

Fundamental to this attitude is the feeling that humans have the right and even the obligation to intrude upon the natural world as extensively as they are able. A person can only marvel that scientists generally seem never to have reflected on or explained to the community why the petroleum is buried in the Earth in the first place. Even the slightest reflection would reveal that nature has taken great care to bury the vast amounts of carbon in the coal and petroleum in the depths of the Earth and in the forests so that the chemistry of the atmosphere, the water, and the soil could be worked out with the proper precision. This needs to be thoroughly understood and respected lest anyone intrude into this delicate balance by extracting and using the petroleum or the coal or by cutting down and using the great forests of the planet without consideration of what will happen when these forces will no longer be able to fulfill their role in the integral functioning of the planet.

The petroleum interval is coming to its termination within the lifetime of persons living in the present. Yet there are still several decades when we can prepare for a future without petroleum. Of singular importance is the need to develop new forms of energy that are within the limits and restraints of nature's cycles. Some of these alternative sources, such as solar energy, radiant heat, and wind and water power have been identified by Amory and Hunter Lovins, John and Nancy Todd, and the Union of Concerned Scientists (Cole and Skerrett, 1995). Their research and writing are invaluable in pointing the way to a post-petroleum period. In the meantime, the best use for the available petroleum may be to use it carefully as we discover our way back to the Earth and learn how best to integrate a human way of life within the larger life community.

REINVENTING *the* HUMAN

WE MIGHT DESCRIBE THE CHALLENGE BEFORE US BY THE following sentence. The historical mission of our times is to reinvent the human—at the species level, with critical reflection, within the community of life-systems, in a time-developmental context, by means of story and shared dream experience.

I say *reinvent the human* because humans, more than any other living form, invent themselves. Other species receive their basic life instructions at the time of their birth. With this endowment they know how to obtain their food, how to defend themselves, how to obtain shelter, how to carry on their mating rituals, how to care for their young. Some species, especially the mammalian species, do need some teaching and guidance from an older generation. Young bears need to be taught how to fish. Many animal species need to be taught how to hunt. Yet this is minimal if compared to the extent of teaching and acculturation that humans need to arrive at maturity. That acculturation process is the purpose of the long childhood distinctive of humans. With their genetic endowment the other life-forms are, from an earlier age, much

more fully equipped than humans to carry out their basic patterns of survival and propagation.

We need to reinvent the human *at the species level* because the issues we are concerned with seem to be beyond the competence of our present cultural traditions, either individually or collectively. What is needed is something beyond existing traditions to bring us back to the most fundamental aspect of the human: giving shape to ourselves. The human is at a cultural impasse. In our efforts to reduce the other-than-human components of the planet to subservience to our Western cultural expression, we have brought the entire set of life-systems of the planet, including the human, to an extremely dangerous situation. Radical new cultural forms are needed. These new cultural forms would place the human within the dynamics of the planet rather than place the planet within the dynamics of the human.

We must find our primary source of guidance in the inherent tendencies of our genetic coding. These tendencies are derived from the larger community of the Earth and eventually from the universe itself. In Jungian terms, these tendencies identify with those psychic energy constellations that take shape as the primary archetypal forms deep in the unconscious realms of the human. Such forms find expression in the symbols of the Heroic Journey, Death-Rebirth, the Sacred Center, the Great Mother, the Tree of Life. Although these symbolic forms are broadly the same in their general meaning, they each take on various modes of expression in the different religious and cultural traditions, modes that are analogously the same in their essential meaning.

The necessity of rethinking our situation at the species level is clear in every aspect of the human. As regards economics we need not simply a national or a global economy but local subsistence economies where the variety of human groups become acquainted with the other species in the local bioregion.

Our schools of business administration at the present time teach the skills whereby the greatest possible amount of natural resources

is processed as quickly as possible, put through the consumer economy, and then passed on to the junk heap, where the remains are useless at best and at worst toxic to every living being. Now there is need for humans to develop reciprocal economic relationships with other life-forms providing a sustaining pattern of mutual support, as is the case with natural life-systems generally.

Especially as regards law, we need a jurisprudence that would provide for the legal rights of geological and biological as well as human components of the Earth community. A legal system exclusively for humans is not realistic. Habitat of all species, for instance, must be given legal status as sacred and inviolable.

Thirdly, I say *with critical reflection* because this reinventing of the human needs to be done with critical competence. Originally there was a certain instinctive, spontaneous process whereby the early cultural formations were established. Now we need all our scientific insight and technological skills. We must, however, see that our sciences and technologies are coherent with the technologies of the natural world. Our knowledge needs to be in harmony with the natural world rather than a domination of the natural world. We need the art of intimate communion with, as well as technical knowledge of, the various components of the natural world.

We insist on the need for critical reflection as we enter the ecological age in order to avoid a romantic attraction to the natural world that would not meet the urgencies of what we are about. The natural world is violent and dangerous as well as serene and benign. Our intimacies with the natural world must not conceal the fact that we are engaged in a constant struggle with natural forces. Life has its bitter and burdensome aspects at all levels. Yet its total effect is to strengthen the inner substance of the living world and provide the never-ending excitement of a grand adventure.

Fourth, we need to reinvent the human *within the community of life systems*. This is the central phrase, the primary condition for reinventing the human. Because the Earth is not adequately understood

either by our spiritual or by our scientific traditions, the human has become an addendum or an intrusion. We have found this situation to our liking since it enables us to avoid the problem of integral presence to the Earth. This attitude prevents us from considering the Earth as a single community with ethical relations determined primarily by the well-being of the total Earth community.

While the Earth is a single community, it is not a global sameness. Earth is highly differentiated into arctic as well as tropical regions, into mountains, valleys, plains, and coastlands. These geographical regions are also bioregions. Such areas can be described as identifiable geographical regions of interacting life-systems that are relatively self-sustaining in the ever-renewing processes of nature. As the functional units of the planet, these bioregions can be described as self-propagating, self-nourishing, self-educating, self-governing, self-healing, and self-fulfilling communities. Human population levels, our economic activities, our educational processes, our governance, our healing, our fulfillment must be envisaged as integral with this community process.

There are great difficulties in identifying just how to establish a viable context for a flourishing and sustainable human mode of being. Of one thing we can be sure, however: our own future is inseparable from the future of the larger community that brought us into being and sustains us in every expression of our human quality of life, in our aesthetic and emotional sensitivities, our intellectual perceptions, our sense of the divine, as well as in our physical nourishment and our bodily healing.

Fifth, reinventing the human must take place *in a time-developmental context*. This constitutes what might be called the cosmological-historical dimension of the program I am outlining here. Our sense of who we are and what our role is must begin where the universe begins. Not only does our physical shaping and our spiritual perception begin with the origin of the universe, so too does the formation of every being in the universe. This human formation is governed by three basic principles: differentiation, subjectivity, and communion.

Our present course is a violation of each of these three principles in their most primordial expression. Whereas the basic direction of the evolutionary process is toward constant differentiation within a functional order of things, our modern world is directed toward monocultures. This is the inherent direction of the entire industrial age. Industry requires a standardization, an invariant process of multiplication with no enrichment of meaning. In an acceptable cultural context, we would recognize that the unique properties of each reality determine its value both for the individual and for the community. These are fulfilled in each other. Violation of the individual is an assault on the community.

As a second imperative derived from the cosmological process, we find that each individual is not only different from every other being in the universe but also has its own inner articulation, its unique spontaneities. Each being in its subjective depths carries that numinous mystery whence the universe emerges into being. This we might identify as the sacred depth of the individual.

The third cosmological imperative indicates that the entire universe is bonded together in such a way that the presence of each individual is felt throughout its entire spatial and temporal range. This capacity for bonding the components of the universe with one another enables the vast variety of beings to come into existence in that gorgeous profusion and yet comprehensive unity we observe about us.

From this we can appreciate the directing and energizing role played by the *story* of the universe. This story that we know through empirical observation of the world is our most valuable resource in establishing a viable mode of being for the human species as well as for all those stupendous life-systems whereby the Earth achieves its grandeur, its fertility, and its capacity for endless self-renewal.

This story, as told in its galactic expansion, its Earth formation, its life emergence, and its self-reflexive consciousness, fulfills in our times the role of the mythic accounts of the universe that existed in earlier times, when human awareness was dominated by a spatial mode of consciousness. We have moved from cosmos to

cosmogogenesis, from the mandala journey toward the center of an abiding world to the irreversible journey of the universe itself, as the primary sacred journey. This journey of the universe is the journey of each individual being in the universe. So this story of the great journey is an exciting story that gives us our macrophase identity with the larger dimensions of meaning that we need. To identify the microphase of our being with the macrophase mode of our being is the quintessence of human fulfillment.

The present imperative of the human is that this journey continue on into the future in the integrity of the unfolding life-systems of the Earth, which presently are threatened in their survival. Our great failure is the termination of the journey for so many of the most brilliant species of the life community. The horrendous fact is that we are, as the Cambridge University biologist Norman Myers has indicated, in an extinction spasm that is likely to produce "the greatest single setback to life's abundance and diversity since the first flickerings of life almost four billion years ago" (quoted in *Biodiversity*, p. 34). The labor and care expended over some billions of years and untold billions of experiments to bring forth such a gorgeous Earth is all being negated within less than a century for what we consider "progress" toward a better life in a better world.

The final aspect of our statement concerning the ethical imperative of our times is *by means of the shared dream experience*. The creative process, whether in the human or the cosmological order, is too mysterious for easy explanation. Yet we all have experience of creative activity. Since human processes involve much trial and error with only occasional success at any high level of distinction, we may well believe that the cosmological process has also passed through a vast period of experimentation in order to achieve the ordered processes of our present universe. In both instances something is perceived in a dim and uncertain manner, something radiant with meaning that draws us on to a further clarification of our understanding and our activity. This process can be described in many ways, as

a groping or as a feeling or imaginative process. The most appropriate way of describing this process seems to be that of dream realization. The universe seems to be the fulfillment of something so highly imaginative and so overwhelming that it must have been dreamed into existence.

But if the dream is creative we must also recognize that few things are so destructive as a dream or entrancement that has lost the integrity of its meaning and entered an exaggerated and destructive manifestation. This has happened often enough with political ideologies and religious visionaries. Yet there is no dream or entrancement in the history of the Earth that has wrought the destruction that is taking place in the entrancement with industrial civilization. Such entrancement must be considered as a profound cultural disorientation. It can be dealt with only by a corresponding deep cultural therapy.

Such is our present situation. We are involved not simply with an ethical issue but with a disturbance sanctioned by the very structures of the culture itself in its present phase. The governing dream of the twentieth century appears as a kind of ultimate manifestation of that deep inner rage of Western society against its earthly condition as a vital member of the life community. As with the goose that laid the golden egg, so the Earth is assaulted in a vain effort to possess not simply the magnificent fruits of the Earth but the power itself whereby these splendors have emerged.

At such a moment a new revelatory experience is needed, an experience wherein human consciousness awakens to the grandeur and sacred quality of the Earth process. This awakening is our human participation in the dream of the Earth, the dream that is carried in its integrity not in any of Earth's cultural expressions but in the depths of our genetic coding. Therein the Earth functions at a depth beyond our capacity for active thought. We can only be sensitized to what is being revealed to us. We probably have not had such participation in the dream of the Earth since earlier shamanic times, but therein lies our hope for the future for ourselves and for the entire Earth community.