

## Chapter 4

# Ways of Knowing

“The heart has its reasons that reason knows not of.”  
- Pascal

### Face to Face with a Wild Lion

*I was driving the Land Rover around Nairobi National Park in search of cheetahs when I came across a small group of lions lying at the edge of shrubs on the shelf above the Athi River Plains. The male was a young adult, perhaps three years old, and he was accompanied by several lionesses. Though his mane was not especially full, he was an attractive specimen and I wanted to photograph him.*

*That particular day I was driving an open-top Land Rover, better for photography. As I drove close the lions withdrew further into the bush. But I kept getting in just a little closer to get a better shot: the young male became agitated and snarled at me as he crawled another couple of feet into the brush.*

*I had raised the windshield so I could shoot over the hood of the car. Because I needed to jockey around to take the best pictures, I was using the hand throttle rather than the pedal.*

*When I was about ten feet away from the lion I stopped and started focusing the Zeiss lens.*

*Suddenly the lion charged out with a loud huffing roar. "Oh, shit," came out of my mouth as I fell back in the seat, popped the gear into reverse and slammed the hand throttle as far as it*

would go, all the time keeping my eyes straight ahead on the lion who was still charging, taking swipes with his paws at the front of the Land Rover. Though I was accelerating backwards, he was keeping up with me, and then I realized that I was in dire straits: what if he came over the hood? And then I wondered what was behind me: if I hit a large rock or tree or warthog hole I'd be thrown from the vehicle completely vulnerable to attack. There was no one else around. I was on my own.

As the car kept moving backwards at top speed, the lion began to slow down so I figured that I was going to make it through if I didn't collide with something behind me. I got some of my favorite lion photos that day, but nearly at the cost of my life. Such are the risks taken by the ego in its quest for fame and fortune.

Back at the college in Nairobi I didn't tell anyone about the near mishap, and a few days later I was back in the park this time following cheetahs on foot. The mother had four nearly adult offspring that were beginning to fend for themselves. The mother stayed back as one of the young adults led the hunts. As the family headed off towards a bluff above the river I decided to park the vehicle and follow them on foot. The terrain was rocky and I didn't want to lose visual contact. Grabbing my camera and notebook I started out after them.

As I went around the point of a long row of brush I felt strange, as though something were behind me, and I turned to look. There under the bush ten feet away which I had just walked by was an adult male lion – the very lion that had charged my vehicle several days ago. "Oh my God, not you

*went through my mind, followed by "What the hell am I going to do?" I had no weapon and there was no one else in the vicinity. All of a sudden, fear vanished and I was overcome by perfect calm and inner peace. He stared straight into my eyes, not a good sign since that signaled he was not at all afraid. I knew that it was important for me to stare right back at him and never to waiver. Somehow, I also knew that turning to run was not an option.*

*Do not mistake me. I did not stand there and reason all this out the way you would a chess move. No, I was in an altered state of consciousness, fearless and devoid of reasoning altogether. There was instead instantaneous knowing of what was most appropriate and essential. Considering that I had never pondered the situation, nor read accounts of people in similar circumstances nor talked it over nor had any comparable experience in my life, it is utterly remarkable that I knew what to do. After holding my stare for about one minute I began to very slowly and carefully take tiny steps backwards. Each step must have been an inch or two in length, lasting ten to twenty seconds. Talk about focus!*

*At a distance of ten yards I began to think that the lion may not attack, though I knew I wasn't out of the woods yet so I kept backing up slowly, still holding the stare until I was about 40 yards away. The lion seemed at that point to lose interest as he glanced to his right when a Bobo bird landed in an Acacia next to him and sounded off. I walked steadily backwards now with bigger steps until about 80 yards away then I turned and walked as fast as I could towards the nearest trees of any size, intending to climb them to safety. The lion didn't pursue me so I headed off after the cheetah family, only to be stalked by one of the young adult males, but that's another story.*

*How did I know exactly what to do? There simply is no logical explanation, even if upon reflection one's actions seemed quite reasonable. Reason was not at work, at least not initially, though it did click in once I was far enough away to begin thinking about escape strategies and routes.*

*Was instinct at work? Initially, in the first second or two, fear was the ruling emotion, and it may have called upon inherited information conducive to survival. Do we know instinctively when confronted with a dangerous predator to be quite still and appear unfrightened, which direct staring ought to communicate? Or are these notions simply conformations with*

*evolutionary theory, in which I was thoroughly indoctrinated?*

*Looking back on it all it is easy to imagine that I believed I was in "clear and present danger, " and ego bailed me out, "It's a damn good thing you let me be in charge that day. If you hadn't been afraid you'd now be dead."*

*The real truth is that while fear and ego responded initially, very quickly I found myself in an extreme state of transcendent alertness accompanied by total emotional calm. My mind was completely clear, still and empty, the state known as Zen mind or beginner's mind in Japan. I was no longer "me," identified with my body, but I was me and the lion and our shared circumstances.*

*I wonder if absolute fearlessness would mean a far more wonderful world? Who knows that I even might have befriended that lion? Impossible you say? Counter to the "laws" of nature? I propose that that is the ego talking, and the ego wants to be in charge always and will go to any length to be the chairman of our psychic board. It climbs to prominence through the force of fear.*

*In those days I did not know about sanyasans, holy men, who befriended adult, wild bears high in the Himalayas. Clearly, they are functioning on another level with a distinctly different set of beliefs. For example, when Guru Dev was located in the forest after decades of solitude, meditation and silence, to be placed as head of the Hindu religion, a tiger lay at his feet, a cobra in his lap. One of his "rescuers" asked if he were afraid. Guru Dev responded that he*

sees only God.

*Deepak Chopra explains the influence of our beliefs. He says, for example, that a person who sees a cobra on the path in India may jump back in fear, and his increased heartbeat and panting are visible signs that the hormone adrenalin has kicked in, secreted by the adrenal cortex stimulated by ACTH secreted by the pituitary. But if a biochemist could track down every molecule involved in his fear reaction, he would miss the invisible decision maker that decided to have the reaction, for even though the person reacted in a split second, his body didn't jump back mindlessly. Someone else with different programming would exhibit a different reaction. My friend, Ron Dupont, a herpetologist, might make every effort to catch it. A Hindu who perceives snakes as a form of Shiva, might kneel in prayer.*

*Any of a number of possible reactions might have occurred - panic, reverence, paralysis, apathy, curiosity, delight. It all depends on the meaning that a cobra has for a person. There is truth in a saying from Aldous Huxley that the experience is not what happens to us; it is what we do with what happens to us.*

*- Randall L. Eaton, The Greatest Things I Never Did (in progress)*

Ken Wilber is touted by a well-known authority as the leading writer on consciousness today. His *Up From Eden* presents a typical humanistic perspective of progress over time, civilization's myth of history with an expectation of a grand synthesis of scientific reason and religion that will

transfigure our lives any day now. Vehemently, I have debated this and other points with Wilber who places faith in reason while I remain convinced that astute erudition has not and likely will not open hearts or bring peace to the world.

What does David Bohm, the great physicist, have in common with Jidu Krishnamurti, the spiritual teacher? What do they have in common with Joseph Pearce, an authority on human development, intelligence and creativity, and with healer Deepak Chopra? And what have they all in common with anthropologist Richard Nelson and the elders of numerous tribes of North America? In their respective ways, each of them discriminates between two radically different ways of knowing. Chopra, for instance, advises us to sit quietly at a table to receive insight. Lakota holy man Wallace Black Elk refers to the normal every day chatter of the ego as “traffic.” Krishnamurti and Bohm differentiate normal intellect from true intelligence, and Joseph Chilton Pearce terms these “ego-intellect” and “intelligence,” which I prefer to label “heart-intelligence.”

We live in a world that worships ego-intellect; behind our great myth of science is an even greater myth of reason or intellectualism. We suffer from what Ortega calls “pious idealism,” another way of saying we are extremely egotistical. He defined reason as an orthopedic device imposed on a broken instinct. We are so stuck on the importance of what we and others already “know,” that we seldom create a space to allow the unknown to move into awareness. It comes through by no conscious effort on our part in the form of dreams, sudden insights and unexpected intuitions, those “Aha!” experiences that have given birth to scientific and creative breakthroughs. In short, we do not trust higher reason, the intelligence of the heart. Trusting in ego-intellect is exactly what has brought our life and world to the verge of collapse. What we require is a change

of heart.

Anyone who has spent much time with the natives of this continent soon discovers that they often function in a different way. Conversation moves quite slowly as medicine people or elders seem to be wasting valuable time and waiting forever to speak. At first, the snail pace of dialogue is downright frustrating. But something valuable is happening; these people do trust more than ego-consciousness and they turn to it for guidance. While it is customary for many modern people to say, "I think..." more traditional folks often say, "I feel in my heart..." Because indigenous peoples tend to surrender to an intelligence beyond ego, they are able to tap into wisdom.

Anthropologist turned hunter, Richard Nelson says, "Over the past 500 years, we have concentrated on promoting Western secular and religious education in Native American communities and have almost completely ignored what they could teach us in return. As a result we've lost the opportunity for a balanced exchange and coalescence of our two great intellectual traditions..." The great traditions of the Western ego and the hunter's heart come together in the hunt, as Nelson himself discovered.

Nelson continues,

"In my opinion, the ethnographic record supports the existence of a widespread and well-developed tradition of conservation, land stewardship, and religiously-based environmental ethics among Native Americans. I believe that Aldo Leopold's eloquent and insightful formulation of a land ethic is a fascinating example of convergence with Native American thought....Is it possible that wisdom has been more important than knowledge as a basis for the long and successful habitation of North America by indigenous people? Could it be wisdom that explains



why the first European travelers found here a vast and untrammelled beauty, an extraordinary wealth and diversity of wild species, an area of intact natural communities?”

In the final analysis, it is the wisdom of humility and respect for nature characteristic of native hunter-gatherer societies that we must adopt if we are to forge a viable culture. These qualities stem from the hunting lifeway, but they also emerge from the lives of recreational hunters such as Aldo Leopold who recapitulated the ancient wisdom of hunting peoples. Not so long ago Richard Nelson was opposed to recreational hunting, and he disapproved of my promotion of it as a principle way to connect with nature and discover animals as teachers. Perhaps it was the years spent with subsistence hunters of the far north that finally awakened the spirit of the wild in him, and now he is a model for the virtues of recreational hunting. His personal transformation is an endorsement of the theme of this book: that hunting can be a cardinal component in the initiation of boys to men who will think with their hearts, not just their heads.

As Shepard said in *Tender Carnivore and Sacred Game*, “Man is part a carnivore: the male of the species is genetically programmed to pursue, attack and kill for food. To the extent that men do not do so they are not fully human.”

Speaking to delegates from 70 nations about a common ground for subsistence and recreational hunting, I was accused by wildlife biologist, Shane Mahoney, of promoting the noble savage. I think Rousseau was right to identify what is artificial for civilized humanity and what we might recover from primal societies that is natural and healthy. I know quite well that foraging peoples are not perfect. For example, they feud and divorce, but they also are anything but primitive in their knowledge of nature, which has been shown to rival the best of our science, or in

their mythology, cosmology and spiritual life. War is uncommon; they have no professional soldiers or standing armies. There is more personal choice and freedom in their ranks than among ours. Anthropologist Elman Service said that individual adults participate far more fully in every aspect of their culture than do people of more complex societies. According to sociologist Murray Bookchin, among Ituri pygmies there are outrageously boastful men and extremely shrewd women and those who exhibit humor and gaiety, contradicting the conventional image of preliterate peoples as divested of personality. So does the superb writing of Bradford Keeney about the Kalahari Bushman.

Problems among individuals and between the sexes are resolved in the context of daily life. Colin Turnbull said that in terms of a deliberate dedication to human relationships, both affective and effective, the primitive is way ahead of us. Anthropologist Richard Lee says there is no evidence of exploitation on the basis of sex or age. Except for sex, sharing is a way of life. According to Lee, there is an ongoing struggle against one's own selfish, anti-social and arrogant impulses, which indicates that despite all appearances to the contrary and idyllic social conditions for raising children, nonetheless adults actively contend with negative impulses, and positive cultural traditions help. The good wolf wins over the evil wolf when we feed it most.

Paul Shepard adds that ecological influences of the foraging lifestyle are non-polluting and stable.

Are we on the wrong path? Will science, technology, computers and TV give us what we want? Is belief in a punishing God a projection of the patriarchy, which breeds fear, doubt and murder, not love? The mission of Jesus, Joseph Chilton Pearce insists, was to teach us that, like him, we are divine – “ye shall do these things and greater still” - that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us,

and that except as little children we shall not discover the Kingdom through transcendence, our right. Pearce claims that Paul corrupted the teachings of Jesus by deifying and separating him from us, and by infusing the punishing God of the Hebrews into Christianity, and as a consequence the heart is still at war with the ego, and transcendence has not become our way of life. He is convinced that Jesus is the exemplary model for civilized humanity, and that if we do not recover innocence there is little hope for us. His recipe for recovery of transcendence in human life includes endless play for children and for adults, which is common among foraging cultures.

When humanity left hunting as a lifeway in the “wilderness,” it started the several thousand year process of dehumanization. Savagery, brutality and barbarity have only increased exponentially since we crossed that threshold. Time was when the world was a temple, every bird, rock and leaf were divine gifts, each animal was souled and life was whole and full, pregnant with its own dimensions. No need for Jungianism among some aboriginal Americans who saw in each person a boy, an old man, a girl and a woman. Like Leopold, Jung’s contributions to the modern world amount to wisdom that is ancient among hunting societies.

The lack of balance within and between humans and between them and their world is the tragic outcome of the loss of innocence incumbent to primal living. With civilization defense of resources became practical, and war became the new theme of human life. Civilization means domination and subjugation of that which had been elusive (hunted): primal living necessarily involves at its core acceptance of the “principle of uncertainty” in exploitation of resources, but civilized life is a progressive pretension towards certainty of resources. Big game were converted to livestock which are “man-aged” instead of pursued at risk of failure and danger; wild plant foods put under the hoe and plow in fields prepared and watered close to home rather than being sought when

and wherever local conditions might prove favorable to their production, and, these and their concomitant circumstances rapidly remove humanity from nature and interdependence with her to progressively immodest domination. Humanity reduces to possession what before could never be possessed, and in so doing insulates itself from nature and the compassionate power of the heart. Could it be that as men dominated wild animals they also subjugated women? As competition for clumped food resources became paramount to human success, was the value of women correspondingly diminished except as breeding stock?

Possession of wealth favors warring to defend and steal wealth, so maleness and the Father God rise to prominence until male egoism brings civilized life to collapse – or, in our age, the specter of destroying humanity and its life-support systems altogether.

Without the recovery of the ancient wisdom in the earliest myths of civilization, when people were still consciously aware of what they were giving up in the transition from foraging, there may be no dynamic equilibrium between male and female, nor the inner masculine and feminine of the psyche. Is psychic fragmentation the real origin of a global crisis?

William Irwin Thompson's proposal for solution of the human crisis is that human ignorance of timeless myth is on the verge of recovery as we stand at the edge of the "age of chaos or heroes" glimpsing the recycle of "the age of gods." The last age of myth amply forewarned men of the dangers they were bringing upon themselves with civilization, but it was only in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that humans started taking the ancient myths seriously.

Gilgamesh and the Destruction of Nature

The oldest story recorded on earth comes from the Sumerian city of Uruk (Erek) built to honor the gods Anu and Ishtar. Gilgamesh was the ruler of Uruk, his mother was a goddess, his father a man. Described as tyrannical, Gilgamesh was said to be beautiful in manliness, his whole body adorned with voluptuous grace. Powerful in physique, Gilgamesh had no equal among men or gods.

Gilgamesh had a dream of an axe. His mother, Ninsun, explained to him that the axe in his dream is a man, and that Gilgamesh shall love him. Ninsun tells Gilgamesh that she created the man to rival with him, that mighty in the land is his strength.

When a hunter comes to Gilgamesh and tells him about the wild man who has come from the mountain, whose strength is mighty, and who grazes with the wild cattle, Gilgamesh sends a harlot with the hunter to the wild man's waterhole where she can entice him with her sexual favors.

After three days, Enkidu the wild man comes to the waterhole with the cattle, and the harlot bares her bosom and takes of his lust. For six days and seven nights Enkidu stayed with the whore, but when he tried to rejoin his cattle and sheep they did not recognize him and ran away. Enkidu was weak and could not catch them, so he returned to the woman, sat at her feet and listened as she begged him to return to Uruk and meet the mighty Gilgamesh who sees visions of Enkidu in his dreams.

Enkidu puts on clothing and accompanies the harlot to Uruk where he learned to eat food and drink beer, seven pots at one sitting. He anointed his body and seized a weapon, and attacked lions which preyed upon shepherds at night. Finally the day came when he wrestled with Gilgamesh to a draw and they became the best of friends.

Gilgamesh proposes to slay the monster Humbaba in the cedar forest. Humbaba is the god of

the forest, perhaps all things wild and untamed. Having lived in the mountains when he wandered with the cattle, Enkidu respects and fears Humbaba. He says to Gilgamesh, “The roar of Humbaba is as a hurricane, his mouth is fire; his breath is death. Why hast thou desired to do this thing, a battle without precedent, the conquest of Humbaba?”

Again Enkidu implores Gilgamesh to refrain as he warns him of the difficult journey and of Humbaba who sleeplessly guards the forest. The commander of the gods, Enlil, decreed for Humbaba, sevenfold terror to keep safely the forest. Furthermore, Enkidu advises Gilgamesh that anyone who goes there is seized by disease.

The response of Gilgamesh to his wild man friend epitomizes the hubris of civilized humanity, “If I fail I shall establish my fame, ‘Gilgamesh fell by Humbaba the powerful,’ it shall be said.

Gilgamesh vows to conquer the cedar forest, to cut the cedars down with his own hand, and make for himself an everlasting name. Though the elders of the city attempt to dissuade Gilgamesh for all the same reasons given by Enkidu, Gilgamesh proceeded to have the weapons made as he prayed to Ninsun and Shamash for protection.

When Gilgamesh and Enkidu finally reach the far away cedar forest, and Gilgamesh proceeds to clear cut the forest, Humbaba in rage cries out, “Who has come and cut down the cedars which are held precious in my mountains?” Now Shamash comes to the aid of Gilgamesh and Enkidu, and urges them on. There is a fight with disastrous results. But Shamash inflicts Humbaba with mighty winds, eight in all, which blind him.

Humbaba submits and begs Gilgamesh for mercy, saying he would serve him well by supplying cedars to build houses for him. Strangely, Enkidu protests and tells him not to spare Humbaba. Enkidu decapitates the god of the forest, and for this act the council of the gods decreed that he

should die, though Gilgamesh was spared. Gilgamesh mourns a lifetime for his friend Enkidu. Ironically, Gilgamesh gains possession of the plant of life that would have prolonged his mortal existence, but he lost it on his journey home.

The German poet, Goethe, said, "There are two hearts beating in my breast," and in every man among us there is a Gilgamesh, refined, civilized, knowing and prideful. And there is an Enkidu, discheveled, hairy, at home with the animals and nature. Had it not been for the temptation of the city and his love for Gilgamesh, Enkidu never would have dreamed of harming Humbaba. For his transgression against Nature, Enkidu paid with his life.

It is an ominous tragedy: everyone loses. The world loses the cedar forest; the god of Nature is given no mercy even when he offers to serve humanity. Enkidu the wild man dies, and Gilgamesh mourns a lifetime, all because a mighty, civilized man aimed to make an everlasting name for himself! Had Gilgamesh listened to the wild man and respected his wishes, everyone would have been better for it. Here we have in the oldest story from civilization a warning about the dangers of vaulted pride, and the question it raises is whether we will listen to the wild man within or follow the tragic route of Gilgamesh.

It is said that you can take the boy out of the country, but not the country out of the boy. The Epic of Gilgamesh suggests that in fact the country can be taken out of the boy as it was from Enkidu. We cannot afford to overly civilize the wild man.

In the anthology, *A Testament to Wilderness*, Laurens Van der Post confronts wilderness as a way of truth, "...we all know what wilderness really is, because we have it inside ourselves. We know it is a world in which every bit of nature counts...and we know when it is not there....human

beings...who live in industrialized environments are...therefore estranged in a sense from their natural selves.” Laurens recounts a story of three problem boys of different nationalities from wealthy families which had sought his assistance. He sent them to Zululand where they went on a wilderness trek with Ian Player who said nothing to them about themselves, though they found something of themselves and the wilderness within and went on to distinguish themselves. Laurens says, “Wilderness is an instrument for enabling us to recover our lost capacity for religious experience....Through wilderness we remember, and are brought home again.”

Van der Post’s many years of contact with Bushman brought him to realize that in destroying wilderness we have destroyed “wilderness man,” which he considers the greatest loss of all because this person could have been our bridge to knowing wilderness and nature in the way it is known by the Creator. The Bushman committed themselves to nature, and nature was kinder to them by far than any civilization ever was. Laurens added that wherever the Bushman went they felt they were known, unlike the staggering loss of identity and meaning in the modern world which has banished the wilderness persons in ourselves and the wilderness that sustained them. He says we are all know-it-alls, but the feeling that our knowing is no longer contained in a greater form of being known.

Van der Post believes we can recover the “wilderness man” because he exists in us, and he is the foundation in spirit or psyche on which we build, and we are not complete until we have fully recovered him. “And before we can live properly, before we can face the future, we have got to remember...the needs and hunger of our instinctive, intuitive, natural self...What we need to do now...is to make the first the last, and to bring what was left behind up to where we are. We still carry around with us the world of nature within. We need to match that to the world without, to make



the world without more and more an expression of the world within....Our greed and aggression and corruption by power comes from cheating that first person within ourselves out of his natural inheritance.”

Finally Laurens concludes, and I emphasize, **“Somewhere, beyond the walls of our awareness...the wilderness side, the hunter side, the seeking side of ourselves, is waiting to return.”**

### Loss of Innocence

Concerning the city man’s corruption of the wild man and his loss of innocence let’s turn to an ancient civilization, China, and repeat what the *I Ching* or book of wisdom (changes) says. Under the hexagram for innocence are ideas corresponding with the mystical interpretations of the legends of paradise and the fall of man.

“Innocence frees itself of mistakes, so that no misfortune of internal origin can overtake it. When misfortune comes unexpectedly, it has external origin, therefore, it will pass again...this fact suggests movement in harmony with heaven, which is man’s true and original nature...If someone is not as he should be, he has misfortune, and it does not further him to undertake anything...When innocence is gone, where can one go? When the will of heaven does not protect one, can one do anything?

“(Innocence) shows man in the proper relationship to the divine, without ulterior designs and in primal innocence. Thus man is in harmony with heavenly fate... But where the natural state is not this state of innocence, where desires and ideas are astir, misfortune follows of inner necessity.”

Which is the theme of Pearce's book, *The Biology of Transcendence*.

The wisdom of hunting peoples is echoed among the religions of the world: the human crisis is a result of humanity's desires and fears being astir with ulterior designs in disagreement with the divine plan. In harmonious, innocent living man has heaven to help him against external misfortunes, but when his egoism prevails, which hunting cultures actively guard against, misfortune is inevitable, the price of being untrue to one's heart or deepest self, the same as turning one's back on the divine. This almost all civilizations have done regardless of their beginnings or intentions: civilized humanity becomes top-heavy with self-infatuation, and the foundation it built crumbles. Exceptions to the rule among pastoral and farmer cultures are the Tibetan Buddhists and their New World relatives, the Hopi, both of which have kept alive the humility, wisdom and respect associated with hunting cultures. It would be wise to explore with them the cultural forces underlying their humility.

That the animal was a totally significant being to subsistence hunters seems irrefutable; the animal's importance to civilized man was merely as a stepping stone for his purposes, as indicated in the *I Ching's* history of civilization. Legend points to the hunter as founder, "The name of the mythical founder of civilization is written in various ways; its meaning seems to point to a hunter..."

After the passing of the first human clan, which seems to represent the passing of the primal or original human lifestyle of hunting, "there sprang up the clan of the Divine Husbandman...which is said to have taught the people agriculture."

Not surprisingly, the *I Ching* connects agriculture with the trigram for Increase - increase of food, wealth and people. At this stage draft animals could be used and part of the work of farming

shifted to oxen.

The next stage in development of civilization is the replacement of the clan of the Divine Husbandman by the clan of the Yellow Emperor who brought continuity through alterations. Agriculture has succeeded so well that social order requires hierarchy of power, centralized government, taxation, bureaucracy. The horse was yoked so that distant regions could be reached, undoubtedly by “all the King’s men.”

“They introduced double gates and night watch-men with clappers (warning devices), in order to deal with robbers...They strung a piece of wood for a bow and hardened pieces of wood in the fire for arrows. The use of the bow and arrow is to keep the world in fear.” Keeping the world in fear is keeping people in a state of defensive ego-consciousness, the origin of identification with the body, materialism and greed...and spiritual disempowerment.

Here we see the great hoax of civilization in the making. Humans living not with greater security as they imagine, but with more fear of being invaded, robbed and killed. Not more security, material or psychological, but just the opposite, not to mention a shift from what ethnographers have documented is, relatively, a life of creative leisure among hunters to one of toil for the farmer and city people.

The last step in civilization was the introduction of written documents as a means of governing officials and supervising the people. Though the ancient Chinese had tied knots to keep records, writing became the last decisive blow in the dehumanization process. Now, no one, not even officials, can be trusted, and the fate of humanity rests not upon human to human communication, but on the cold, hard word.

May civilized man recover the wholeness and peace he knew as a hunter? The *I Ching* offers

this hope,

“One must draw on the strength of the inner attitude to compensate for what is lacking in externals, then the power of the content makes up for the simplicity of form. There is no need of presenting false appearances to God. Even with slender means, the sentiment of the heart can be expressed.” Hunter wisdom.

On our journey from civilized values that emphasize externals, ownership of property and materialism, to the way of innocence, simplicity and the heart it will profit us much to further inspect the pervasive mythology of human societies as a mirror of their economy and ecology.

## Romancing the Cow

Civilization rests upon domestication of plants and animals. Farming and pastoralism are made possible by converting wild plants and animals into domestic forms more productive and manageable. Farming succeeds because humans subjugate nature, bend it to their will and control it. Wild animals and pests are risks to crop production; farmers live in opposition to nature, unlike their hunting ancestors.

My neighbor is a grain farmer whose life is drudgery from morning till night. When I asked him for permission to hunt geese on his land, he said, “You can kill every damn goose and deer in the county for all I care.” He goes to church every Sunday and prays, convinced that God wants him to subdue the earth, that perhaps geese and deer were put here by mistake. (He’s not a hunter, and those farming and ranching families that maintain a hunting tradition truly respect the land and wildlife. I know Native Americans who feel that the members of the non-native culture who are

closest to them in feeling and respect for the earth are cowboys!).

Pastoralism is the turning point in human perception away from nature and to the sky God. Herding succeeds only if herders are able to defend herds against dangerous predators and other humans who would steal them. Moreover, herders have to keep their livestock moving to new range or water which means confrontations with farmers or other pastoralists, i.e., war.

The oldest war was not with other human groups but with the large carnivores, and it was waged for meat. In the same way that spotted hyenas, wild dogs and lions contend for carcasses of large animals, even killing one another in the process, our ancestors fought their way up the predatory ladder to become the dominant species of the planet, surely the most impressive achievement – and perhaps greatest curse – of the human race.

It was great men like Hercules who changed human destiny and gave us the lion's share. His first and greatest feat, killing the Nemean lion, was heralded by wearing the lion's mane over his shoulders, a trophy for all to see that advertised his exceptional accomplishment. The trophy communicates prowess, and it was trophy hunting that motivated ego-driven men to risk their lives and kill awesome beasts to gain status and power within society. ( Many trophies carry sacred meaning, i.e., there is a time and place for trophies in our lives, as discussed below.)

The herders moved from being hunters dependent upon nature to trophy hunters who dominated nature. That movement gave birth to the mythologies that characterize civilization and which account for its mad rush to annihilation. Essentially, we now endanger ourselves and world because of our adherence to a set of myths which proved successful heretofore, but which now is failing us.

The pastoral myth arose with domestication of animals over which we became dominant. Not

only did we take on a new relationship to domestic animals, unlike the interdependent relationship characteristic of hunters with wild animals, we also dominated enemy predators and humans.

Herding life is sheer domination. In the same ways that herders shifted from a reciprocal relationship with wild animals to one of domination of domestic animals and enemies, herders shifted their cosmology from a diffuse theology to monotheism. The great one-god religions have their origins in pastoral life. Hunting societies do believe in a supreme creator, but they also believe that all of creation embodies divinity, and that humans and animals are created more or less equally (or that the animals are superior in certain respects including intelligence).

Just as herding men dominate animals and their enemies, their God becomes all powerful. With the formation of armies required to defend livestock and their forage, human societies shifted from small, more-or-less egalitarian communities governed largely by consensus, to larger, hierarchically structured, patriarchal societies. The new emphasis was on warring ability, masculinity, control of nature, competition for status and rank, and of course wealth.

From the pastoral mythology is born the myth of history, life as time and progress, in contrast to the hunter's mythology of repeating renewal of cycles, seasons and life and death, in which humans and animals participate gratefully in the same on-going banquet. The herders live in a perpetual state of identification with and competition for material possessions. Their heroes, like their gods, are ruthless. A life of restless conquest for fame and fortune besets humanity. So is born the mythos of heroism, rampant male egoism, upon the planet earth.

Science exists in a presumptive state among hunters, who, faced with the problem of hunger, deduce hypotheses, make predictions and then test those predictions in living experiments we call hunts. Einstein envisaged proto-science among hunting peoples. Their ability to observe,

deduce and predict the behavior of animals and weapons to intercept them requires complex computation, simulation and space/time reckoning of the highest order, the blueprints and processes for which have been programmed in the human brain. However, the trajectory of idealism and intellectualism that led to science and technology in the West has its origin in the pastoral mythology of domination, which is founded on egoism. It is identity with material wealth that has meant a descent from the Edenic life of hunters for whom universal spiritualism prevails. Cartesian philosophy and science are merely restatements of the pastoral mythology of domination of nature which threatens our very survival.

The combination of monoculture agriculture, diminishing resources, poisoning of ecosystems and our bodies/minds, reduction in biodiversity leading to instability of ecosystems, growing human population and all the rest of it presents a frightening future. Will our children survive? Will they live in a sterile world devoid of otherness save a few domestic species? What will become of the human spirit in a world deprived of wild animals and places?

In essence, the problem we face is how to convert the prevailing mythology of civilization to the harmonious mythology of hunting peoples for whom sustainable economy, cooperation and sharing with one another and nature, humility, gratitude and spiritual values are the way of life?

The starting point for recovery of Pleistocene values is recognizing the fundamental needs of human development, i.e., how to raise children so they are profoundly connected to other humans, the creatures, the earth and the divine. To make that leap, it is necessary to establish that what we perceive as normal actually may be pathology. We must achieve in the realm of the development of human behavior, the brain and the heart what Rousseau sought for human society: to discover what is natural and what is artificial.

## Commentary On Wild at Heart

The day I was confirmed in the church I argued with the pastor about Darwin's theory of evolution.

Maybe the local librarian's refusal to let me check out *The Origin of Species* because she thought

it was evil had set me on the wrong path early in life. As a child and even as a teenager I always

felt the presence of God in nature and that is where I sought solace and peace and composed

poetry. In college I discovered a mysterious ability to mesmerize an audience when I entered an

oral interpretation contest and read Carl Sandburg's poem, "To a contemporary bunkshooter."

The poem starts out, "You come along tearing your shirt yelling about Jesus/Where do you get that

stuff?/What do you know about Jesus?"

Carl Sandburg felt as I and Joe Pearce do, that fear, guilt and damnation have nothing to do with

Jesus, God or the Holy Spirit. They are instead expressions of the human ego. To this day I still

don't see why creationism and evolution are necessarily mutually exclusive, but of one thing I am

absolutely sure: if we have free will then we, not God, have authored our own curse. In another

word, while I believe that God and the Holy Spirit are there to assist us – and not only Christians -

we have to stop blaming God for our mistakes. Here begins my argument with John Eldredge's

well known book, *Wild at Heart*.

He is right that as a result of having abandoned masculine rites of passage we have a world of

unfinished, uninitiated men, and I could not agree more that we must rediscover and honor the

stages of male development. And I agree with him that most messages males receive about what

they ought to be or do ultimately fail, however well intended, because they ignore male passions,



i.e., what males need to experience to develop well. They do not need to sit at desks in school all day. They do not need to be in Sunday School on Sunday morning. They do not want to be good little boys, like Tom Sawyer, they want to play hookey, go fishing or catch frogs, like Huck Fin.

Doesn't it seem intelligent to design their education accordingly?

Eldredge believes that we men need permission to be what we are, made in God's image, living from the heart. That men need adventure and "battles" and, oh yes, a Beauty to rescue. For that is how God made us all, he claims. Boys and men definitely need adventure, to take risks and become fearless, and throughout almost all of human life that came from nature and the hunt, which had its share of danger including lions and bears, but battles with men? Rescuing Beauty? Is this the way God made us? Is it like the song says, the same old story, a fight for love and glory, do or die? Or are these the tragic outcomes of civilization, egoism and the myth of power and war?

If Beauty has to be rescued perhaps it is because someone stole her, in which case she has the status of livestock. Primal hunting societies do not steal women. Their men respect women too much to own them.

Joseph Campbell's exhaustive inquiries led him to conclude that women are, but men do, meaning that woman creates life, that man is her provider and protector. He recognized among hunting cultures the unifying influence of respect for woman, and he also observed that where male power is dominant there is separation.

If women today long to be "rescued" by a knight in shining armour, perhaps it is because they do not feel genuinely appreciated, which has been the case for women since the onset of civilization and the rise of the dark side of the masculine. Is any of this the handiwork of God? Or is it the folly

of men? If God wants anything for us it is peace and with peace comes joy and love. It strikes me as sad that the egotistical values of civilization, rather than the spiritual virtues of the hunting life, permeate Eldredge's book, which sold two million copies.

way. "You can't just sit down and talk about the truth. It doesn't work that way. You have to live it and be part of it and you might get to know it."  
-Rolling Thunder, Cherokee

## Chapter 5

# The Story of Human Development

"Unless you become as little children ye shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven"

- Jesus Christ

**Of Raccoons and Boys, Sit Spots and Guardian Angels**

*One of the core routines recommended by wilderness/tracking mentor, Jon Young, in Coyote's Guide to Connecting People to Nature, is "sit-spot," which refers to finding a place in nature to daily go and sit alone to practice being alert and aware of the surroundings and one's self. It is something I began doing spontaneously in my youth and later when still-hunting waterfowl or deer.*

*Owing to a family illness I found myself living in Cincinnati, the first city I'd inhabited in 30 years, and soon I found a sit-spot at a local park. I went there alone and sat and observed, also to pray and sometimes read or write. It was not long before the birds and gray squirrels recognized me and accepted my presence. The first time I prayed there the top half of a dead maple fell off; the only time I saw a tree break without a strong wind. Was it a sign?*

*A few days later at about 8 in the morning I looked up at the trunk of the maple that had broken off and saw a raccoon about ten feet off the ground grasping the tree in its claws and looking at me. I have great affection for raccoons which I've raised as pets and also studied so I was thrilled to see it. I let out the raccoon trill and then spoke to it and thanked it. Soon it climbed up another four feet to a natural cavity below where the trunk had broken off and crawled inside.*

*That day I finished reading Rudolf Steiner's little book on guardian angels*

*in which he advises that when falling asleep we ask our guardian angel to plan our day, which I did that night. I awoke feeling superb, better than I had felt since the birth of my son, Drake, 14 years earlier. My heart was wide open and I was radiating energy. When I arrived at my sit spot in the park the birds flew in from all directions singing as they came. It was almost as if I had been feeding birds in the cold of winter, but I had never fed these birds and it was summer. I knew they were responding to my exalted state of being.*

*Sitting there feeling joyful and thankful, I saw a black boy walking down a dirt path toward me. He looked about ten years old and was walking in a slumped posture with his eyes pointed down. I wondered for a moment what I could do to make a difference in his life. When he came by me I pointed to the broken maple and said, "You see that tree there? The one with the top broken off? A raccoon lives there." He looked at the tree and asked, "How do you know?" "Well, yesterday morning when I was here he climbed up that tree and crawled into that hole there."*

*"Don't raccoons usually sleep in the daytime?" he asked.*

*"Yeah, they usually do, but this one must have stayed out late."*

*"Gee, I wonder what he was doing?"*

*"I don't know."*

*We walked over to the tree and I pointed again to the cavity, and while I was*

*looking up at it, the boy who had shown keen interest up to that point suddenly turned and started walking back down the same dirt path without saying a word. No thanks, no goodbye, nothing. As I watched him walk away with his hands in his pocket, eyes looking down at the ground again, I was overcome with extreme grief. I wondered if this boy had a man in his life. I wondered how many boys in Cincinnati and other cities would never have anyone teach them about raccoons, take them fishing or tell them stories. How many millions of boys out there would never connect with nature? With older men? I wept hard and long and then came back to my place to go to work doing what I can to help.*

*For several days I was depressed and sought Guidance on the meaning of that morning in the park. If my guardian angel had planned that day, what did it want me to learn? Was my true self, my spiritual nature, and the true nature of all humanity being revealed to me: unlimited, joyous, certain, powerful? Was the boy a mirror of my false self, my ego, and the defensive consciousness of civilized humanity with its disconnection from nature, other humans and the divine? I wondered, too, if what had been revealed to me was the immeasurable tragedy of humanity's fall from spiritual grace into physical form and the pain and suffering that accompany it.*

*When I felt up to it again, I repeated the prayer and got up in the morning to*

*drive to the park. En route I asked myself, "I wonder what Spirit has in store for me today?" As I approached the entrance to the park I saw a dead raccoon in the gutter of the street, about 100 yards from the broken maple. I slowed down and could see that it was half-grown, the same size as the raccoon I had seen, and when I saw it had the exact same pattern of missing hair on its tail, my heart sank. Normally I would have stopped my car and moved the raccoon's body off the road or buried it, but there was heavy traffic behind me and I was upset. I went to my sit spot and prayed for understanding, but after a few minutes returned to my car and started the drive home.*

*As I approached the location of the raccoon I noticed that the head and front-end of the body had moved slightly closer to the curb. I pulled off at the first road, parked and ran back. Though barely able to move, the raccoon was alive! I picked it up and put it in my car and drove back home, then placed it in a ferret cage in the basement with water and cat food. It lay there motionless for hours, but in the morning I found blood in the water bowl which meant the raccoon had at least tried to drink in the night. That second day was no different, and again the following morning there was blood in the water bowl.*

*I did a lot of prayer these two days for the raccoon's recovery, and on the third morning there was no more blood in the bowl, which was turned over, and all the food was gone. The inside of the cage was a mess, a good sign that the raccoon was much improved. On the fourth day it was spry, even eating*

*and drinking in front of me. When it sat back on its haunches looking at me and put its paws through the wire I petted them softly with my fingertips for several seconds, but the raccoon did not withdraw them, something unexpected from a wild animal that had not been raised by humans from an early age. The raccoon had made a full recovery.*

*That same day I went to my sit spot, and who shows up smiling with three of his friends? Proudly announcing that, "He's the guy I told you about. The one who saw the raccoon that lives in that tree over there." He had brought his playmates to show them the raccoon tree. They were attentive as I told them the story of what had happened to the raccoon. This time when they left, they thanked me, and all the way down the path the boy who brought them could be heard talking about raccoons.*

*That day I cried happy tears and my faith was renewed, and every night since I have asked my guardian angel to plan my day.*

*- Randall L. Eaton*

The critical question is what experiences are conducive to development of a sane man who lives in proper relationship with society, nature and the divine? My hypothesis is that the hunt is one as is the mid-teen yearning for spiritual connection that the vision quest offers and

which art expresses and maintains.

I have argued since 1985 that we all are victims of the patriarchal, pastoral mythology of male dominance and the subjugation of nature, which tore us away from a relationship of respect and admiration for the animals, the earth and one another. "Medicine men" tried to improve on nature by industrializing childbirth and early development, effectively robbing generations of confidence and trust and propagating massive paranoia, by locking millions of people into ego rather than the heart and higher intelligence, the natural outcome of healthy human development.

We do face the very real possibility of extinction by our own hands, which could be positive if the threat wakes us up to how we have gone astray. In the midst of the global crisis scientists are busy cooking up ways of colonizing space or extending life, perhaps indefinitely. In principle, they believe that the secret to physical life eternal lies somewhere in the genome. What they really offer is a final loss of meaning because life and death are complementary and interdependent. As Joseph Chilton Pearce says, without death the meaning of life is lost. To take it further, to live in fear and ignorance of death is a perversion of life.

Ego-intellect is busy compounding the problems it made, incapable of comprehending, much less embracing, wisdom. The solution we seek for a better life in the body lies in development.

The behavioristic models of psychology and biology have led us to



despair precisely because they left out everything that makes us tick, the purpose and meaning of life, and left us with mere reflexes, instinct, conditioning and selfish genes. Idiot savants and fire-walking are glaring examples of the fundamental failure of mechanistic models. The model of ourselves must lead us to freedom, be open-ended though structured and allow room for intuitive and non-verbal awareness including, for example, the Dream Time of Australian aborigines, the ecstatic dance of the Kalahari Bushman who communicate and heal via invisible energy cords, the visions and dreams behind great scientific breakthroughs such as the benzene ring and DNA, and the communication between hunters and prey, women and children.

And now more than ever we require models that inspire us to achieve what Joe Pearce, I and many others have experienced, which he terms “unconflicted” states of complete faith and trust which allow us to accomplish the unthinkable. Unconflicted behavior is a state of fearlessness, another word for love, and is what is meant by “perfect poise” in athletics and martial arts when one moves adroitly without effort and at times with awareness outside the body which also may occur in hunting. Sex within the mantle of spiritual love can be a gateway to transcendence.

The Developmental Blueprint

The developmental blueprint we inherit prompts us to seek in the outside world appropriate models and interact with them. For example, if an adolescent fails to find a suitable model to emulate then his blueprint may atrophy and sink into a dormant state leaving a depressed, disappointed young adult who feels and acts more like a child. Or a young man who is unaware that his anger and distrust towards older men has its origin in their failure to nurture and initiate him. .

Nature's agenda is a lot like an architectural blueprint. We can't live in the lines drawn on paper, but if we follow the blueprint with the appropriate content soon we'll have a house. The quality of our intelligence, like the quality of a house, will be determined by the quality of the content with which we construct it, i.e., the quality of the models we follow and by our interaction with those models, thus the critical significance of mentoring.

Though Piaget, Pearce, Shepard and others have defined the blueprint for human development, we still send kids to school and expect them to sit in desks, and utilizing intimidation, law and fear of punishment force them to learn what they "have to know" to become worker bees. But ultimately we do them and our society great harm. Joseph Pearce summarizes the frustration that I and countless boys and girls have experienced, and why school is disastrous.

"At age seven, for instance, my sense of betrayal on being forced to sit at

a desk all year was because the blueprint within me set up a tremendous expectation for something different. Schooling could elicit no response from my blueprint because there was no match between model and agenda. A mismatch of stimulus and response brings on a sense of outrage, a violation of self, for the growth of self is thereby truncated or retarded. All that my early schooling did was to teach me to hate schooling, for we hate anything that thwarts our development, which is the basis of our survival. This learning to hate school, which is practically universal among children, is doubly tragic since we equate school with learning and the brain is constructed to do one thing – learn. So a double-bind sense of despair is the only result. If the model for learning matches the needs of the learning period, then learning is spontaneous, natural and impeccably thorough.”

About 95% of what children learn comes from observation and modeling adults, only 5% from school, but how much more of value would children learn from schools without walls in which their proclivities are playfully aligned with nature?

By the middle of adolescence, our house of intelligence should be primed for full occupancy and employment. At this point in our development we are supposed to make a radical shift in agenda to a very different form of intelligence. Just as we are born to grow, mature and become parents, maturation leads us beyond biological development to

become one who accesses higher knowledge and creates. Once we have identified with creation, it is natural for us to move on to identify with nature and the Creator, ultimately accepting life and death and our own death gracefully.

But our biological development has been so seriously disrupted that we have generated dysfunction, and what is worse, we have resigned ourselves to a dysfunctional state as revealed nightly on “reality” TV. Our conceptions of self and the world have been shaped by dysfunctional models. Because we have no concepts of normality, we pass on to our children our own dysfunctional state – from every direction dysfunction is mirrored back thus reinforcing our pathology as normality.

We administer drugs to boys because they are bored or have difficulty paying attention in school. What if it is normal and natural for them to be outside playing and learning in nature? What if the sickness is not in them but in schooling? What of formula, circumcision, crib death, growing up without wild animals to name and imitate, schooling and teen pregnancy (the average age of woman at their first birth in Bushman societies is around 20)? And these are as unnatural as nuclear families living by themselves, children growing up with merely one parent in their lives, and elders being confined to “homes” where they do not interact with younger generations. A book could be written just about the adverse effects of living by the clock instead of “Mother Time.”

## Brain Development, Heart and Mind

We actually have five brains in one. The oldest is the reptilian brain, which was dominant for hundreds of millions of years. Superimposed on it is the old mammalian brain, which took on a giant leap of new possibilities, and finally the neo-mammalian brain or neocortex associated with dolphins, whales and humans. The old mammalian brain uses the reptilian brain, and the neocortex utilizes both older brains in yet another quantum leap of possibility.

These three brains work this way: the reptilian handles physical imagery – through it we sense and respond to the physical world, except for smell; the old mammalian brain processes internal images and emotions; and, the neocortex is the intellectual brain that handles extremely abstract images. The things we learn to do so well they are seemingly automatic, like driving a car, are handled by the reptilian brain. The old mammalian or mid-brain evaluates quality including relational character or condition between ourselves and our experience. It processes love, hate, fear, aversions, attractions, as well as all our bondings between child and parent, child and nature, male and female, person and society and so on. The mid-brain is cohesive; it ties things together. Sensory information coming through the old brain is given meaning and emotional content by

the mid-brain, which also integrates the reptilian brain with the neocortex.

After centuries of bad remedies prescribed for a disease that has been wrongly diagnosed, new research gives us that opportunity to remove blocks to transcendence and allows us to develop a nature that lies beyond violence and rage. A major clue to our conflict is the discovery that we have five different brains within us. These five brains, four of which are housed in our head, represent the entire evolution of life before us: reptilian, old mammalian and human. Pearce says, "Nature never abandons a good idea but instead builds new structures upon it; apparently each new neural structure we have inherited evolved to correct shortcomings in or problems brought about by nature's former achievements," and he sees brain evolution as another example of transcendence, "rising and going beyond."

The mid-brain is the heart of this three-part brain system, and also is directly innervated with the heart itself, a vitally important connection with the function of bonding. Traditionally, emotion always has been associated with the heart, and the mid-brain actually does take directives from the heart and communicating with it in turn. Long intuited by poets and saints, the fifth brain lies not in our head but in our heart, half or more of which is composed of neurons, a hard, biological fact. We really do think with our hearts! This heart-head dynamic reflects, determines and affects the very nature of our resulting awareness even as it is, in turn,

profoundly affected. Within this mutually interdependent system lies the key to transcendence and the resolution of our tendency toward violence.

If spirit is the unknown power impelling us to rise and go beyond, the intelligence of the heart brain embodies this elusive driving force, a fact we can grasp if we distinguish between intelligence and intellect as we must between spiritual and religious, heart and ego, love and fear. In an efficient biological unfolding the intelligence in our heart and the intellect in our head should function interdependently, but their reciprocal action is broken down by the cultural counterfeits of civilization, namely the predominance of ego/fear, which blocks the “unconflicted” state.

Pearce discovered that he was capable of unconflicted behavior “through a kind of willful and voluntary throwing away of self-preservation....a genuine acceptance of death...Therefore there was nothing left to lose! I found that in this state not only did fire not have to burn me, but also gravity did not have to hold me...” Twice I observed levitation by a man who was praying intensely. While giving a demonstration speech in college on how to treat a poisonous snake bite, I had intended to gesture with a razor blade where one would cut Xs across the imaginary fang punctures in my arm, but instead and much to my surprise, actually made the cuts, though I did not feel them. The class was impressed and the professor gave me a high mark.

Which seems as nothing compared to the Sufis who not only walk

across 1300 degree coals, hot enough to melt aluminum, but who hang from hooks on which they swing for hours without harm; moreover, after they descend and remove the hooks the wounds quickly disappear. The Sufis playfully practice what Jesus taught: in knowing **what** we are, we know there is nothing to fear so we are entitled to miracles.

Joe Pearce discovered that the structure of reality is negotiable when he was free of all internal conflict which is generated by fear of harm or death. Acceptance of death carries us beyond the fear of death and opens us to another reality, one in which we are literally invulnerable – from Viking to Samurai, the ancient warrior's code. Fear of any kind throws us into an ancient survival mentality which shuts down our higher awareness and full potential. While 97% of the Sufis who annually undertake a ritual firewalk pass unscathed, 3% become frightened and perish. While it is widely believed that because its function is defensive or protective, ego is good for survival, the frightened Sufi firewalkers might disagree. Repeatedly in my life I survived or saved the lives of others when I moved beyond fear and ego to fearlessness and inner peace. Heroes typically claim the same.

### Pathways to the Heart

The path to manhood with heart requires the completion of a series of bondings, first with mother. Normal bonding between mother and infant



occurs in utero, and if a pregnant woman feels unsure about having a child she communicates that insecurity to a fetus which is surprisingly aware and sensitive to the mother's emotions and even to her environment.

Civilized life is so fraught with artificiality that we have lost our bearings in the world, and nowhere is this more obvious or more harmful than in birthing and neonatal care. We cannot imagine raising a baby without diapers, but women in Africa and Latin America do it. These mothers know when the babies they are carrying close to their bodies, often in slings on their backs, are about to urinate or defecate. According to anthropologist Colin Turnbull, they anticipate the infant's need prior to any detectable signs. Women in Guatemala say a woman is stupid or a poor mother when two or three days after the birth of her baby she is still being soiled by it.

These women have bonded with their babies. They were allowed to have natural childbirth, an instinctive process mediated by the mid-brain and basically identical in all cultures. Like breathing, bonding will manifest if allowed. Bonding provides an intuitive, extrasensory kind of connection between mother and child, a felt process that is inexplicable to language, thought or intellect, a communion that transcends the reasoning mind. A mother senses her baby's needs the same way she recognizes her own bodily needs, but the communion of bonding extends beyond physiological processes.

Bonding relies upon a physical link between the mid-brain and our hearts, and bonded people connect at intuitive levels that operate below ordinary awareness at the level of the beating heart, the mid-brain's center of emotion.

“Attachment behavior” is defined by Pearce as the pathological consequence of the failure of bonding at birth, though it can also occur at any time in our development when bonding is programmed to occur. Attachment is mediated by the reptilian brain and the lowest levels of the mid-brain; the attached person can relate only through overt signals or stimuli and is not able to perceive subtle or intuitive signals as precursors of physical experience. A person governed by attachment instead of bonding is locked into hindsight – and the hindbrain - which motivates him to compensate by trying to anticipate, predict and control events in the external world, which seems like an accurate description of civilized humanity. *A Course in Miracles* says it is insane to plan our life, but we live in such fear – ego-dominance – that we cannot imagine the possibility of living in the present and trusting our own intuitive guidance, as subsistence hunters do.

The attached person is unaware of the inner power of the mid-brain and its connection with the heart. Which has serious consequences, socially and environmentally. The attached person lacks trust that his needs will be satisfied, so instead acts aggressively to seize and possess. “I can't get

no satisfaction,” the Rolling Stones sang in the mid-60s to the baby boomers, first generation to be industrially birthed and denied bonding with their mothers, possibly the origin of the hippy generation’s protest to “make love not war.” In retrospect were they asking to be allowed to bond with their mothers rather than be warred against, as they were?

The attached person feels vulnerable to an unpredictable world and attempts to incorporate into his ego defense the objects, events and persons of his external world, which means he treats another person as an object to be dominated or as a means for his own protection. The attached person lives in a perpetual state of defensive alert, a precursor for stress disease, addiction, substance abuse and violence.

Learning is a process of moving from what is known to that which is unknown. Bonding gives a person a level of trust that calls forth a response rather than a reaction; it allows a person to flow with events in contrast with the attached personality who attempts to analyze the future and predict outcomes, obsessed with forcing the unknown back into the known, again an apt description of science and Western culture. A bonded person’s receptivity allows him to integrate experience into ever widening circles of possibility. His deep trust in the connectedness of everything mirrors the creative principle that binds a diverse creation together, from subatomic particles to ecosystems, galaxies and minds.

***Attachment behavior is a metaphor for civilized life obsessed with***

***control, bonding is a metaphor for foraging life and its acceptance of what is.***

Though bonding is well established in utero, after birth it must be reconfirmed, and if re-established well the child will move far afield integrating the old into the new. If not, then the attached infant's fists will remain clinched long after birth, and later it will cling to the parent fearing loss of contact, afraid to explore the world, like Harry Harlow's rhesus monkeys clinging to their artificial surrogate mothers.

If two living heart cells are separated on a slide they pulsate at different rates, but if the cells are brought closer together, at critical distance before they actually touch they will start to pulsate in synchrony and function as a miniature heart should. They have successfully communicated with one another, overcome a gap of separation. They are bonded.

Proper birthing and the brilliant start it gives to learning is a model for the movement from known to unknown that will be carried out in all the subsequent shifts that must be made with each stage of development.

Nursing continues to signal well being from mother to child. The infant's heart sends these messages on to the mid-brain which gives it a sense of emotional security in a stable world. The child that is breast-fed is more intelligent than the bottle-fed child, and the longer it is breast-fed, up to three years, the more intelligent it will be. If the child's future developmental shifts are met with successful bonding, his superior intelligence, sociability

and suitability as a parent are assured.

Before we look at the ways in which bonding processes have been disrupted by industrialized birthing and caused an epidemic of attachment behavior, which severely threatens our ability to cope with the social-environmental crisis, we need to take a deeper look at healthy bonding between heart and mind.

The heart plays a major role in our consciousness. Feature films and books recount actual events from heart transplants in which the receiver takes on proclivities or expressions of the donor. A woman who received a man's heart awoke from the operation and requested hot dogs and beer for the first time in her life, exactly what the man had been eating when he died. In another case the recipient, a Mexican male, began speaking words he had never heard before, but when he met the donor's wife discovered that the peculiar language was often used by the donor. Heart recipients describe themselves after transplant as feeling like a new person has come inside their life. Quite possibly their body has become the home of a second spirit that never left its heart – which, after all, was kept alive as it was relocated from one body to the other.

In any case, activity in the heart controls and governs activity in the body and the brain. The heart receives reports from the brain about the environment, then the heart commands the brain to respond. A medicine man once told Carl Jung that white men, with furrowed brows and

unrelenting anger, were insane and murderous because they thought in their heads. He explained that whole people think in their hearts.

Intellect is dangerous without intelligence, which is the ability to function for our well being. Intelligence is designed to incorporate intellect into its service, but to do this intellect must be developed right along with the intelligence of the heart. The problem we face today is the dynamic of the relationship between heart and brain, intelligence and intellect. Pearce says,

“Since all intelligences are coded to unfold within nature’s timetable, intellect opens on target whether an intelligence of the heart has developed or not (just as sexuality unfolds at puberty whether we are ready for it or not). And therein lies the problem. The dynamic of the heart and brain is the dynamic of intelligence and intellect, the principle dynamic on which our life is based. If we develop intellect and fail to develop intelligence we are then subject to a novelty seeking mind that operates without regard to our own or others’ well-being. Anything is possible to us, but what is appropriate?”

Intelligence of the heart is the foundation of all bonding. Without it people do not nurture one another or the earth. There are at least two stages of heart development. The first starts at birth and follows the natural stages of childhood development that impart emotional security and trust. The second opens at middle adolescence with the development of the

pre-frontal cortex, which may have appeared only 40,000 years ago. This fifth and final brain was described by neuroscientist Paul MacLean as the angel lobes, because they are the center for empathy, compassion, understanding and higher intellect. The prefrontals become active at around the age of 15 years, a stage that allows us to develop an awareness that incorporates animal emotions into a higher human state in which the biological links up with the spiritual, as when we fall in love with another person or through hunting with nature, when truth, metaphor and poetry acquire significance.

In each case, the new stage of development must be met with a nurturing environment. The heart-limbic system may appear primitive, but its solid connection is absolutely critical. The first teacher of the heart is the mother; the bonding between mother and child must be established at birth. The mother then awakens the undeveloped intelligence of the infant and serves as the model for ongoing development until the child's intelligence is self-actualized and is no longer in need of nurturing. The child becomes a person at home in a world of movement and change, someone who stands firm in the strength of the living earth.

The heart's intelligence is not merely a sweet sentiment but a biological necessity and the basis for all bonding. Bonding develops in clear stages: mother-infant from birth to 1.5 – 3 years; infant-father/family from 1.5 – 3 years; child to nature from 3 to 12 years; adolescent to society (and males

to nature) from age 12 to 16; and, male-female mating bond, from 18 to 21.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century incurred the loss of the bonding power that holds family and society together. As a consequence of the failure of the mother-infant heart bonding, there has been a corresponding loss of intelligence, love and nurturing that has left us living in a dark, reptilian world of exaggerated ego-defensiveness. No wonder so many films feature rampaging reptiles ranging from escaped crocodiles and giant snakes to Godzilla.

### Breaking the Bond

Our relationship with Mother Earth is an extension of our relationship with our own mothers. Likewise, some have argued that lack of bonding with our earthly fathers stands in the way of a relationship with the Father in Heaven. Are society and the earth dying because we have not honored our most fundamental human needs? Awareness and important insights on the behavioral and emotional needs fulfilled by human development came from classical ethology, the biological study of animal behavior, especially the work of Nobel laureates Konrad Lorenz and Niko Tinbergen, from whom I learned at Oxford. Lorenz's well known studies of imprinting in geese who were exposed to him soon after hatching and thereafter followed him as though he were their mother, pointed to critical



periods for bonding in human development.

In the later 60s, my professor, a classical Lorenzian ethologist, and I spent countless hours speculating on the disaster of modern birthing practices: yanking babies out of women with stainless steel forceps, removing newborns from their mothers and placing them alone in a nursery, bottle-feeding instead of nursing and so on. Unfortunately, we were proven right.

Perhaps the greatest insult to generations born since WWII was taking babies away from their mothers and keeping them in nurseries. Finally, someone in medicine wondered why babies are so quiet there, even though they cry out at first. Perhaps the newborns are adapted to be quiet to reduce the probability of being found and killed by predators?

So a study was done on nursery babies to discover what is going on internally, and the results are most distressing: after crying for a while, which in natural circumstances would attract the mother, the babies went into shock! Why wouldn't they be severely frightened? In the same way that a baby's mouth and sucking response – finely coordinated use of more than twenty muscles - is innately adapted to the mother's nipple, the newborn's instincts program it to be held closely by its mother. To an infant abandonment is unthinkable; it is astonishing and incredible that it has happened to millions of babies throughout the civilized world. Though industrialized birthing has begun to recognize the needs of infants and

mothers to bond, the baby boomers are now the age of elders with economic and political power, but they suffer from severe attachment. So can they serve as elders capable of mentoring youth through rites of passage, essential to self-replicating communities? Or will they simply be elders? My guess is that many older people may need to be called to service and trained as mentors. Perhaps abundant play in nature and belated rites of passage would help prepare them.

Other medical geniuses did an analysis of mother's milk and found it wanting: way too low in protein and fats, they said. So formula was invented and with it a highly profitable industry to replace breast-feeding. Why no one asked how babies managed to grow into healthy children for the past few million years is a real puzzle. But following WWII, 97% of the babies born for several decades were bottle-fed with formula. As it turns out, babies are adapted to nurse from their mothers 60 times per day, a frequency of intimate contact that assured effective bonding. With bottle-feeding babies were fed much less often and had less contact with their mothers. Equally bad, while being bottle-fed babies are held at arm's length rather than to the mother's breast close to her heart, thus depriving the child of the heart-to-heart communication it needs for bonding and proper subsequent development.

What has the high sugar content of formula done to the population and its proclivity for sugar and carbohydrates? High carbohydrate

consumption has been identified as responsible for the diseases of civilization, ranging from diabetes and obesity to high cholesterol. For another thing, sugar deflates the immune system. In the 1950s when a physician in North Carolina warned the populace about a correlation he discovered between the incidence of polio and summer consumption of sugar in the form of ice cream and pop, the incidence of polio declined sharply for several years until reversed by PR men backed by the Rockefellers who had major ownership in the soft drink industry. Something you would not expect to happen in a hunting society.

And what of the insult to mothers? Is post-partum blues something natural or is it the result of industrialized birthing which also deprives the mother of bonding with her baby? The mother and the baby are a co-adapted system of heart, emotion and body interface: the mother is programmed to nurture as well as receive rewarding feedback from nursing, holding and caressing the baby that is unparalleled in adult human life. How has this deprivation influenced mothers' relationships with their children? Their sense of wholeness and cosmic connectedness? Their attitudes toward men? Their hearts? The earth?

On top of all these insults to mother and child the boy infant is hauled away by strangers and under blinding lights has his penis foreskin whacked off. Even though there is no good reason known to perform circumcision, the practice persists apparently because parents are

concerned that little Johnny might grow up, see other boys' penises and think he's different. He's not different. Chances are he's just as insecure and lacking in trust as the next unbonded kid. Brain wave studies demonstrate that it more than hurts a little while before they "fall asleep". Like the infants removed to nurseries, circumcised infants go into a state of shock.

Does infant circumcision sentence a male to a lifetime of fear and defensiveness? Could the barbaric practice of infantile circumcision be a contributor to the growth of male violence and sexual dysfunction? Does it up the odds that males will be more willing soldiers?

But the real disaster is the separation of mother and infant at birth, leaving us psychologically and emotionally crippled. Pathetically, an unbonded child has no choice but to try to possess his experience so he holds tight to the blanket, his only stable source of stimuli in his world. Human awareness develops and exists solely through relationship, but when the intimate relationship is lacking, an infant's only choice is to establish whatever relations he can on the shallow sensory level provided him. Then he will perceive every encounter as an object of possession, and when he is older that possession will become domination because emotional bonding will be beyond his capacity.

The inability of people to relate on an emotional level is epidemic. Unbonded males see females as objects of gratification, physical

possessions to be dominated which leads to physical abuse. Each developmental shift contains a quantum step of possibilities, but the unbonded ego cannot make the leap and be integrated into the higher level of integration. A bonded child automatically makes the shift and easily relinquishes an earlier identity.

The unbonded child becomes an obsessive-compulsive consumer who can never get enough stimulation. Thanks to industrialized birthing, generations of Americans are helplessly addicted to everything from TV and computers to food, sex and material possessions. They can't get no satisfaction. The greed that is devouring the earth comes from a lower brain identity – reptilian humans on the take.

Parenting has become a major national issue, but most remedies are intellectual in nature. There is no intellectual substitute for bonding. We need mothering far more than a bigger house, second car or the latest in entertainment centers. When people are locked into the sensory-motor system of the reptilian brain because they were never bonded in infancy, do they crave stimulation and self-protection and so choose a life defined by materialism, money and consumption? Meanwhile, the hundreds of thousands of violent attacks by students against teachers are blamed on TV violence, a symptom as much as a cause. School shootings are blamed on everything from Ridilin to bullying and firearms, but what if lack of bonding and fearful enculturation are the real influences behind high

divorce rate, single-family homes and fragmentation at every level?

Facing an annual expenditure of four billion dollars for crime and violence, in 1979 the State of California conducted the first major study of the basic causes of crime and violence. At the top of the list was the violent way children come into the world.

**We need a developmental plan that accomodates our evolutionary human needs. We do not need more therapy: “a hundred years of psychotherapy and the world is getting worse,” but recovery of certain irreplaceable elements of the sane lifestyle of our Pleistocene ancestors, including prolonged and intimate association between children and mothers, between children and nature and society, and effective rites of passage for adolescents, coupled with “rising above and going beyond” the negative culture of fear.**

If true intelligence means thinking with the heart and that is dependent upon proper bonding and positive enculturation then it should not surprise us that things are awry on planet earth. Perhaps what we really should ask is how all this came about? It came about because of male dominance in civilization. Because we have been living in the shadow of Hercules, whose first and greatest feat, killing the Nemean lion, made herding possible, we find ourselves living in a patriarchal society that wars and worships heroism and competition. Dominating animals and nature is

equivalent to domination of women and the heart. The untempered egoism of pastoral life that gave birth to intellectualism and then to science and technology reached its apex with the domination of child birthing and culture by men.

Pearce adds this discouraging reflection,  
“No good comes from discussing any of this. An enormous literature has appeared over the years to no avail. These obscene practices have become not just acceptable but the model for childbirth. Our current generations are the unbonded victims shaped by the system, terrified of the thought of birth outside the medical umbrella, willing to pay any price to avoid personal responsibility for what is considered a dreadful experience. As my New Zealand physician friend Dr. Stephen Taylor, put it, this is really a basic war of man against woman. In the male intellect’s long battle with the intelligence of the heart, the real trump card was found in catching the woman when she is most vulnerable and stripping her of her power. Now, it seems we have her – and are surely had. Beneath it all grows great anger: children angry at their parents; men angry at women because they didn’t get what they needed from woman at life’s most critical point and still fail to get it; women angry at men for robbing them of their power and, identifying with their oppressors, rejecting motherhood and men in the process. This has caused a rising tide of incompetence and inability to nurture and care for offspring....Home birth under any

circumstances is safer and more successful than hospital birth...the death rate is six times higher in hospitals than at home...Male doctors' intellect has interfered with woman's intelligence and in effect, destroyed a major segment of their lives. Medical childbirth is one of the most destructive forces to issue from the mind of man and a most destructive force on earth today....the violence done to infants and mothers at birth...is the primary cause of our explosive rise of suicide, drug abuse, family collapse, abandonment and abuse of infants and children, deterioration of schooling, and social disintegration...Only television...comes close in destructive force."

The origin of the male intellect being at war with nature's wisdom, in this case, feminine intelligence and the intelligence of the heart can be traced back to the domination and control of nature required of herding and agricultural life. Even though men were bonded with their mothers for thousands of years in civilization, increasingly they were separated from nature during childhood and barraged with the culture of fear, then put through rites of passage during adolescence that incorporated earlier development into the defensive ego-consciousness of the warrior for whom conflict, domination, subjugation and conquest are the meaning of life.

Adolescence



Part of the programming of adolescence involves a scrupulous examination of our culture, and if we find it wanting, we rebelliously reject it. On the one hand we seem driven to identify, adopt and conform to life as it has been; on the other we are reluctant to accept what is pathological. Adolescence is a stage of development during which shifts can be made in the greater social and economic fabric.

Here is what my 14-year old son, Drake, had to say in a poem he wrote for school:

“I used to hate change/Now I am change/I used to believe in this world/Now I can only resist it/I used to be a stale pond/But now I am an ocean of raging waves!”

Popular music today features screams of agony, hate, desperation, self-pity, anarchy, loneliness and suicide. Hopeless.

Adolescence also is the sensitive period for the awakening of spiritual life and acquisition of wholeness. If we have not been bonded, then we are driven to maintain and protect our state of dysfunction. Instead of moving our physical, emotional and mental processes into an all encompassing higher structure of spirituality, we resist and rationalize our inability to integrate and devote ourselves to the maintenance of a fragmented psyche. We grow up surrounded by slogans that reinforce our counterfeit culture, “Be a man,” “Stand up for yourself,” “Be assertive,” “Get even,”

“Get ahead in the world,” “Be somebody,” “Survival of the fittest,” “It’s a jungle out there,” “He made a killing in the stock market,” “Be a strong individual,” and so on. Implementing these pseudo-virtues of the pastoral myth underlying industrial civilization is won at the cost of true society. Development of spirit is what generates community, but imagine what a 17-year old boy encounters if he walks away from football practice to undertake a vision quest or gives up partying to meditate! His pursuit would be branded as selfish, self-indulgent, anti-social, even pathological, and yet what could be more appropriate at that time in his life for his personal development and ultimately the benefit of his future family and society?

Do not mistake me, adolescence is a biological adaptation that prepares boys for adult life, and that life includes the assumption of risks as a protector as well as being a provider. It’s just that all earlier developmental stages and growth are being reassembled under a spiritual umbrella that must be embraced for adult life to take on a correspondingly higher level of meaning. Just as the newborn is adapted to bond with its mother, and the child is adapted to identify and imitate animals to develop cognition and differentiate itself, the adolescent male is primed by a critical period to encounter a model that will facilitate his adult bonding to society as protector and provider. That model consists of adult males and an initiation process commonly known as rites of

passage, the original form being the hunt. Boys are primed to take risks and prove themselves worthy as providers, and in the process of killing an animal to confront death and the necessity of self-control and to adopt moral reflection. They also are ready to respond to this pivotal experience by opening the heart to spiritual influence, tempering their instinctive fire, bonding with nature and acquiring humility.

Anthropologist Carleton Coon believed that unlike the children of hunters, boys and girls today have no adults to guide them through the puberty ordeals that they need in order to maintain social continuity. It is no wonder that they create age-graded micro-societies of their own, including gangs. Coon also thought that saving our planet from human destruction is only half of the problem. The other half is for us to learn how nature intended human beings to live and reestablish continuity with those who may still be living after the rest of us are dead.

Males come out of properly initiated adolescence with their intellects integrated with intelligence. Intelligence is the means by which the life process interfaces and synthesizes divergent parts into symbiotic relationship resulting in well-being, success of individuals and societies, and proper relationship to nature. Intellect, on the other hand, is a tool of intelligence, a process meant to operate in a logical, analytical and non-judgmental manner. The integration of intellect into the higher integral

structure of intelligence is accomplished in spiritual development of adolescence during which we move beyond the body to identification with the divine.

The shift associated with adolescence opens us to a qualitatively different kind of awareness than we knew in the first fifteen years of life. The shift requires an authentic rebirth; we must become as little children in order to be remade. We embark on a new development that means relinquishing development up to that point.

Joseph Campbell views rites of passage as a hero's journey. Without tearing, blood and pain, there can be no growth, no new life. To discover the divine within we must muster the courage to leave society and discover spiritual bliss. Society is the enemy because it imposes its structures on us, but when we enter where the dragon dwells we must kill it because everyone of its scales says, "Thou shalt." It is imperative that we throw away yesterday as the snake sheds its skin. The very dark place we were afraid to enter turns out to house what we were looking for: the mysterious treasures of life. Deep within our own psyche there shimmers the eternal jewel of peace. Embracing the spiritual we cannot despise the earthly because the ultimate purpose of our journey is compassion, our goal to bring the jewel back to the world. Though separateness appears real, beyond the world of opposites is radiant unity everywhere, and our job is to recover that

rapture and integrate it.

Campbell shares the advise that was given to a Native American at the time

of his initiation: as you travel the path of life and come to a great chasm, jump. It's not as wide as you think. To leap across the chasm to the new life of adulthood, the hero needs the fearlessness of unconflicted mind.

Like a Samurai warrior, he must go into battle ready to die so he will live.

The shift in adolescence differs from earlier transformations in so far as our own volition enters into the process. If bonding has taken place, then we are apt to choose to move ahead with initiation to adulthood. But if unbonded we may not be able to surrender to the new blueprint and move on, but instead will remain attached to the old identity, to body, childish emotions and rage, intensified by the onset of sexuality at puberty. The bonded person who rises to the occasion offered has the potential of gaining immense personal power. The unbonded adolescent may turn to technology for a weak imitation of power, including cars and video games. The dwindling recruitment of boys into hunting and the outdoors over the past few decades indicates a lack of bonding and a paucity of role models in their lives.

Because we have not provided the social context in which adolescence

may flower into spiritual power, we have instead a populace of despair that endeavors to find in technology what they did not find in themselves at adolescence. On top of which is despair over our feeling of vulnerability which motivates us to invent more and better machines and gadgets to substitute for our eroding power, until we are entirely dependent on technology because we have no power to embrace life as it is. Our final retreat is to artificial existence over which we have a semblance of control, and that leads to a perpetual state of anxiety over losing the ease and comfort technology offers, until we are ready to wage war against anyone who threatens our technological lifestyle and the oil it depends upon. We have identified with the things we made and we are lost in them, unlike the hunting societies who identify with creation and find in a natural life wholeness and fulfillment. The same applies to many recreational hunters.

Technology has locked our consciousness into the lowest level of our brain system, the reptilian. On every front it pollutes and destroys, hidden by consumerism and the ceaseless demand for more technological products. There is an apocalyptic awareness around the planet that we cannot keep going in the same direction, but there also is massive denial of the simple fact that we reap what we sow. Jerry Mander is right that our faith in scientific breakthroughs that will save the day is pure illusion.

Technology has always created more problems than it has solved, and the new technologies created to solve those problems generate more of the

same. *A Course in Miracles* teaches that we already have everything we need, something the Pygmy fully understands but which we, being unbonded and living in the defensive ego-consciousness and madness of artificial life, cannot possibly comprehend. And yet the proof is there in the coherence, humility, peace and joy of the hunting peoples and recreational hunters for whom life is sacred. Pearce's unconflicted state of being, one without fear or doubt, is that same "everything we need".

Are we willing to make the changes necessary to avert the coming catastrophe? The mechanistic scientists and the behaviorists deny the existence of mind, spirit and soul, but then they are offended that the culture produced by this denial exhibits insanity. But we still have it in our power to recover the wisdom of nature and true intelligence in our lives and the lives of our children. The very least we can do is make every effort to see that our infants and children bond with us, that they grow up hearing stories rather than watching TV so their imagination will blossom, that we recognize they need to play much more and work less, that we maximize their exposure to nature, that we ourselves redefine the meaning of life based on heart and make lifestyle choices so as to be worthy models, and that when adolescence appears we offer them the opportunity to embrace the power within themselves adjusting our life in whatever ways will facilitate their movement toward adulthood with sacredness.

"Nature Deficit Disorder" Revisited

Those critical years of childhood from 3 to 12 during which we are meant to interact and bond with nature prepare us for the transformation to adulthood. Regarding this development period it is unfortunate that Richard Louv's important book, *The Last Child in the Woods*, overlooked the seminal insights of Joseph Chilton Pearce (*Magical Child* and *Magical Child Matures*) and human ecologist Paul Shepard (*Thinking Animals* and *Nature and Madness*). Shepard said, "His nine-year mission is to build confidently from his good-mother symbiosis a lively relationship...to slowly master new patterns of nonhuman life that will, in time, serve his identity shaping when he enters the adult social world as an adolescent...."

"And what difference can it make if those nine years are played out in a fabricated environment?...."

"First, life in a made world slowly builds in the child the feeling that nonlivingness is the normal state of things. Existence is shaped from the outside or put together. Eventually, he will conclude that there is no intrinsic unfolding, no unique inner life at all, only substance...."

"Second, when he goes back into society after adolescence, having missed the initiation into the world of final mysteries and poetry, he will believe either that (a) all life, including people, is, in fact, machines...or (b) the only truly living things are people; this opens the door for all the dichotomies that separate the human from the nonhuman on the basis of



soul, spirit, mind, history, culture, speech, rights, right to existence, and so on....”

Shepard is correct that the consequences, philosophically, of an artificial perspective dominate the Western mind: God is the maker working from the outside rather than spirit that dwells within; the reductionism of Greek atomists and their scientist progeny; the paradigm of the universe as machine including the human body; and relativistic thought from the psychology of self-help to existentialism which culminates in the conclusion that reality is whatever we make it.

The task of youth is to discover structure in nature: continuity; patterns that are predictable; regular rhythms; relations that are stable, a coherent world that remains during his own changes. The child in the city is expected to move directly from bonding with his mother to mastery of social relationships, and to skip over his intimate indulgence in nature and get on with adult life. During these 8 to 10 years his inherited need will be deadened with the portrayal of nonhumans as entertainment rather than oral tradition which actually complements his hunger for otherness. Inadequate substitutions abound in the form of toys, videos, films and zoos, an arbitrary, superficial mix of nature. It should not surprise us that the boy of 13 is keenly interested in machines. The image of nature that has been given him has proved incoherent. The boy is destined to a life of

alienation, fearful helplessness and a sense of himself and the cosmos as nonliving.

Shepard says,

“The archetypal role of nature...is in the development of the individual human personality, for it embodies the poetic expression of ways of being and relating to others....Indeed, the real brittleness of modern social relationships has its roots in that vacuum where a beautiful and awesome otherness should have been encountered....The multifold, otherness-with-similarities of nonhuman nature is a training ground for that delicate equilibrium between the play of likeness and difference in all social intercourse and for affirmation instead of fear of the ambiguities and liveliness of the self.”

#### Adolescence and Life as Sacredness

“Tribal people everywhere greeted the onset of puberty, especially in males, with elaborate and excruciating initiations – a practice that plainly wouldn't have been necessary unless their young were as extreme as ours....The tribal adults didn't run from this moment in their children as we do; they celebrated it. They would assault their adolescents with, quite literally, holy terror; rituals that had been kept secret from the young until that moment....rituals that focused upon their young all the light and

darkness of their tribe's collective psyche, all its sense of mystery, all its questions and all the stories told to both harbor and answer those questions....The adults had something to teach: stories, skills, learned well and completely, or the tribe could not survive....Tribal cultures satisfied the craving while supplying the need, and we call that initiation. The practice was so effective that usually by the age of fifteen, a tribal youth was able to take his or her place as a fully responsible adult.”

-Michael Ventura, *The Whole Earth Review*

Among foraging cultures and in the past, children in the early teens were put through rites of passage and assumed a place among adults in their society. The modern world has no economic niche or spiritual horizon for young people, and we have forgotten the special importance of rites of passage. As Robert Bly says, confirmation, barmitzvah, a letter in football or a driver's license do not suffice.

Anthropologist Colin Turnbull cannot think of a single culture that handles the crucial stage of adolescence more abysmally than western civilization. The consequences are to be seen all around us in the neurosis, violence and loneliness of our youth, our adults, and our aged, many of whom never approach the richness and fullness of life that could have been theirs had their adolescence been handled with more wisdom,

respect and understanding.

The holding pattern we have created keeps youth in limbo. Each year children enter adolescence earlier and stay in it longer. Michael Gurian (see Foreword) says it now spans from age 9 to 21. They are alienated and each generation more lost than the last, a dismal situation exacerbated by commercial exploitation of the age group's lack of models and their deep longing to belong. The young naturally want to participate in adult life as adults, and males are especially primed and eager to prove themselves worthy of following the footsteps of their elders. A disciple is one who "follows the exemplar," the exemplary model appropriate to a new, adult life. We see a lack of "discipline" in our young precisely because there is a breakdown in the biologically encoded program for following the model. The failure is ours, not theirs; it is anomalous for an adolescent to resist initiation rites and refuse to take his or her role in society.

The genetically encoded imperative is for the adolescent to follow; the model is what the adolescent seeks, and without emotionally rich rites of passage led by mentoring elders, our youth bond with media personalities, Rambos, victimized heroic figures alone in the world whose lives are committed to vengeance, or to sports heroes, many of whom are glory hounds, and to the ever present anti-heroes of popular music whose vehement social protests speak to the alienation and anger of youth

waiting impatiently if unknowingly for someone to intervene and reorient their life toward meaning.

The failure of bonding at birth is the fault of the adult, not the infant's, and the failure of adolescents to follow is the failure of adult models. Our failure to meet their need to follow may redirect identification from an adult role in society to a place in the gang. The gang offers the opportunity to "be somebody," to face risks and prove self-worth, which accounts for much violence and teen death in the cities of America. ***In the same way that we blame school violence on guns rather than our failure as parents to provide bonding, we pretend that gun control is the solution for gang violence which also is a consequence of our failure to provide bonding with models.***

Starting at about age 12 until the mid-teens, we develop an idealistic image of life, and around 14 to 15 a feeling arises that something great is supposed to happen. Adolescents also feel deep within themselves that there is something great that must be expressed. It is a sense of destiny, and their efforts to express this is often accompanied by pointing to the heart, a clue to a dawning love affair with life on a new plane.

How tragic it is that in our world the "something tremendous" that is supposed to happen rarely happens. That pitched feeling of expectation may be felt as an acute longing. It is not about sex because what the young person anticipates is unknown. What they anticipate but seldom

find is death and rebirth of the psyche. Becoming an adult includes dying to childhood and being reborn as something new and as someone with a special mission to fulfill. Some Jungian psychologists believe that the unfulfilled need for psychic death and rebirth contributes to teen suicide, another perversion of what is natural precipitated by our failure to provide rites of passage.

Because our youth appear cynical and pursue anti-heroes, it might be difficult for us to perceive the idealism spontaneously unfolding in them. Through the framework of idealism, they scrutinize society, adults, parents, teachers, coaches, and discover our vulnerabilities and weaknesses, not out of disrespect but from the necessity to construct a new model for adult human life, to become the best they can be as an adult and to contribute to the reformation of society.

### On Role Models

The hidden greatness a young person feels calls for exemplary models, the emulation of which may facilitate success. This is where myths and stories of heroes of immense stature served youth well for millennia.

In the tradition of India, the Bhagavita and Ramayana legends of superhuman feats by godlike women and men are woven into the highest

spiritual teaching. Pearce says,

“The power of these great epics lay in the paradox that the highest reaches of humanity arose from people depicting every human failing, failings so magnified as to be unmistakable, yet finally overcome.

Incorporating god-like greatness, which we long to possess, and human weakness, which is already ours, these models of transcendence meet us where we are in order to show where we can go. Our evolution toward greatness begins, after all, in a most animal-like body. The bridge in childhood is between a specifically mammalian brain and a human brain, while in adolescence the bridge is between the human brain and the human spirit that can transcend it. The great and lasting cultures of history held before their young people symbolic figures who rose above their lower natures, making transcendence the highest and most noble of all quests, the ultimate achievement and model for becoming....Brought up on models of such stature, we identify with a general...notion of a ‘higher aim of life’...all are lifted up just by the acknowledged presence of them. And for some, at least, such images act as their first stage in the cycle of competence: a rough model about whom we feel impelled to ‘fill in the details’ and to become like through practice.”

Six decades of research on brain development and function led Paul MacLean to conclude that the critical human needs are audiovisual communication, nurturing and play. Pearce believes that these needs

sustain us from birth and also serve as a springboard to transcendence itself. To fulfill these needs it is imperative that models are provided at each stage of development. Pearce says, "Recall that the model is the living embodiment of the child's inherited capacity or talent and that its stimulus – a possibility demonstrated by the model's presence – brings about a like response in the child, building structure of knowledge or imprint within him." He emphasizes that there are no exceptions to this necessity for modeling, and that, "The character, nature and quality of any intelligence or ability are determined...by the character, nature and quality of the model." Which is all the more reason to recover community life, meaning authentic society, so that appropriate models are present and available for young people.

At each stage of maturity the inherited program of development extracted our sense of self out of one stage and moved us into an expanded potential. By the age of 15 or 16, with sexual drive in full swing, we are "all gonads," but also engrossed in logical intellect and social involvement. We are obsessed by the heroic impulse to prove ourselves worthy as men, often taking extreme risks; until the mid-20s we are ideally suited as soldiers. (The only changes in the brain after age 15 are a growth spurt of the prefrontal lobes from age 18 to 21.) Both cerebral hemispheres are fully myelinated, and if we civilized (domesticated) people who have been deprived of bonding and suffer from "nature deficit



disorder” have at that point developed no more than 5-10% of the neocortex, as has been proposed, then the adolescent feeling that something great is coming may have a neurological basis.

The secondary prefrontal development at age 15 represents the highest level of brain coordination and development. When the higher incorporates the lower into its service, it transforms the lower into the nature of the higher, the key to nature’s plan for our biology.

The sexual instinct evolves in us to magnificent levels of spiritual love as immortalized in the legends of Tristan and Isolde or Romeo and Juliet. At mid-adolescence the pre-frontal cortex incorporates our instincts of the lowly serpent which are subsequently transformed into transcendent power. This is Pearce’s model of brain development, and it converges precisely with my own model of behavioral development: the sexual instinct links up with the heart and transforms us, just as the instinct to hunt links up with the heart and transforms males.

The idea that only a small percentage of the cortex is needed to operate and interact with the lower centers to handle the external world, while the rest of the cortex deals with a vast, open-ended, literally infinite spiritual world is supported by the fact that Abos appear to utilize much more of the cortex than we do, and the spiritual life of Kalahari Bushman is much more extensive than our own. Civilized living and its focus on ego consciousness may demand much less use of gray matter.

We have touched on some of the costs of our failure to provide young people with proper initiation to adulthood, but the toll is enormous for society and the environment. When the something tremendous that was supposed to happen didn't – rites of passage and discovery, as in vision quest, of an individual's unique mission in adult life – our youth knuckle under to the paltry models and commercial curricula provided. We measure our self-worth monetarily and are schooled accordingly. Before the age of five a kid watches 6,000+ hours of TV and the pattern continues after starting school. By the age of adolescence, a young person will watch 18,000 murders and learn that life is violent and expendable. What of noble aspirations, virtue and restraint?

Our youth are sabotaged by TV, commercialism and our compulsive buying into materialism and consumerism. Several decades ago it was estimated that every day six teenagers committed suicide and over 3,000 ran away from home, that on any given day over 1,500 children were in jail and about 2,500 babies were born out of wedlock. Each year the percent of black males who are either in prison, awaiting sentence or on parole increases. The rate of recidivism is over 95%.

Pearce wrote about a hit rap album the lyrics of which describe anal-oral sex with a 12-year old girl. Attempts to remove the record from the market brought an outcry of infringement of rights and freedom in the marketplace. Plato said he could predict the shape of a society by the

music of its youth, in which case our situation is gloomy. Carol Gilligan found that girls at age 11 were confident, had clarity and purity of mind as well as strong self-image, but by age 16 were confused. Pearce adds, "Millions of dollars are made from this destruction, and the destroyed child becomes the destroying and consuming adult."

What is the cost of not belonging to the fraternity of men, the sorority of women? Without rites of passage that culminate in acceptance into and identification with adult circles and their responsibilities leaves young men few alternatives other than membership in gangs. One is joining the military and giving allegiance to a government that has eroded the Bill of Rights for the sake of imperialism, another is the empty path of egoism which makes us more vulnerable to manipulation and control by industry and government.

It is not true that history repeats itself. Since WW II a range of phenomena without historical precedence have confronted our inherited makeup so severely that we are unable to cope. We have been so altered by industrial thinking and technology that we are not even capable of grasping cause and effect. Hospital childbirth, day care, schooling, TV and the decline of child play have taken their toll, and now we face the final insult from computers on every desk and video games in every home.

There are many factors contributing to premature sexuality, and one of them is industrialized farming. "A better life through chemistry," the DuPont

slogan proposed. Have hormones in our meat, eggs and milk contributed to a younger onset of puberty and an accentuated sexual drive among youth? Rape by 12-year old boys has become common. It all comes down to the strategic invention and alteration of products that will sell better and make higher profits irrespective of the costs to the quality and integrity of human life. ***Unbridled intellect coupled with reptilian motives set free in a world without intelligence anchored in the heart can only go bad.***

#### The Cost of Stimulation

The mounting crisis for youth today includes the crisis in the family, education, structure of society, declining health and well-being and multiple forms of violence, all spilling over increasingly into adult life. A century of disruption of natural developmental processes also has taken a toll on human awareness, sensitivity and consciousness. Research indicates that the brain is not synthesizing an ever increasing disparity and intensity of information, but instead is tuning out. Enjoyment and aesthetic levels have dropped. According to Pearce, twenty years ago people could distinguish 300,000 sounds, but now many children are unable to go beyond 100,000. Twenty-five years ago subjects could distinguish 350 shades of a particular color, but today the number is 130.

Either young people have a steady input of high-level stimulation from TV, computers, video games, game boys, cell phones and Ipods, or they are sinking into sensory anxiety and isolation. Last weekend I took my 14-year old son and two of his friends camping, but whenever we weren't active one boy had his cell phone out and was texting, unresponsive to my questions. Many young people today have little interest in visiting parks or undertaking outdoor pursuits because they lack intense sensory input. German psychologists have speculated that a generation with such altered brains may create an environment of such intense stimuli that a normal brain might not survive. The total sound of a preliterate jungle society is about equal to that of a modern refrigerator!

#### What Unfortunate Children Have

An independent child psychologist, Mikulak, developed extensive tests of sensory awareness in children, and applied them to cultures ranging from the preliterate societies of Latin America and Africa to those of Europe and America. She found that children of primitive settings averaged levels of conscious awareness of their surroundings and sensory sensitivity 25 to 30 percent more than those of the children of industrialized nations. Preliterate children were more aware of what was happening among people around them, also what was said to them. They

also were more aware of the sights, sounds, taste and touches of daily life. And they knew the names of plants and animals in their environment, which few of the children and adults of industrial culture do. Mikulak's studies have been ignored.

In his book, *Evolution's End*, Pearce described studies in the late 1980s of the learning ability of children in so-called primitive groups of the third world with severely low standards of living. When these "deprived" children were put into a learning situation equal to those provided for our fortunate children, the deprived children showed a three to four times higher learning capacity, rate of attention and comprehension and retention than the fortunate children. About this Pearce comments, "Deprived of advanced electronics, these primitive children were given the most necessary things – love and nurturing – and they played continually and developed to the maximum their society afforded."

### Why Unschooling?

The negative enculturation that civilized peoples impose on their youth is not instinctive though it capitalizes on our survival instincts. Convinced that we must pass on survival knowledge and engender fear, distrust, competitiveness and self-centeredness, we pound it into our offspring for their own "good" just as it was pounded into us. We treat schooling in a

similar way, regardless of how much pain it may have caused us, having lost the richest, most wonderful years of our life, we insist that it must have been good for us. Then we subject our children to it and they prove our point by becoming just like us, joining the ranks of mass anxiety, confirming our insane worldview. We have little choice in the matter, but hope springs eternal that this time “we will make schooling work.” Pearce reminds us that, “It never has.”

In a poem entitled “Space Man Society,” my son Drake said,  
‘The school is a prison where you go almost every day to learn yet I learn nothing/ The government is an organization meant to protect us yet all it manages to do is take away freedom and collect taxes.../I am not the cowering mind trapped by fear/I am the courage of the eagle chick at its first attempt at flight...’

Competition or Cooperation?

Turnbull believes that we must consciously aim adolescents toward transformation. Do we choose a society in which people want to cooperate rather than compete? A world in which each individual becomes fully integrated and applies his whole being to whatever he does? Adolescence is when it is possible to bring together the heart, mind, body and spirit to function simultaneously so they reinforce and

vitalize one another. In so doing we inculcate the spirit of cooperation rather than competition, the spirit of incorporation and integration rather than the mechanics of isolation and fragmentation, and we promote a shared belief system in spirit as the glue of society rather than legality. Greater fulfillment, equality and security are the rewards offered by true society compared to the State. Primal societies inform us about what we have forgotten: the ecstasy of divinity. Have we lost our human potential in the bloody business of survival and the endless fear of loss?

This sorry state of disintegration can be traced back to our ancestors shift from the humble interdependence of hunting life to immodest domination of nature and the commitment to progress it entailed. When moved to a reservation and told to take up the plow one Indian complained that it was wrong to rip and tear the flesh of mother earth, that humans are meant to share her bounty. A few years later the same society removed babies from their mothers and stuck bottles in their mouths filled with cow's milk containing hormones and excessive sugar, then put a TV in every home. Up from Eden? Hardly!

“In the first place, God made idiots. That was for practice. Then he made school boards.”



- Mark Twain