps to Wednesday pm. Then to 7. The clock jumps to Thursday, 5:20 pm. It's Friday, almost 8.

floating along the gracht

painting the venerables white and yellow,
    painting the flowers red and white, then blue
the flowers painting each other
some days in another century
Belgian, Dutch, French, Russian, Rasta, Israeli, and others the past
the past: izvenezia, da, nyet, neva, parazhalsta, spaceba, eetcafe,
eekhous, hoogstratt, getontothebus, stampitthankyou

9. Maxim the Nevsky rhuba

I begin my class Wednesday morning. "Nachi Nayim", I say. "Let us
begin."

(Ya nee Nevsky rhuba.") I am not a Neva fish. But I know one:
Maxim. I happened to meet the Nevsky rhuba when I was in
Leningrad the summer of 1990. He was swimming in the City's
central river, the Neva.

It was hard.

Even once I had found a possible translator, the actual translation
process was long and difficult, back and forth, back and forth;
Difficult not only that translating from the trout language was itself
arduous, but also because this trout was Maxim, who was wearing a
gas mask as he talked.

He could not stay long.

He asked me to tell you...he says to us, he says: Over two-thirds of
our world's surface is water. Over 80% of our own body's weight is
water. And, as for him and his colleagues and family, they are
obliged to swim around in the Neva's water all day and night long.

He said that in his fish school he had heard historic tales of fisher
families of ancient times when gentle angles of underwater hills
were visible, clear in the morning light distance stories of seeing
through the Neva for great, long distances, of seeing the distant
underwater hills and bushes, early sun's rays down through which
morning in the Neva waters his trout family's ancestors would swim.

Maxim envisioned and wished fervently for that clear-water
"heaven" again for them and their heirs.

"If only," said the Nevsky rhuba, "you'd listen. If only, ...."
the dna library in our bodies, subtle and dark, for our reading as we are ready, sometimes head, sometimes heart, sometimes emptiness or light

A young Indian man is burning sage now up on the stage in the Oakland Masonic hall. I'm in the back. He's bringing a group of 1000 into an American native peoples ritual. I see the smoke, hear the incantation. I sit. A couple minutes of ritual take place. Then whiff; I smell it.

This sage smoke is going out to summon into the hall all his Indian ancestors to the tribe's council, I imagine that going on further out to all beings who have ever existed in the past, of whatever species and category. What if they could gather and sit with us here in our council, as we sit with each other, as we consider our ecosphere to come?

11.

We sit, as small ducks sit together in a gathering, big brown and tan duck nearby, at the water's edge looking out at the current moving, shades of green; far water rippling, blue in the water nearby.

12.

Vermeer 350 years ago paints a woman still reading the letter right now. Her eye holds this moment's white light.

PRESENT

From across the water, the hours of the ending old Millennium wave at the speed of light;
white lace curtains in the windows

of the house up the hill
on the left, hills rolling up ahead,
driving North just past Dog Town.

Dear Audubon begins a census of sentient beings
of all the sentient beings alive this minute:
those in the air, those on the land, those in the sea.

All creatures have names for themselves and each other.
What number? All here this moment, and flowers,
on and off again go the single numbers, in the left grass the speeding
roadside car passes a dozen unseen uptipped, suntouched small blue
souls among the green.

Says the Roshi: There's nothing but the present.
Past gone; future not.
Any hour can be the last one; pass the Wine.

13.
As I come towards waking, someone is speaking on the radio in a
language I don't understand, perhaps Dutch or German. It had been
a symphony when I turned it on.

8:32 am
This house in Amsterdam was built about 1800, 190 years old, in a
neighborhood of buildings with some older than anything in modern
American anglo culture. Older than New England, older than that.
Sixteenth and seventeenth century canals in Amsterdam? In Brugge,
some towers from the 12th century and a town full of stone
buildings from 500 years ago. It's summer noon and the old
stonemasons are laughing as they work.

European neighborhoods may be 1000-years old or more. Some
native neighborhood may be 15,000 years old. Some campfire
remains say about three million. How old is yours? Well, how
come?

14.
How many beings are alive now? Well, 6 billion humans now. But
how many others?
Just on our planet, now as we speak, write, read, and listen. How
many now?
Trailing rainbows of water, the porpoise arcs upward through the
air.
"Gorilla Fine Animal" says Koko, in sign language. Koko the Gorilla.

Sage burning. In this hall among us. We need to all of us call
ourselves together. Is there still time to talk and plan and do? From
time to time, Joanna Macy and John Seed gather, as they put it, a
council of all beings. A council of humans sits down playing roles of human and other animals and sentience;

I can see the sage burning cloud of light smoke begin to rise in the hall. Joanna and John gather beings together. Some crawl in; some fly. All kinds of hair and bone and sinew. All kinds of eyes. All settle down and sit together in silence for a while. Sage is burning to gather souls.

The sage touches my left nostril.

All past lives meet with all present.

15.
I'll leave now to see Rembrandt about how light is upon your face

16.
It's after 6 pm Wednesday

The present is going once, going twice,

FUTURE

17.
Looking out the front windshield, splashed with light -- All lives to come in the future: Come sit with us here -- with all past, all of the present, sitting with all of you yet to come. We must talk. Our watch over the planet is going badly. It's your future. What do you advise?

18. The white and the gold

I am driving slowly down Ascot, down our winding, wooded hill. On the car's radio a piano is playing, something soft and sweet

It is September 14th, Sarah's
16th birthday. She sits on the right
front seat looking out the window smiling
holding in her hands a single white rose above four green leaves on
the stem

in a half-filled-with-water translucent
carton, a present from a friend since kindergarten.
The early afternoon sunlight comes in her window,
passes through two higher rose leaves

a luminous light green. The winding back and forth
down the hill to the music is like dancing.
We reach Telegraph Avenue and turn right
down it toward campus. Before us,
a black dog walks, yawning, across
the street, from the West side to the East,
watching neither right nor left.

By Shakespeare's and the Soup Kitchen crowds
are flowing along Telegraph. Our driving
is very slow. As our car approaches Cody's
bookstore corner, Telegraph at Dwight, we
stop behind the traffic ahead of us. I see

out my left window a young
woman in dark blue, with long brown hair, walking
briskly winding through the crowd,
her legs in multi-color tights

Her left hand holding high a long dark wood
walking stick, this staff crowned on top
with bright gold knob in the form
of a sailing ship, sail spread, catching in the wind.

The knob sailing forward twinkles the gold with
the sun. Traffic moves forward. I turn my eyes,
give the gas pedal a touch, then turn
back to my left again to see the shine, but she has gone.

19.
Child of children, children's child, child among children, children birthing children, the strength of the sound stretches here from the beginning.

All beings past, all beings present, all potential beings yet to be.

Incense in the air.

20.

Two guys talking intensely in French on Amsterdam radio. I don't really understand most of what they are saying, but when they get funny, I laugh too.

What best? What really can be done?

Hey Jack, hey Jill, what feeling to your one and ten hundred-year family plans? Millineum is knocking now and will come in. What tearful no-doubt blood-flecked trail can finally bring us home?

21.

Friday night bedtime. The deadline's up. Back to America on Monday. I'm starting to fall asleep in my chair in front of the computer's streaming light.

Tomorrow, during the morning, begin to pack. Turn the computer back in to the rental shop across Prinzengracht.

I turn it off, drop my clothes, and crawl into bed, pull the covers up. It's begun to rain.

As I sleep, I can hear above in the night sky great thunder rolling on and on. My closed eyes see flashes of strong lightning light fall down through my skylights, Long rolling roars. Then silence. Then again. After awhile, everything falls away. As the darkness rolls like an immense dark blue tide from continent to continent, every being lays down and sleeps.

22.

Five small ducks sit together touching, leaning toward each other, tiny beaks in light, in the woodside gathering. Under the far trees, in shade, large creatures come and go. Nearby, the big brown and tan duck (who's at the water's edge) looks out at the moving
current, green further water glimmers, sky blue in the water close by, then, in this wave tip a moment's glint of yellow-white,

while Einstein, dreaming, rides a beam of light.
Afterword

Five Methods Which Mind•Emotion•Body•World•Time Employs to Encourage Study

It is important that students of any discipline learn the history of their craft. It is as important to learn the history of the craft and the main stage-by-stage processes by which it reached the present as it is to know the latest contemporary issues, because the present is but a way-station on the track moving from the past into the future and out of sight. If by learning crucial developmental stages and breakthroughs of the craft as it moves inexorably toward the present, the student can learn framework and momentum that give imperative perspective to what the present sees as knowledge and "truth." Then the student is better prepared to appreciate the most important meanings of the craft's present and to see how he/she chooses to prepare for the craft's and the world's onrushing future.

So may it be in psychology.

But one problem that stands in the way of such appreciation is that many, if not most, students are put off initially by the seemingly impossible vastness of the field. It must seem to them that they don't know of a meaningful way to get started that is not too imposing, like thinking about approaching the climbing of a vast mountain in shorts and thongs.

This study as a book approaches the subject in what it hopes is a more approachable way. Hopefully, the book appears to the new student as a meadow to enjoy rather than an infinitely tall mountain to suffer up on, perhaps in Sisyphean futility; and the book uses several methods to encourage students to get started and to keep going through the book to its end.
The methods it employs include an innovation or two.

The first method is to keep the book short, thus easy to pick up. Since this is self-evident, I will move on to the second.

The second method is to combine my essay text with carefully chosen examples of my poetry, mostly published ones, poems which focus themselves on precisely the point I am making in the essay text. My experience with students over the years is that, at least for some, the proper poetry allows them to take in a different sort of experience which is complementary to what they have been reading in essay form. As a teacher of poetry and as former President of the Board of California Poets in the Schools, the nation's largest poet-teacher residency program, I have seen over and over how emotional experience can "get through" to students, experiences of poetry which can actually intensify and clarify cognitive and linear thinking, while developing an emotional perspective as well. As one way of seeking the potential learning experience, it is a little like, in music, going from high fidelity to stereo. As a second way of seeing it, poetry can make a key conceptual point in a way that involves the emotions, which then involves more of the learner's senses, which in turn allows a wider-band integration of the experience/thought to take place. Put another way, this book aims to experiment with the proposition that even the history of ideas and consciousness can benefit from inclusion of alternatives to prose form.

In an important sense, in the post-modern world which is fast evolving, it is most appropriate for us to experiment with form and substance. The combination of essay and poetry offers to stimulate emotion which adds motivation and excitement, vivid imagery which adds excitement and enhanced memory, the positive sensations caused by use of the language to evoke and to be experienced as music as well as "meaning," and as an enhancement to it.
To review the first two methods, then, the book is aimed to be read by the student new to the history of consciousness for whom it can seek to act as one approachable form of introduction which is easy to read while being true to intellectual history. The premise is that by combining ease of understanding with emotional activation, the reader is more likely to approach the beginnings of his/her intellectual quest in this field with appetite, curiosity, and hope.

The third method is that I have taken my own very idiosyncratic approach to the material. The intent is to seek to excite the new students with what has excited and does excite me. This has the strength of my intuitions, if they are correct, that my best shot at exciting them is through seeking to communicate my own. In essence, I seek to think and to feel my own personal way through the times and issues I reflect upon and to report on what I see in a way to invoke the reader's emotions as well as mind.

One significant limitation to this method is that the book is neither systematic nor comprehensive. It does not seek to be. It assumes (and requires) that the student will seek out other books systematically introducing the history of thought or consciousness to flesh out what this book begins. Tarnas, Russell, Van Doren and any number of other sources can be a deep systematic introduction, while, of course, each of the individual authors and texts who and which developed our history of thought are excellent introductions in themselves.

The fourth method is that the book starts with my speculation about the most ancient of conscious times, long, long before the human. Although it is speculation, this can stimulate initial student thought about the profoundly ancient beginnings of things. If one is to have a history of consciousness, it behooves one to seek the very roots of beginnings, on the shoulders of which the main introduction to early human and early human recorded events can take their place and be seen in perspective. Then, throughout the book, time and space is devoted to thought on the non-human heirs to the most ancient of
life and consciousness. I am convinced of the consciousness (broadly defined) of non-human life forms and that they surround us. I am convinced that one antidote to the poison of alienation we suffer (because of our distancing from the earth life web in which we live) is to make the reality and shape of the other forms of life we share the planet with (and on whose continued vitality we utterly depend) more vivid and real. This needs to include their grand combination into the earth's Gaia.

Fifth, in a separate but connected publication for students in the SSU Spring 1994 History of Consciousness, I have included written pieces on which my role has been that of editor, one by His Holiness The Dalai Lama and the other by the Reverend Thomas Berry. Although including one's editing is not usual in a book or thesis, I find in this case that it enhances what I am trying to convey. Although books done as a thesis have normally been only of the graduate student's own writing, I believe passionately in the pieces of work developed under the method of my editing. Both manuscripts began over twenty pages long and have been distilled to four pages. With the Dalai Lama piece I took over a year of editing before I released it, with permission, into the public. Both manuscripts bear testament to absolutely crucial changes taking place right now -- ones that Mind-Emotion-Body-World-Time seeks to deal with -- changes which parallel the issues raised in my chapter called "At the Future's Edge" and in my speculation of psychological characteristics of a sustainable future.

The first edit has already been translated by His Holiness The Dalai Lama's Russian editor into Russian and published twice there.

These two edits do not substitute for the essay form, nor does the poetry. The manuscript experiments with having different methods bearing in on one subject, like lights from different angles shown down onto the actors on the stage, instead of one light from only one angle. If it works, there is more dimension, a wider field of illumination for the actors, and a wider variety of forms to stimulate
the reader's interest and learning processes. Each person seeks learning and apprehends learning differently.

Finally, this book sets out to offer itself as an introduction to five "forces" which appear to primordially shape what we have been, who we are, and who we can become. The book starts with speculation about consciousness among life's species long before the human, long in fact before mammals at all. Coming in from considering the past, the book takes one individual walk through five facets of the present and the intriguing question of who inhabits the now in which we live. The book then stands at the doorway between present and future and ponders. Finally, it speculates about certain mental characteristics of the near and distant future.

Mind, emotion, body, world, and time are five different faces of a single integrated phenomenon, a web of which we are made and within which we live and breathe and have our being. These five interweaving factors - mind, emotion, body, world, time - are involved in each of our lives at all times. In times of great stress, shock, and change, or in cases of meditation or other centering, these factors and others can share priorities, lock onto each other for cooperation, and operate a little like a single engine with five pistons, like different facets of a single wave.

Mind and emotion act together as a synthesis of the mirror-imaging the two would set in motion. The body and its nervous system provide the neural and sense envelope in which mind and emotion are to be experienced by the person, by you and me. The mind and emotions can experience an increase in energy flow through the body system when the muscles begin to relax. Each person's body lives within the great body sphere of the world's live and sentient web, which in turn lives within the incomprehensible vastness of the infinite space of the universal cosmos. And these four -- mind-emotion-body-world -- are born, live, and die within the great and infinitely mysterious womb of time.
These five methods expressed in this way produce a brief manuscript which students may use with potentially easier access and potentially deeper experience. Time and experience is the test of all.

Although I did the actual writing of this book/thesis largely without reference to notes or reference books, except for periodic checks of historical dates, I am adding two bibliographies. The first bibliography (Works Cited) simply answers references from the text. The second bibliography (Works Consulted) consists of books in my current library which were important in the development of my own thought on these topics and which, to the degree available and practical, I can recommend to a student beginning such a quest.
Works Cited

Page


26  Randall Starkey, M.D. (Personal communication September 19, 1993). Oakland.


Joanna Macy and John Seed. (Periodic). Council of All Beings. Workshop held around the earth.


Works Consulted

Chapter 1
THE PAST


Shakespeare, W. Various plays and poetry.


Chapter 2

THE PRESENT


Chapter 3
ON THE FUTURE'S EDGE
Chapter 4
GAIA, ECOS, AND COSMOS and
Chapter 5
THE FUTURE


Macy, J. & Seed, J. (Periodic). Council of All Beings. Workshops held around the earth.


TWO TALKS
with Ram Dass

GROPING TOWARD OUR ECOZOIC FUTURE
by
The Reverend Thomas Berry

and

THE ONE AND THE FOUR
by
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
When I started to read your writings, I came across the term "dysfunctional cosmology"; and something happened inside of me, because it was such an apt phrase for the way in which I'm experiencing the world in which I live.

Thomas Berry: Well, most peoples have their life patterns and their norms of action, their ideals, their values rooted in some kind of a cosmology. It's a story of how things came to be in the beginning, how they came to be as they are, and the ways in which humans fit into the cosmology, and then the direction in which human affairs should go. And as long as the cosmology functions well, there is a basis for dealing with human situations. But when there is a disassociation from the cosmology, then the whole basis of meaning begins to change.

The larger dimension of my effort is to establish a capacity to experience the developmental story of the universe as our sacred story, as our sacred cosmology.

The universe is the revelation. In other words, this is a living Bible that we just have to learn how to read. But we not only have to learn how to read it, we are part of the Bible itself. We’ve got to read ourselves.

So what we are having is a new insight into this; and it’s astounding. We see this awesome power that we have. And it’s power that we don’t know what to do with or how to judge good and evil with, because we don’t understand the story as a sacred story. In other words, we don’t understand the earth as a sacred reality, the trees as sacred, the rivers, the mountains as sacred.
We live and everything lives in everything else. Every atom lives in every other atom. I think that's one of the wonderful discoveries that we have now from science. But we don't know what to do with it, because we don't have this mystique to enable us to deal with it.

Here's the basic point: I was dealing with some situations recently, and, to deal with those, I had to draw up what I call the Pattern of the Emerging Ecozoic Age.

You see, we are at the terminal phase of the Cenozoic Age, the last 65 million years. We're not just passing into another historical period, or another cultural modification. We are changing the chemistry of the planet. We are changing the biosystems. We're changing the geosystems of the planet on a scale of hundreds of millions of years. But more specifically, we're terminating the last 65 million years of life development. Now a person would say, "Well, where do we go from here?" To my mind we go from the terminal phase, if we survive it, into a really sustainable world. We will be passing from the terminal phase of the Cenozoic Age into what I call the Ecozoic Age. And the primary principle of the Ecozoic Age that we have to learn, I'm saying, is that the universe (and in particular planet Earth) is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects.

If we don't learn that, nothing is going to work. The universe has to do something about itself. But it has so committed itself to the human mode that, with regard to planet Earth, it has to function through the human at this stage. Whereas all this beauty of the universe that we see about us came into being without human consultation, from here on the universe will never function that way again.

As far as I can tell, the universe will never again function the way it functioned previously in the Cenozoic period, that is the last 65 million years. During the 65 million years in which wave-on-wave of life expansion took place, humans had nothing to say about it. What we have about us -- as planet earth, in particular, and the universe as a whole -- came out so magnificently. But in the future, even though the humans cannot make a blade of grass, there's liable not to be a blade of grass unless humans accept it, protect it, and foster it.
Now in this period that is emerging, even wilderness will, in a sense, have to be a protected wilderness. It will have to be protected so it can function within itself; and it will have to be protected from humans by humans. And there are occasions when humans will have to be a support system, provide a support system for so many of the animals, for many of the living forms that prior to our times made it on their own. Now the ideal should be that we should enable them to be on their own, that we should withdraw the human interference as much as possible and certainly not make it too controlled.

RD: Your focus on history and your appreciation of aesthetic beauty leads you to see the changes that humans are bringing about as somehow (I can't help but feel) a breakdown of the system. It's a transformation but also a breakdown, a loss. A great loss.

TB: Well, it's an enormous difficulty, I think; and I think it's one of the reasons for so many of the pathologies that we're into. It's because we have lost our rapport with these governing forces of the planet. And there's a great deal can be done, a great deal of human sympathy that can be developed and all that; but now we are into what I would consider an unworkable industrial plundering society that is at a dead end.

Let me say this. To my mind, at this order of magnitude, the industrial society, industrialization can be done once; it cannot be maintained, nor can it ever be done again.

Three reasons:

The first reason is the psychic energy. When we put all this up, we were fascinated with the bright side of things. We saw only the benefits. We didn't see the disadvantages.

The second reason is the finances. We couldn't begin to build the New York subway system now. We and roads are breaking up faster than we can repair them. We've taken on ourselves an enormous burden. Right now, the whole industrial world is bankrupt: our cities, the nations of the world, the third world, even the first world. We can't do anything now because we are
broke. Look at our three trillion dollar debt, going faster up to four trillion dollars. I can remember when in 1928 the national debt was eight billion dollars.

The third reason why it can't be maintained or can't be done again is the diminishment of natural resources. So we have to immediately begin changing, because the oil is going to be going and be gone. Everything we do now is dependent on our oil: our food, our clothing, our instruments, our transportation, everything. Well, to my mind we have to first recognize that we are at an impasse and that we can't cure this by more technology in the sense of genetic engineering, refinement of computers and all this. All these instrumentalities and "techno-fixes" are not going to assist.

RD: The Technozoic Age isn't going to work.

TB: It's not going to work. Now we need to go into an Ecozoic Age. And the primary principle of the Ecozoic Age is that we accept life on the conditions that life is granted us. And life is granted us on certain conditions, that we have to learn to accept certain difficulties of life. Like for ourselves, we have to first strengthen our inner world. In the Asian world, and you've been rather much into the Asian world, and particularly India, they deal with life (primarily) by strengthening the inner world, not by conquering the outer world. We try to deal with life by conquering the outer world; and the inner world is weakened. Now we have to begin to recover some sense of dealing with life by an inner adaptation to life rather than a controlling of life. This is going to be imposed upon us.

The basic biological law is that every life system has opposed life systems or conditions that limit each life system, so that no one life system or group of life systems should overwhelm the others. But our technologies enable us to transcend those limits. We are not subject to being limited. So we have to self-limit. The basic principle has to be self-limiting as regards use of resources, as regards habitat, as regards resources, habitat and population. America particularly has to begin to limit consumption.

Well, the question is whether it's going to happen creatively or destructively. It is going to happen. Is it going to bring a
corresponding total devastation? A large amount of the
devastation is unavoidable now. We can’t avoid a population now
of ten billion people. There’s no way we can avoid that. But if
we are already consuming 40% of the gross earth product,
humans, if we double that and begin to take 60, 70, 80%, then
the whole biosystems of the planet will cease to function
effectively, and it will be a kind of a collapse, a biological
collapse. At the same time, there is this: A lot of wonderful
things have happened in the last several years, in the last three or
four years. I was much darker ten years ago than I am now.

RD: Okay. What kind of things are giving you some hope?

TB: Well, pervasive consciousness. In politics, nothing is going
to work anymore, unless it claims to be environmentally
oriented. The whole ecological disaster is beginning to dawn
upon people. Now children are learning this now in elementary
school. I’m in contact with a lot of schools even elementary
schools. And when the kids get hold of this, they do things. A
person has to feel the challenge of it, and young people
particularly need to feel the challenge of it in a creative way. We
can think about something like the "Chitco Movement," where
those women went out and stopped the coating of the trees, when
they realized that their destiny and the destiny of the trees go
together.

And there is just a fantastic number of people everywhere now,
even in the commercial world. Just about everything has to be
recognized. We need to think whether and how clothing has to
be ecologically made. We need to think about everything, even
food. So beginnings have been made. Maybe it’s one percent,
but beginnings are of that nature.

But what we need most now are visions of directions,
comprehensive directions in which to go. That’s immensely
important.

As soon as we begin to understand the universe in its sacred
dimension, then we develop a sense of reverence and concern
and identity and sympathies and the compassionate.
There are two ultimate categories for me. One is creativity and the other is celebration. The universe I consider -- in its vast extent in space and in its transformations in time -- is a single multiform celebratory event. And the role of the human is to enter into that celebratory process in a special mode of conscious self-awareness.

RD: And with that mode, one is a celebratory participant, which you are in your moment-to-moment living. And that allows you to be peaceful even in the presence of the way in which the human mind has done it's work thus far. You said there were two: There was the celebration, and what is the other one?

TB: The creation, the creativity and the celebration.

RD: Well, in a celebratory act, every moment is a creative act, isn't it? The whole thing is creative; there's no stopping of creation. You don't stop.

TB: Yeah. The creative is the most important. That's why the geneticist Theodore Dubchomsky did so much. He's written some beautiful things on this, the evolutionary process. And as regards it being either determined or random, he says, "It's neither; it's creative." And creativity is -- it's like a person making a poem. You don't know what it is until it hits you. It's like a melody. I describe it as a melody. We grope toward these issues. That's why Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's word "groping" is such an apt expression of the emergent process. We grope toward the creativity. We're groping toward what I would call the Ecozoic Age.

And what we need is some help with that groping. We do need to help people enter into this, because it's just urgent. And that's why there's a new movement now. We don't know what to do exactly, but I think we are being guided, even at this moment, toward a creative response to what has already taken place that can bring about a lot of healing and can bring about a new and brilliant phase that will be available for all the future generations.
Here is my main interest:

Today, more than five billion human beings live on this planet.
Among these five billion, I believe hardly one billion are genuine believers.
We look at the other four billion. They are a majority.
The future world is much dependent on these four billion.
Now, you see, we must think together about
how to approach those in the majority.

—The Dalai Lama

Edited Excerpts from

His Holiness The Dalai Lama
in his dialogue with Ram Dass, Fall 1990, India

Edited by Skip Robinson

THE ONE AND THE FOUR

Introduction

Genuine compassion has no limit and extends toward all sentient beings,
including your enemy, even when it seems that person is creating the problem.

Human beings (and other sentient beings) want happiness, freedom from suffering.
You and they have every right to overcome suffering, just like me.

After all, what is the purpose of the practice of Dharma?
Not just the belief that there is something sacred.

You see, we want happiness. We want pleasure, joy. We have the right.
Now how to achieve that?

And we do not want suffering, pain. How to overcome that?
Deepening

Love, compassion, affection are often very conditioned, very much a mixture, compassion mixed with desire, attachment. This is something close to me. If this is my friend, closeness develops. The aspects of desire and attachment are kinds of compassion that are so unstable. As soon as that person creates some negative attitude, your compassion completely changes. You develop negative feelings. The same may be true for the other person. The other person operates on the basis of that person's personal rights and concern for that person's feeling, irrespective of that other person's attitude toward yourself.

Compassion is something genuine when it is not simply the passive feeling of pity or sympathy, but rather genuine concern with a sense of responsibility to do something — that kind of compassion.

I believe I can change my own attitude, my own mental thinking. Reason and logic show our potential ability to change. I think, from Buddhism's viewpoint, this kind of change is the proper way.

And spiritual system and tradition can teach us the way. Ultimately whether you encounter a negative or positive phenomenon, you can find the real source within, not outside. Things are within.

With the impulse to achieve joy, to overcome suffering and pain, we can see the change, the transformation in our own mental attitude.

Perhaps a basic law or something is that we have the feeling of "I". That's all right; nothing wrong. On that basis, we have the impulse, you see, to be happy. That's all absolutely right!

Now, "matter" and "mind" are both very much relevant to happiness and joy and the like. Usually people are very much concerned about external forces. Those matters which create positives for us, we take care of, while those which create pain, we push away.

Similarly, when we talk "mind", it is not simple, solid. Mind is not just one thing. When we talk mind there are several hundred types of mind, several thousands of different thoughts. Now among them are some minds and thoughts that are very useful for us, such as compassion and calm and these things. Very useful. These thoughts give us almost new life and freshness, calm and fearlessness, sincerity. All these positive things develop with this certain mind.

Negative thoughts such as fear, anger, ignorance, and jealousy create or develop negative and unhappy states. So, therefore, just as we do with external matters, we make distinctions. Certain things are useful for us; certain things are not. In this matter, outer and inner work alike.

In the midst of suffering, how does one strengthen the determination to struggle within the mind? Developing determination, desire, awareness all can give rise to different mental thoughts very relevant in deepening our happiness. In dealing with these different mental events or mental thoughts, how can we reduce the negative mental thoughts? How can we increase the positive thoughts? We can seek and find determination and method. From the Buddhist point of view, sometimes faith is useful; but mainly it is reason.
Emptiness

Realize the emptiness, ultimate nature as emptiness. Once you do this, you can explore and dismiss the ignorance, the false mental attitudes which are just the opposite of ultimate nature emptiness. Things exist independently. Observe our grasping, grasping ignorance. Then you may realize that wrong conception is the key source of all the negative emotion.

Because the key source, key factor of the negative emotion is that it is just a wrong conception, you can remove it. You can let it go.

Therefore, while you develop deeper awareness about emptiness ("shunyata"), you can, at the same time, feel stronger. Then you can let negative things fade.

Do you see? You have an alternative after all. Once you realize the emptiness residing in the ultimate nature of mind, the negative thoughts loosen and can fall away. As the negative falls away, the mind purifies. That mental state is salvation. Once you have some knowledge, some feeling about that emptiness, then you can see it is possible for you to achieve that.

The one and the four

Among the individual different mental dispositions and mental attitudes, some people accept, I think, deeper values about human beings, spiritual values. The word “spiritual” means more when seen as “dharma”, compassionate life and work through which to awaken. Some accept God or some other alternative way of long-term benefit. In that condition, someone who accepts God serves humanity as a means of serving God. That way (karma yoga, bhakti yoga) gives you energy.

Some others, although they do not really accept God, believe in Bodhisattvas or something like that. They too have deep values about human life, do they not?

Still others are people who have no belief at all and think mainly about the self. How may we approach these people? This is more difficult.

Here is my main interest: Today, more than five billion human beings live on this planet. Among these five billion, I believe hardly a billion are genuine believers. We look at the other four billion. They are a majority. The future world is much dependent on these four billion. Now, you see, we must think together about how to approach those in the majority.

I believe that those four billion human beings have basically already been trained about the value of compassion, the value of human affection, through their mothers and fathers and some of their closest friends. In deep nature there is the potential to develop compassion, because they are human. I believe that we human beings, no matter how negative or cruel, have potential to develop enough human affection. This is because we ourselves, all of us, come to being, come to exist on that basis, on the basis of human affection.
In preparing to consider this challenge, I believe it extremely important to realize one's own potential. Sometimes people forget about inner potential in seeking the external. Once we fail with externals, we may become discouraged, depressed. We need to realize our own inner resources. Then, basically, I believe human nature frees more compassion. We become prepared.

The individual's human nature in the human community is as a social animal. Fundamentally, we can see that one individual human being, even if very healthy and powerful, does not matter more than another human being, who may be lonely and in dire need. If we leave such suffering beings remain without being touched by compassion, how can the human community survive? I believe compassion is at the heart of human nature. We can discover that such Nature Law is very powerful and can lead us home.

When we look at small insects, such as bees, we can see their nature is as social animals. They have very good sense of responsibility. Community feeling is very strong there. Apparently, they have no religion and no constitution. Nothing. But because of their nature, they develop some kind of genuine sense of responsibility. In human beings, we can explore that basic nature properly. We can learn modern economic structures and sustain a good environment. We can deepen our relation with fellow human beings, with fellow human brothers and sisters.

Our own internal deepening along with our deepening relationship with nature can show us nature's laws, don't you think? We can further develop our mental attitudes directly according to nature's own laws, as we grow to understand them, according to the beauty of nature's own basic system.

Then I think we can explain and introduce to humanity's other four billion a right way to live with one's neighbor, with one's own nature, in order to gain one's own interest, one's own better future, happiness in the future.

When you act within this sphere of human affection, this is not just something sacred, not just a religious matter: This is something within your own interest, your own happiness, your own future.