

The word "love" in English: [OED](#)

" I. Senses relating to affection and attachment.

1. a. A feeling or disposition of deep affection or fondness for someone, typically arising from a recognition of attractive qualities, from natural affinity, or from sympathy and manifesting itself in concern for the other's welfare and pleasure in his or her presence (distinguished from sexual love at sense 4a); great liking, strong emotional attachment; (similarly) a feeling or disposition of benevolent attachment experienced towards a group or category of people, and (by extension) towards one's country or another impersonal object of affection. With of, for, to, towards. See also brotherly love at BROTHERLY adj. 1b, mother-love n. at MOTHER n.1 Compounds 7

2. In religious use: **the benevolence and affection of God towards an individual or towards creation**; (also) the affectionate devotion due to God from an individual; **regard and consideration of one human being towards another prompted by a sense of a common relationship to God.**

Cf. CHARITY 2. a. "Love, kindness, affection, natural affection: now esp. with some notion of generous or spontaneous goodness. . . . 4. Benevolence to one's neighbours, especially to the poor; the practical beneficences in which this manifests itself. . . . 1836 H. Smith *Tin Trumpet* I. 105 'Charity—The only thing that we can give away without losing it.'"

4. a. An intense feeling of romantic attachment which is based on sexual attraction; sexual passion combined with

liking and concern for the other person. Cf. TRUE-LOVE n. 1.....

b. An instance of being in love. Also in pl.: love affairs, amatory relations.....

c. The motif of romantic love in imaginative literature.....

5. Sexual desire or lust, esp. as a physiological instinct; amorous sexual activity, sexual intercourse. Cf. to make love at Phrases 3a.

6. a. A person who is beloved of another, esp. a sweetheart (cf. TRUE-LOVE n. 2); also (rare) in extended use of animals. Cf. LADY-LOVE n. 1.

b. As a form of address to one's beloved and (in modern informal use) also familiarly to a close acquaintance or (more widely) anyone whom one encounters. Freq. with possessive adjective.....

{dag}c. In reference to illicit relations: a paramour or lover (applied to both men and women).....

d. gen. An object of love; a person who or thing which is loved, the beloved (of); a passion, preoccupation. See also first love n. (b) at FIRST adj. and adv. Special uses 2a.....

e. colloq. A charming or delightful person or thing.....

7. a. Now with capital initial. The personification of romantic or sexual affection, usually portrayed as

masculine, and more or less identified with the Eros, Amor, or Cupid of Classical mythology (formerly sometimes feminine, and capable of being identified with Venus). See also Phrases 6b.....

b. In pl. Representations or personifications of Cupid; mythological gods of love, or attendants of the goddess of love; figures or representations of the god of love. Freq. with modifying word.....

P2. In prepositional phrases with in, into, out of. a. in love (with): enamoured (of), filled with love (for); (in extended use) very fond (of), much addicted (to). In quot. a1398: {dag}in heat (obs.). See also mad in love at MAD adv. 2b and madly in love at MADLY adv. 2a.....

b. to fall (also {dag}be taken, caught) in love: to become enamoured; (in extended use) to become passionately attached to, dote on. Freq. with with. Also in early use {dag}to yfall (also be brought) into love's dance.....

c. out of love (with): not or no longer in love (with); (in extended use) disenchanted or disgusted (with).....

d. to fall out of love (with): to cease to be in love (with); (in extended use) to become disenchanted or disgusted (with).....

P3. With to make. a. to make love [after Old Occitan far amor (13th cent.), Middle French, French faire l'amour (16th cent.; 1622 with reference to sexual intercourse), or Italian far l'amore]. (a). To pay amorous attention; to court,

woo. Freq. with to. Also in extended use. Now somewhat arch.....

(b). orig. U.S. To engage in sexual intercourse, esp. considered as an act of love. Freq. with to, with..... [*modern usage*]

P8. love at first sight: the action or state of falling instantly in love with someone whom (or, by extension, something which) one has never previously seen.....

P12. the love that dare not speak its name and variants. a. Chiefly euphem. Homosexuality.....

b. In extended use (freq. humorous): any (trivial) enthusiasm or predilection regarded as embarrassing, shameful, or inappropriate..... OED

"There are several Greek words for love, as the Greek language distinguishes how the word is used. Ancient Greek has four distinct words for love: agápe, éros, philía, and storgē. However, as with other languages, it has been historically difficult to separate the meanings of these words. Nonetheless, the senses in which these words were generally used are given below. * **Agápe** (ἀγάπη agápē[1]) means "love" (brotherly love) in modern day Greek, such as in the term s'agapo (Σ'αγαπώ), which means "I love you". **In Ancient Greek, it often refers to a general affection or deeper sense of "true love" rather than the attraction suggested by "eros". Agape is used in the biblical passage known as the "love chapter", 1**

Corinthians 13, and is described there and throughout the New Testament as sacrificial love.

13 If I speak in the tongues^[a] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,^[b] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part,¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. ¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. ¹²For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Agape is also used in ancient texts to denote feelings for a good meal, one's children, and the feelings for a spouse. It can be described as the feeling of being content or holding one in high regard. * *Éros* (ἔρως *érōs*[2]) is passionate love, with sensual desire and longing. The Modern Greek word "erotas" means "intimate love;" however, eros does not have to be sexual in nature. Eros can be interpreted as a love for someone whom you love more than the *philia*, love of friendship. It can also apply to dating relationships as well as marriage. Plato refined his own definition: Although eros is initially felt for a person, with contemplation it becomes an appreciation of the beauty within that person, or even becomes appreciation of beauty itself. Plato does not talk of physical attraction as a necessary part of love, hence the use of the word platonic to mean, "without physical attraction." Plato also said *eros* helps the soul recall knowledge of beauty, and contributes to an understanding of spiritual truth. Lovers and philosophers are all inspired to seek truth by eros. The most famous ancient work on the subject of eros is Plato's *Symposium*, which is a discussion among the students of Socrates on the nature of eros. * *Philia* (φιλία *philía*[3]) means friendship in modern Greek. It is a **dispassionate virtuous love, a concept developed by Aristotle**. It includes loyalty to friends, family, and community, and requires virtue, equality and familiarity. In ancient texts, *philos* denoted a general type of love, used for love between family, between friends, a desire or enjoyment of an activity, as well as between lovers. * *Storge* (στοργή *storgē*[4]) means "affection" in ancient and modern Greek. It is natural affection, like that felt by parents for offspring.

Rarely used in ancient works, and then almost exclusively as a descriptor of relationships within the family. It is also known to express mere acceptance or putting up with situations, as in "loving" the tyrant." [Wikipedia](#)

“LOVING-KINDNESS” + *METTA*

Emotive Ethics = deeds of loving-kindness? Is it the extension of Augustine's version of emotive ethics to animals -- "Love and do what you will" -- with the understanding that "love" is what is now known as "loving-kindness"? Compare to Sympathy in Virtue Ethics in Philosophical Ethics?

"Loving-kindness is used as an English translation for the Hebrew word *chesed*... This term is used often in the book of Psalms, and refers to God's acts of kindness, motivated by love." (This loving-kindness may be compared to *miseriordia* in Latin: *misereri*, "to pity" and/or "to feel mercy," and *cor*, "heart").

In Buddhism it is explained in the *Metta Sutta* (circa 400 BC) , focusing on the metaphor of a mother's protective love for her only child and fifteen supporting character traits. The *Metta Sutta* includes meditations to set one's intentions, such as "May all beings be happy" and ways to radiate loving-kindness all around you (as in our Ram Dass guided imagery). (Wikipedia) *Metta* is closely related to *karuna*, the word for compassion.

One English translation of the *Metta Sutta*:

“This is to be done by one skilled in aims who wants to break through to the state of peace: Be capable, upright, & straightforward, easy to instruct, gentle, & not conceited, content & easy to support, with few duties, living lightly, with peaceful faculties, masterful, modest, & no greed for supporters. Do not do the slightest thing that the wise would later censure. Think: Happy, at rest, may all beings be happy at heart. Whatever beings there may be, weak or strong, without exception, long, large, middling, short, subtle, blatant, seen & unseen, near & far, born & seeking birth: May all beings be happy at heart. Let no one deceive another or despise anyone anywhere, or through anger or irritation wish for another to suffer. As a mother would risk her life to protect her child, her only child, even so should one cultivate a limitless heart with regard to all beings. With good will for the entire cosmos, cultivate a limitless heart: Above, below, & all around, unobstructed, without enmity or hate. Whether standing, walking, sitting, or lying down, as long as one is alert, one should be resolved on this mindfulness. This is called a sublime abiding here & now.

"Karaniya Metta Sutta: Good Will" (Sn 1.8), translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.1.08.than.html>

JUDEO-CHRISTIAN VERSION, King James Bible
(also see O.E.D. on *love* in previous pages)

Leviticus 17-18 "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt not in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt ***love thy neighbour as thyself***: I *am* the LORD."

?UNCONDITIONAL LOVE:

1 Corinthians 13 on ***caritas*** "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is ***kind***; *charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up*, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth:

John 15:12 "This is my commandment, That ye

love one another, as I have loved you.

Love vs. Fear

Matthew 5:43-44 "Ye **have** heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt **love** thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But **I** say unto **you**, **Love your enemies**, bless them that curse **you**, do good to them that hate **you**, and pray for them which despitefully use **you**, and persecute **you**;"

Cf. Luke 6:35;

1 John 4:18 : "There is no fear in love; but perfect ***love casteth out fear***: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

Ethics as LOVING-KINDNESS VS. FEAR NATIVE AMERICAN VERSION:

"One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all. The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.* The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith." The grandson asked, "Which wolf wins?" The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

The term *biophilia* was used by German-born American psychoanalyst [Erich Fromm](#) in *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973), which described biophilia as “the passionate love of life and of all that is alive.” The term was later used by American biologist [Edward O. Wilson](#) ** in his work *Biophilia* (1984), which proposed that the **tendency of humans to focus on and to affiliate with nature and other life-forms has, in part, a genetic basis.** *Encyclopedia Britannica*

Biophilia is the feeling that we are deeply, instinctively connected to all living beings, a love for all forms of life.

The chief obstacle to an environmental ethic is “biophobia,” an instinctive “morbid or superstitious fear of animals”:

“**3.** A love of or empathy with the natural world, esp. when seen as a human instinct”; “philia”: “amity, affection, friendship; fondness, liking.”

Vs. Biophobia: “(b) avoidance of contact with animals, plants, or organic materials; strong aversion to aspects of the natural world”; “phobia”: “fear, horror, strong dislike, or aversion.” (“Biophobia ranges from discomfort in ‘natural’ places to active scorn for whatever is not man-made, managed, or air-conditioned” (*OED* citation: Orr 1993, 416). Hence the “emotional spectra” of the two responses ranges “from attraction to aversion, from awe to indifference, from peacefulness to fear-driven anxiety” (Wilson 1993: 31). (*OED*).

**Edward O Wilson, is the foremost proponent of [sociobiology](#), the study of the genetic basis of the social behaviour of all animals, including humans. After receiving a doctorate in biology at [Harvard University](#) in 1955, he was a member of Harvard’s biology and [zoology](#) faculties from 1956 to 1976. At Harvard he was later Frank B. Baird Professor of Science (1976–94), Mellon Professor of the Sciences (1990–93), and Pellegrino University Professor (1994–97; professor emeritus from 1997). In addition, Wilson served as curator in entomology at Harvard’s Museum of Comparative Zoology (1973–97). . *Encyclopedia Britannica*

The **brahmavihāras** (sublime attitudes, lit. "abodes of brahma") are a series of four **Buddhist** virtues and the meditation practices made to cultivate them. They are also known as the **four immeasurables** (Sanskrit: *apramāṇa*, Pāli: *appamaññā*).[1][2] According to the *Metta Sutta*, **Gautama Buddha** held that cultivation of the four immeasurables has the power to cause the practitioner to be reborn into a "**Brahmā** realm" (Pāli: *Brahmaloka*).[3] The meditator is instructed to radiate out to all beings in all directions the mental states of: 1) loving-kindness or benevolence 2) compassion 3) empathetic joy 4) equanimity These virtues are also highly regarded by Buddhists as powerful antidotes to negative mental states (non-virtues) such as avarice, anger and pride. . . .

When developed to a high degree in meditation, these attitudes are said to make the mind "immeasurable" and like the mind of the loving *Brahmā* (gods).[9]

Other translations: English:four **divine emotions**, four sublime attitudes.

The four immeasurables are:

1. **Loving-kindness** (Pāli: *mettā*, Sanskrit: *maitrī*) towards all: the hope that a person will be well; "the wish that **all sentient beings, without any exception**, be happy." [11]
2. **Compassion** (Pāli and Sanskrit: *karuṇā*): the hope that a person's sufferings will diminish; "the wish for **all sentient beings** to be free from suffering." [11]
3. **Empathetic joy** (Pāli and Sanskrit: *muditā*): joy in the accomplishments of a person—oneself or another; sympathetic joy; "the wholesome attitude of rejoicing in the happiness and virtues of **all sentient beings**." [11] *
4. **Equanimity** (Pāli: *upekkhā*, Sanskrit: *upekṣā*): learning to accept loss and gain, good-repute and ill-repute, praise and censure, sorrow and happiness (*Attha Loka Dhamma*), [12] all with detachment, equally, for oneself and for others. Equanimity is "not to distinguish between friend, enemy or stranger, but **regard every sentient being as equal**. It is a clear-minded tranquil state of mind—not being overpowered by delusions, mental dullness or agitation." [13]

.... while the four immeasurables might be delineated as attitudes to the future or past, they contain the seed of the "present" within their core; as **they manifest new ways to act (a living embodied practice)**. In this context, a living embodied practice can be a dedicated intention that we are in the "here and now"; that is to say we experience both a tranquil awareness of at once a) our own and other being's gifts and accomplishments and b) tranquil awareness of moments where our own and other being's actions do not reflect the four immeasurables. [14].... [Loving-kindness and compassion can both be viewed as hopes for the *future leading, where possible, to action* aimed at realizing those hopes.]

. . . . Central to Buddhist spiritual practice is a deep appreciation of the present moment and the possibilities that exist in the present for **waking up and being free of suffering**. [15]

*[“Buddhist teachers interpret *mudita* more broadly as an inner spring of infinite joy that is available to everyone at all times, regardless of circumstances. "The more deeply

one drinks of this spring, the more securely one becomes in one's own abundant happiness, the more bountiful it becomes to relish the joy of other people." Joy is also traditionally regarded as the most difficult to cultivate of the **four immeasurables** (*brahmavihārā*: also "four sublime attitudes"). To show joy is to celebrate happiness and achievement in others even when we are facing tragedy ourselves.^[2]

[Elizabeth J. Harris, *A Journey into Buddhism* Source for Free Distribution with permission from Access to Insight and the Buddhist Publication Society <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mudita>]

Although this form of these ideas has a Buddhist origin, the ideas themselves are in no way sectarian. The **Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement** uses them in public meditation events in Sri Lanka bringing together Buddhists, **Hindus**, **Muslims**, and **Christians**. **Rudyard Kipling's** inspirational poem *If* refers to the idea of *upekkhā* in calling Triumph and Disaster impostors.

In the *Tevijja Sutta: The Threefold Knowledge* of the *Majjhima Nikaya* set of scriptures, Buddha Shākyamuni is asked the way to fellowship/companionship/communion with Brahma. He replies that he personally knows the world of Brahma and the way to it, and explains the meditative method for reaching it by using an **analogy** of the resonance of the **conch shell** of the *aṣṭamaṅgala*:

A monk suffuses the world in the four directions with a mind of benevolence, then above, and below, and all around – the whole world from all sides, completely, with a benevolent, all-embracing, great, boundless, peaceful and friendly mind ... Just as a powerful conch-blower makes himself heard with no great effort in all four [cardinal] directions, so too is there no limit to the unfolding of [this] heart-liberating benevolence. This is a way to communion with Brahma.^[16]

The Buddha then says that the monk must follow this up with an equal suffusion of the entire world with mental projections of compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity (regarding all beings with an eye of equality). . . . In an authoritative Jain scripture, the **Tattvartha Sutra** (Chapter 7, sutra 11), there is a mention of four right sentiments: Maitri, pramoda, karunya, madhyastha.

1. [Jon Wetlesen, Did Santideva Destroy the Bodhisattva Path? *Jnl Buddhist Ethics*, Vol. 9, 2002](#) (accessed March 2010)
2. Bodhi, Bhikkhu. *Abhidhammattha Sangaha: A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. BPS Pariyatti Editions, 2000, p. 89. Peter Harvey, "An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics." Cambridge University Press, 2000, page 104.
3. [AN 4.125, *Metta Sutta*](#). See note 2 on the different kinds of Brahmas mentioned.
9. Peter Harvey, "An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics." Cambridge University Press, 2000, page 104.
11. [Buddhist Studies for Secondary Students, Unit 6: The Four Immeasurables](#)
12. <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/piyadassi/wheel001.html>
13. [A View on Buddhism, THE FOUR IMMEASURABLES: Love, Compassion, Joy and Equanimity](http://viewonbuddhism.org/immeasurables_love_compassion_equanimity_rejoicing.html) http://viewonbuddhism.org/immeasurables_love_compassion_equanimity_rejoicing.html
14. Allen, Kim. "Beautifying the Mind: Benevolence". <http://www.audiodharma.org/>. Retrieved 16 January 2014.
15. Fronsdal, Gil. "The Issue at Hand". [theinsightmeditationcenter.com](http://www.insightmeditationcenter.com). Retrieved 16 January 2014.
16. *Majjhimanikaya*, tr. by Kurt Schmidt, Kristkeitz, Berlin, 1978, p.261, tr. by Tony Page. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brahma-viharas>

through lack of presence which is normal, the emotion temporarily becomes "you." Often a vicious circle builds up between your thinking and the emotion: they feed each other. The thought pattern creates a magnified reflection of itself in the form of an emotion, and the vibrational frequency of the emotion keeps feeding the original thought pattern. By dwelling mentally on the situation, event, or person that is the perceived cause of the emotion, the thought feeds energy to the emotion, which in turn energizes the thought pattern, and so on.

Basically, all emotions are modifications of one primordial, undifferentiated emotion that has its origin in the loss of awareness of who you are beyond name and form. Because of its undifferentiated nature, it is hard to find a name that precisely describes this emotion. "Fear" comes close, but apart from a continuous sense of threat, it also includes a deep sense of abandonment and incompleteness. It may be best to use a term that is as undifferentiated as that basic emotion and simply call it "pain." One of the main tasks of the mind is to fight or remove that emotional pain, which is one of the reasons for its incessant activity, but all it can ever achieve is to cover it up temporarily. In fact, the harder the mind struggles to get rid of the pain, the greater the pain. The mind can never find the solution, nor can it afford to allow you to find the solution, because it is itself an intrinsic part of the problem." Imagine a chief of police trying to find an arsonist when the arsonist is the chief of police. You will not be free of that pain until you cease to derive your sense of self from identification with the mind, which is to say from ego. The mind is then toppled from its place of power and Being reveals itself as your true nature.

Yes, I know what you are going to ask.

I was going to ask: What about positive emotions such as love and joy?

They are inseparable from your natural state of inner connectedness with Being. Glimpses of love and joy or brief moments of deep peace are possible whenever a gap occurs in the stream of thought. For most people, such gaps happen rarely and only accidentally, in moments when the mind is rendered "speechless," sometimes triggered by great beauty, extreme physical exertion, or even great danger. Suddenly, there is inner stillness. And within that stillness there is a subtle but intense joy, there is love, there is peace.

Usually, such moments are short-lived, as the mind quickly resumes its noise-making activity that we call thinking. Love, joy, and peace cannot flourish until you have freed yourself from mind dominance. But they are not what I would call emotions. They lie beyond the emotions, on a much deeper level. So you need to become fully conscious of your emotions and be able to *feel* them before you can feel that which lies beyond them. Emotion literally means "disturbance." The word comes from the Latin *emovere*, meaning "to disturb."

Love, joy, and peace are deep states of Being, or rather three aspects of the state of inner connectedness with Being. As such, they have no opposite. This is because they arise from beyond the mind. Emotions, on the other hand, being part of the dualistic mind, are subject to the law of opposites. This simply means that you cannot have good without bad. So in the unenlightened, mind-identified condition, what is sometimes wrongly called joy is the usually short-lived pleasure side of the continuously alternating pain/pleasure cycle. Pleasure is always derived from something outside you,

whereas joy arises from within. The very thing that gives you pleasure today will give you pain tomorrow, or it will leave you, so its absence will give you pain. And what is often referred to as love may be pleasurable and exciting for a while, but it is an addictive clinging, an extremely needy condition that can turn into its opposite at the flick of a switch. Many "love" relationships, after the initial euphoria has passed, actually oscillate between "love" and hate, attraction and attack.

Real love doesn't make you suffer. How could it? It doesn't suddenly turn into hate, nor does real joy turn into pain. As I said, even before you are enlightened — before you have freed yourself from your mind — you may get glimpses of true joy, true love, or of a deep inner peace, still but vibrantly alive. These are aspects of your true nature, which is usually obscured by the mind. Even within a "normal" addictive relationship, there can be moments when the presence of something more genuine, something incorruptible, can be felt. But they will only be glimpses, soon to be covered up again through mind interference. It may then seem that you had something very precious and lost it, or your mind may convince you that it was all an illusion anyway. The truth is that it wasn't an illusion, and you cannot lose it. It is part of your natural state, which can be obscured but can never be destroyed by the mind. Even when the sky is heavily overcast, the sun hasn't disappeared. It's still there on the other side of the clouds.

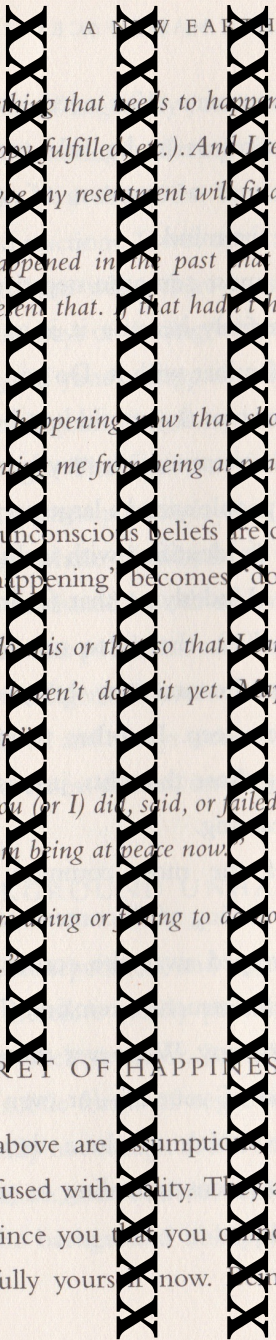
The Buddha says that pain or suffering arises through desire or craving and that to be free of pain we need to cut the bonds of desire.

All cravings are the mind seeking salvation or fulfillment in external things and in the future as a substitute for the joy of Being. As long as I am my mind, I am those cravings, those needs, wants, attachments, and aversions, and apart from them there is no "I" except as a mere possibility, an unfulfilled potential, a seed that has not yet sprouted. In that state, even my desire to become free or enlightened is just another craving for fulfillment or completion in the future. So don't seek to become free of desire or "achieve" enlightenment. Become present. Be there as the observer of the mind. Instead of quoting the Buddha, *be the Buddha, be* "the awakened one," which is what the word *buddha* means.

Humans have been in the grip of pain for eons, ever since they fell from the state of grace, entered the realm of time and mind, and lost awareness of Being. At that point, they started to perceive themselves as meaningless fragments in an alien universe, unconnected to the Source and to each other.

Pain is inevitable as long as you are identified with your mind, which is to say as long as you are unconscious, spiritually speaking. I am talking here primarily of emotional pain, which is also the main cause of physical pain and physical disease. Resentment, hatred, self-pity, guilt, anger, depression, jealousy, and so on, even the slightest irritation, are all forms of pain. And every pleasure or emotional high contains within itself the seed of pain: its inseparable opposite, which will manifest in time.

Anybody who has ever taken drugs to get "high" will know that the high eventually turns into a low, that the pleasure turns into some form of pain. Many people also know from



"There is something that seems to happen in my life before I can be at peace (happy, fulfilled, etc.). And I resent that it hasn't happened yet. Maybe my resentment will finally make it happen."

"Something happened in the past that should not have happened, and I resent that. If that had not happened, I would be at peace now."

"Something is happening now that should not be happening, and it is preventing me from being at peace now."

Often the unconscious beliefs are directed toward a person and so "happening" becomes "doing":

"You should do this or that so that you can be at peace. And I resent that you haven't done it yet. Maybe my resentment will make you do it."

"Something you (or I) did, said, or failed to do in the past is preventing me from being at peace now."

"What you are doing or trying to do now is preventing me from being at peace."

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS

All of the above are assumptions, unexamined thoughts that are confused with reality. They are stories the ego creates to convince you that you cannot be at peace now or cannot be fully yourself now. Being at peace and being

who you are, that is, being yourself, are one. The ego says: Maybe at some point in the future, I can be at peace—if this, that, or the other happens, or I obtain this or become that. Or it says: I can never be at peace because of something that happened in the past. Listen to people's stories and they could all be entitled "Why I Cannot Be at Peace Now." The ego doesn't know that your only opportunity for being at peace is now. Or maybe it does know, and it is afraid that you may find this out. Peace, after all, is the end of the ego.

How to be at peace now? By making peace with the present moment. The present moment is the field on which the game of life happens. It cannot happen anywhere else. Once you have made peace with the present moment, see what happens, what you can do or choose to do, or rather what life does through you. There are three words that convey the secret of the art of living, the secret of all success and happiness: One With Life. Being one with life is being one with Now. You then realize that you don't live your life, but life lives you. Life is the dancer, and you are the dance.

The ego loves its resentment of reality. What is reality? Whatever is. Buddha called it *tatata*—the suchness of life, which is no more than the suchness of this moment. Opposition toward that suchness is one of the main features of the ego. It creates the negativity that the ego thrives on, the unhappiness that it loves. In this way, you make yourself

and others suffer and don't even know that you are doing it, don't know that you are creating hell on earth. To create suffering without recognizing it—this is the essence of unconscious living; this is being totally in the grip of the ego. The extent of the ego's inability to recognize itself and see what it is doing is staggering and unbelievable. It will do exactly what it condemns others for and not see it. When it is pointed out, it will use angry denial, clever arguments, and self-justifications to distort the facts. People do it, corporations do it, governments do it. When all else fails, the ego will resort to shouting or even to physical violence. Send in the marines. We can now understand the deep wisdom in Jesus' words on the cross: "Forgive them for they know not what they do."

To end the misery that has afflicted the human condition for thousands of years, you have to start with yourself and take responsibility for your inner state at any given moment. That means now. Ask yourself, "Is there negativity in me at this moment?" Then, become alert, attentive to your thoughts as well as your emotions. Watch out for the low-level unhappiness in whatever form that I mentioned earlier, such as discontent, nervousness, being "fed up," and so on. Watch out for thoughts that appear to justify or explain this unhappiness but in reality cause it. The moment you become aware of a negative state within yourself, it does not mean you have failed. It means that you have suc-

ceeded. Until that awareness happens, there is identification with inner states, and such identification is ego. With awareness comes disidentification from thoughts, emotions, and reactions. This is not to be confused with denial. The thoughts, emotions, or reactions are recognized, and in the moment of recognizing, disidentification happens automatically. Your sense of self, of who you are, then undergoes a shift: Before you were the thoughts, emotions, and reactions; now you are the awareness, the conscious Presence that witnesses those states.

"One day I will be free of the ego." Who is talking? The ego. To become free of the ego is not really a big job but a very small one. All you need to do is be aware of your thoughts and emotions—as they happen. This is not really a "doing," but an alert "seeing." In that sense, it is true that there is nothing you can do to become free of the ego. When that shift happens, which is the shift from thinking to awareness, an intelligence far greater than the ego's cleverness begins to operate in your life. Emotions and even thoughts become depersonalized through awareness. Their impersonal nature is recognized. There is no longer a self in them. They are just human emotions, human thoughts. Your entire personal history, which is ultimately no more than a story, a bundle of thoughts and emotions, becomes of secondary importance and no longer occupies the forefront of your consciousness. It no longer forms the basis for

ACCEPTANCE

Whatever you cannot enjoy doing, you can at least accept that this is what you have to do. Acceptance means: For now, this is what this situation, this moment, requires me to do, and so I do it willingly. We already spoke at length about the importance of inner acceptance of what *happens*, and acceptance of what you have to *do* is just another aspect of it. For example, you probably won't be able to enjoy changing the flat tire on your car at night in the middle of nowhere and in pouring rain, let alone be enthusiastic about it, but you can bring acceptance to it. Performing an action in the state of acceptance means you are at peace while you do it. That peace is a subtle energy vibration which then flows into what you do. On the surface, acceptance looks like a passive state, but in reality it is active and creative because it brings something entirely new into this world. That peace, that subtle energy vibration, is consciousness, and one of the ways in which it enters this world is through surrendered action, one aspect of which is acceptance.

If you can neither enjoy or bring acceptance to what you do—stop. Otherwise, you are not taking responsibility for the only thing you can really take responsibility for, which also happens to be one thing that really matters: your state of consciousness. And if you are not taking responsi-

bility for your state of consciousness, you are not taking responsibility for life.

ENJOYMENT

The peace that comes with surrendered action turns to a sense of aliveness when you actually enjoy what you are doing. Enjoyment is the second modality of awakened doing. On the new earth, enjoyment will replace wanting as the motivating power behind people's actions. Wanting arises from the ego's delusion that you are a separate fragment that is disconnected from the power that lies behind all creation. Through enjoyment, you link into that universal creative power itself.

When you make the present moment, instead of past and future, the focal point of your life, your ability to enjoy what you do—and with it the quality of your life—increases dramatically. Joy is the dynamic aspect of Being. When the creative power of the universe becomes conscious of itself, it manifests as joy. You don't have to wait for something "meaningful" to come into your life so that you can finally enjoy what you do. There is more meaning in joy than you will ever need. The "waiting to start living" syndrome is one of the most common delusions of the unconscious state. Expansion and positive change on the outer level is much more likely to come into your life if you can

enjoy what you are doing already, instead of waiting for some change so that you can start enjoying what you do. Don't ask your mind for permission to enjoy what you do. All you will get is plenty of reasons why you can't enjoy it. "Not now," the mind will say. "Can't you see I'm busy? There's no time. Maybe tomorrow you can start enjoying . . ." That tomorrow will never come unless you begin enjoying what you are doing now.

When you say, I enjoy doing this or that, it is really a misperception. It makes it appear that the joy comes from what you do, but that is not the case. Joy does not come from what you do, it flows into what you do and thus into this world from deep within you. The misperception that joy comes from what you do is normal, and it is also dangerous, because it creates the belief that joy is something that can be derived from something else, such as an activity or thing. You then look to the world to bring you joy, happiness. But it cannot do that. This is why many people live in constant frustration. The world is not giving them what they think they need.

Then what is the relationship between something that you do and the state of joy? You will enjoy any activity in which you are fully present, any activity that is not just a means to an end. It isn't the action you perform that you really enjoy, but the deep sense of aliveness that flows into it. That aliveness is one with who you are. This means that when you enjoy doing something, you are really experi-

encing the joy of Being in its dynamic aspect. That's why anything you enjoy doing connects you with the power behind all creation.

Here is a spiritual practice that will bring empowerment and creative expansion into your life. Make a list of a number of everyday routine activities that you perform frequently. Include activities that you may consider uninteresting, boring, tedious, irritating, or stressful. But don't include anything that you hate or detest doing. That's a case either for acceptance or for stopping what you do. The list may include traveling to and from work, buying groceries, doing your laundry, or anything that you find tedious or stressful in your daily work. Then, whenever you are engaged in those activities, let them be a vehicle for alertness. Be absolutely present in what you do and sense the alert, alive stillness within you in the background of the activity. You will soon find that what you do in such a state of heightened awareness, instead of being stressful, tedious, or irritating, is actually becoming enjoyable. To be more precise, what you are enjoying is not really the outward action but the inner dimension of consciousness that flows into the action. This is finding the joy of Being in what you are doing. If you feel your life lacks significance or is too stressful or tedious, it is because you haven't brought that dimension into your life yet. Being conscious in what you do has not yet become your main aim.

The new earth arises as more and more people discover

that their main purpose in life is to bring the light of consciousness into this world and so use whatever they do as a vehicle for consciousness.

The joy of Being is the joy of being conscious.

Awakened consciousness then takes over from ego and begins to run your life. You may then find that an activity that you have been engaged in for a long time naturally begins to expand into something much bigger when it becomes empowered by consciousness.

Some of those people who, through creative action, enrich the lives of many others simply do what they enjoy doing most without wanting to achieve or become anything through that activity. They may be musicians, artists, writers, scientists, teachers, or builders, or they may bring into manifestation new social or business structures (enlightened businesses). Sometimes for a few years their sphere of influence remains small; and then it can happen that suddenly or gradually a wave of creative empowerment flows into what they do, and their activity expands beyond anything they could have imagined and touches countless others. In addition to enjoyment, an intensity is now added to what they do and with it comes a creativity that goes beyond anything an ordinary human could accomplish.

But don't let it go to your head, because up there is where a remnant of ego may be hiding. You are still an ordinary human. What is extraordinary is what comes through you into this world. But that essence you share

with all beings. The fourteenth-century Persian poet and Sufi master Hafiz expresses this truth beautifully: "I am a hole in a flute that the Christ's breath moves through. Listen to this music."¹

ENTHUSIASM

Then there is another way of creative manifestation that may come to those who remain true to their inner purpose of awakening. Suddenly one day they know what their outer purpose is. They have a great vision, a goal, and from then on they work toward implementing that goal. Their goal or vision is usually connected in some way to something that on a smaller scale they are doing and enjoy doing already. This is where the third modality of awakened doing arises: enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm means there is deep enjoyment in what you do plus the added element of a goal or a vision that you work toward. When you add a goal to the enjoyment of what you do, the energy-field or vibrational frequency changes. A certain degree of what we might call structural tension is now added to enjoyment, and so it turns into enthusiasm. At the height of creative activity fueled by enthusiasm, there will be enormous intensity and energy behind what you do. You will feel like an arrow that is moving toward the target—and enjoying the journey.

To an onlooker, it may appear that you are under stress,

but the intensity of enthusiasm has nothing to do with stress. When you want to arrive at your goal more than you want to be doing what you are doing, you become stressed. The balance between enjoyment and structural tension is lost, and the latter has won. When there is stress, it is usually a sign that the ego has returned, and you are cutting yourself off from the creative power of the universe. Instead, there is only the force and strain of egoic wanting, and so you have to struggle and “work hard” to make it. Stress always diminishes both the quality and effectiveness of what you do under its influence. There is also a strong link between stress and negative emotions, such as anxiety and anger. It is toxic to the body and is now becoming recognized as one of the main causes of the so-called degenerative diseases such as cancer and heart disease.

Unlike stress, enthusiasm has a high energy frequency and so resonates with the creative power of the universe. This is why Ralph Waldo Emerson said that, “Nothing great has ever been achieved without enthusiasm.”² The word *enthusiasm* comes from ancient Greek—*en* and *theos*, meaning God. And the related word *enthousiazein* means “to be possessed by a god.” With enthusiasm you will find that you don’t have to do it all by yourself. In fact, there is nothing of significance that you *can* do by yourself. Sustained enthusiasm brings into existence a wave of creative energy, and all you have to do then is “ride the wave.”

Enthusiasm brings an enormous empowerment into what you do, so that all those who have not accessed that power would look upon “your” achievements in awe and may equate them with who you are. You, however, know the truth that Jesus pointed to when he said, “I can of my own self do nothing.”³ Unlike egoic wanting, which creates opposition in direct proportion to the intensity of its wanting, enthusiasm never opposes. It is non-confrontational. Its activity does not create winners and losers. It is based on inclusion, not exclusion, of others. It does not need to use and manipulate people, because it is the power of creation itself and so does not need to take energy from some secondary source. The ego’s wanting always tries to take from something or someone; enthusiasm gives out of its own abundance. When enthusiasm encounters obstacles in the form of adverse situations or uncooperative people, it never attacks but walks around them or by yielding or embracing turns the opposing energy into a helpful one, the foe into a friend.

Enthusiasm and the ego cannot coexist. One implies the absence of the other. Enthusiasm knows where it is going, but at the same time, it is deeply at one with the present moment, the source of its aliveness, its joy, and its power. Enthusiasm “wants” nothing because it lacks nothing. It is at one with life and no matter how dynamic the enthusiasm-inspired activities are, you don’t lose yourself in

them. And there remains always a still but intensely alive space at the center of the wheel, a core of peace in the midst of activity that is both the source of all and untouched by it all.

Through enthusiasm you enter into full alignment with the outgoing creative principle of the universe, but without identifying with its creations, that is to say, without ego. Where there is no identification, there is no attachment—one of the great sources of suffering. Once a wave of creative energy has passed, structural tension diminishes again and joy in what you are doing remains. Nobody can live in enthusiasm all the time. A new wave of creative energy may come later and lead to renewed enthusiasm.

When the return movement toward the dissolution of form sets in, enthusiasm no longer serves you. Enthusiasm belongs to the outgoing cycle of life. It is only through surrender that you can align yourself with the return movement—the journey home.

To sum up: Enjoyment of what you are doing, combined with a goal or vision that you work toward, becomes enthusiasm. Even though you have a goal, what you are doing in the present moment needs to remain the focal point of your attention; otherwise, you will fall out of alignment with universal purpose. Make sure your vision or goal is not an inflated image of yourself and therefore a concealed form of ego, such as wanting to become a movie star, a famous writer, or a wealthy entrepreneur. Also make sure

your goal is not focused on *having* this or that, such as a mansion by the sea, your own company, or ten million dollars in the bank. An enlarged image of yourself or a vision of yourself *having* this or that are all static goals and therefore don't empower you. Instead, make sure your goals are dynamic, that is to say, point toward an *activity* that you are engaged in and through which you are connected to other human beings as well as to the whole. Instead of seeing yourself as a famous actor and writer and so on, see yourself inspiring countless people with your work and enriching their lives. Feel how that activity enriches or deepens not only your life but that of countless others. Feel yourself being an opening through which energy flows from the unmanifested Source of all life through you for the benefit of all.

All this implies that your goal or vision is then already a reality within you, on the level of mind and of feeling. Enthusiasm is the power that transfers the mental blueprint into the physical dimension. That is the creative use of mind, and that is why there is no wanting involved. You cannot manifest what you want; you can only manifest what you already have. You may get what you want through hard work and stress, but that is not the way of the new earth. Jesus gave the key to the creative use of mind and to the conscious manifestation of form when he said, "Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."⁴

~~337~~ 632

“COMPASSION” acc. to the *Oxford English Dictionary*

[a. F. *compassion* (14th c. in Littré), ad. late L. *compassi{omac}n-em* (Tertullian, Jerome), n. of action f. *compati* (ppl. stem *compass-*) to suffer together with, feel pity, f. *com-* together with + *pati* to suffer.]

{dag}1. **Suffering together with another, participation in suffering; fellow-feeling, sympathy. Obs.**

1340 Ayenb. 148 Huanne on leme is zik o{th}er y-wonded. hou moche zor{ygh}e he{th} {th}e herte and grat compassion y-uel{th}. 1398 TREVISA Barth. De P.R. V. i. (1495) 100 The membres ben so sette togyders that..euery hath compassyon of other. 1561 EDEN Arte de Nauig. Pref., Such a mutuall compassion of parte to parte..by one common sence existent in them all. 1625 GILL Sac. Philos. iv. 63 That it was onely by a vegetable or animall soule, which suffered by compassion with the body.

2. **The feeling or emotion, when a person is moved by the suffering or distress of another, and by the desire to relieve it; pity that inclines one to spare or to succour. Const. on (of obs.).**

(The compassion of sense 1 was between equals or fellow-sufferers; this is shown towards a person in distress by one who is free from it, who is, in this respect, his superior.)

c1340 HAMPOLE Prose Tr. 36 {Th}ou may thynke of synnes and of wrechidnes of thyne euencristene..with pete and of compassione of thaym. 1535 COVERDALE Joel ii. 12 The Lorde..is..longe sufferynge & of greate compassion. 1591 SHAKES. 1 Hen. VI, IV. i. 56 Mou'd with compassion of my Countries wracke. 1632 LITHGOW Trav. IX. (1682) 386 In Compassion whereof the worthy Gentleman doubled his Wages. 1676 HOBBS Iliad I. 23 You on me compassion may show. 1770 Junius' Lett. xxxvi. 170 You have every claim to compassion that can arise from misery and distress. 1823 SOUTHEY Hist. Penins. War I. 352 In compassion to her grief, and in answer to her prayers. 1876 MOZLEY Univ. Serm. vii. 148 Compassion..gives the person who feels it pleasure even in the very act of ministering to and succouring pain.

{dag}b. with plural. Obs. or arch.

1526 Pilgr. Perf. (W. de W. 1531) 262 All the compassyons & mercyes that thou shewed to the people. 1611 BIBLE Lam. iii. 22 His compassions faile not. 1787 WHITAKER Mary Q. Scots Vind. in H.

~~221~~ 633

Campbell Love-Lett. Mary (1824) 263 All the little jealousies of the rival will surely melt away in the compassions of the woman.

c. to have compassion: to have pity, take pity. So {dag}to take compassion (upon, of).
1382 WYCLIF Heb. x. 34 For whi and to boundun men {ygh}e hadden compassioun. c1385 CHAUCER L.G.W. 390 Prol., And han of pore folk compassioun. 1483 CAXTON Cato Civ, I haue grete ruthe and compassion on you. 1590 MARLOWE Edw. II, Wks. (Rtldg.) 210/2 Thy heart..Could not but take compassion of my state! 1611 BIBLE Ex. ii. 6 She had compassion on him. 1647 W. BROWNE Poxex. l. 164, l..besought him not so to have compassion of a daughter whom he had made miserable. 1714 MANDEVILLE Fab. Bees (1725) l. 290 Humanity bids us have compassion with the sufferings of others: 1841 LANE Arab. Nts. l. 104 Have compassion on the mighty whom love hath abased.

{dag}3. **Sorrowful emotion, sorrow, grief. Obs.**
c1340 Cursor M. 23945 heading (Fairf.), Compassioun of our lauedi for {th}e passioun of hir sone. 1488 CAXTON Chast. Goddes Chyld. 7 Teres of compascyon, teres of compunccion, teres of loue and of deuocyon. 1590 SPENSER F.Q. l. iii. 6 Her hart gan melt in great compassion; And drizling teares did shed for pure affection.

DRAFT ADDITIONS SEPTEMBER 2002 compassion, n.

* **compassion fatigue** orig. U.S., apathy or indifference towards the suffering of others or to charitable causes acting on their behalf, typically attributed to numbingly frequent appeals for assistance, esp. donations; (hence) a diminishing public response to frequent charitable appeals.

1968 A. W. FARMER in Minutes Comm. World Service (Lutheran World Federation) 64 You have been hearing and perhaps using, as I have, the phrase '*Compassion Fatigue'. We are just tired out with all the repeated appeals to do good. 1987 Listener 29 Oct. 19/2 What the refugee workers call 'compassion fatigue' has set in. Back in the 1970s, when the boat people were on the front pages, the world was eager to help. But now the boat people are old news. 1995 S. NYE Best of 'Men behaving Badly' (2000) 161/2 Deborah. Anything to help Dorothy? Gary. No, thanks, I'll shoulder the burden of caring for her. Deborah. Oh, well, maybe later, when compassion fatigue sets in. 2000 Big Issue 4 Sept. 25/2 In a culture exhausted by compassion fatigue, shock is now used more cautiously. OED

“SYMPATHY”

SYM- Gr. { having the same or a like form; conformed; so sy{sm}mmorphism, likeness of form, condition of being conformed. sympalmograph**sympatetic**, nonce-wd. [after PERIPATETIC], a fellow-walker, a companion in a walk. } having a fellow feeling, f. { SYM- + suffering, feeling, to suffer. Cf. F. sympathie (from 15th c.), It., Sp. simpatia, Pg. sympathia. }

1. a. A (real or supposed) affinity between certain things, by virtue of which they are similarly or correspondingly affected by the same influence, affect or influence one another (esp. in some occult way), or attract or tend towards each other. Obs. exc. Hist. or as merged in other senses.

b. Physiol. and Path. A relation between two bodily organs or parts (or between two persons) such that disorder, or any condition, of the one induces a corresponding condition in the other....

2. Agreement, accord, harmony, consonance, concord; agreement in qualities, likeness, conformity, correspondence. Obs. or merged in 3a.
[1567 FENTON Trag. Disc. ii. (1898) l. 90 If he had bene answerd with a sympathia, or equalitie of frendshipp. Ibid. xiii. II. 247 Whereof [sc. of the passion or fever of love] there seamed alredie a sympathia, or equalitie, betwene the two younglinges. 1574 J. ...

3. a. Conformity of feelings, inclinations, or temperament, which makes persons agreeable to each other; community of feeling; harmony of disposition.
1596 SPENSER Hymn Beauty 199 Loue is a celestiaall harmonie, Of likely harts.. Which ioyn together in sweete sympathie, To worke ech others ioy and true content. 1633 HEYWOOD Eng. Trav. I. i, So sweet a simpatie, As crownes a noble marriage. 1775 HARRIS Philos. Arrangem. Wks. (1841) 291 There is..a social sympathy in the soul of man, which prompts individuals to congregate, and form themselves into tribes. 1822-7 GOOD Study Med. (1829) IV. 61 The sympathies and antipathies, the whims and prejudices that haunt us. 1833 H. MARTINEAU Briery Creek ii. 26 It was impossible that there could be much sympathy between two men so unlike. 1876 MOZLEY Univ. Sermon. x. (1877) 206 They enjoy the sympathy of kindred souls.

b. The quality or state of being affected by the condition of another with a feeling similar or corresponding to that of the other; the fact or capacity of entering into or sharing the feelings of another or others; fellow-feeling. Also, a feeling or frame of mind evoked by and responsive to some external influence. Const. with (a person, etc., or a feeling).

1662 R. MATHEW Unl. Alch. p. x, Out of faithful and true sympathy and fellow-feeling with you. 1667 MILTON P.L. IV. 465 With answering looks Of sympathie and love. Ibid. x. 540 Horror on them fell, And horrid sympathie. 1756 BURKE Subl. & Beaut. I. xiii, Sympathy must be considered as a sort of Substitution, by which we

~~630~~ 636

are put in the place of another man, and affected in many respects as he is affected. 1784 COWPER Task VI. 1 There is in souls a sympathy with sounds..Some chord in unison with what we hear Is touched within us, and the heart replies. 1833 COLERIDGE Table-t. 30 Aug., For compassion a human heart suffices: but for full and adequate sympathy with joy, an angel's only. 1856 FROUDE Hist. Eng. I. v. 447 Our sympathies are naturally on the side of the weak and the unsuccessful. 1859 HAWTHORNE Fr. & It. Journals II. 277 Such depth and breadth of sympathy with Nature. 1862 SIR B. BRODIE Psychol. Inq. II. iii. 99 A cheerful disposition..leads to sympathy with others in all the smaller concerns of life. 1880 DISRAELI Endym. xvi, The sympathy of sorrow is stronger than the sympathy of prosperity. 1907 Verney Mem. I. 76 A favourite daughter, to whom he turned on all occasions for sympathy and affection.

c. spec. The quality or state of being thus affected by the suffering or sorrow of another; a feeling of compassion or commiseration. Const. for, with (a person), for, in, with, {dag}rarely of (an event, experience, etc.).

1600 S. NICHOLSON Acolastus' After-witte D2, The showres which daily from mine eyes are raining, Draw the dum creatures to a sympathie. a1701 MAUNDRELL Journ. Jerus. (1732) 34 A kind of Sympathy in the River, for the Death of Adonis. 1777 S. J. PRATT Emma Corbett (ed. 4) II. 107, I wanted to express my sympathy of your present misfortune. 1783 BURKE Sp. Fox's E. India Bill Wks. 1808 IV. 20 To awaken something of sympathy for the unfortunate natives. 1796 {emem} Corr. (1844) IV. 360 Your sympathy makes our ill-health a great deal more tolerable. 1807 SOUTHEY Espriella's Lett. (1808) II. 323 They have..little sympathy for distresses which they have never felt. 1829 LANDOR Imag. Conv., Penn & Peterborough II. 269 Joining in the amusements of others is..the next thing to sympathy in their distresses. 1850 TENNYSON In Mem. lxxxv. 88 Canst thou feel for me Some painless sympathy with pain? 1872 KINGSLEY Lett. (1878) II. 381 Every expression of human sympathy brings some little comfort. 1893 Academy 30 Dec. 581/1 Sympathy with the bereaved parents and for the bride was..deeply felt.

d. In weakened sense: A favourable attitude of mind towards a party, cause, etc.; disposition to agree or approve. Const. with, rarely for, in....

Emotionalist Moral Philosophy: Sympathy and the Moral Theory that Overthrew Kings
George P. Landow, Professor of English and Art History, Brown University

According to Samuel Johnson's Dictionary (1755), sympathy is defined as "fellow-feeling; mutual sensibility; the quality of being affected by the affections [feelings] of another." More than one hundred years later, John Ruskin, the great Victorian critic of art and society, similarly explained that sympathy, "the imaginative understanding of the natures of others, and the power of putting ourselves in their place, is the faculty on which virtue depends" (Fors Clavigera, 1873).

During the second half of the eighteenth century and throughout most of the nineteenth, sympathy, which today signifies little more than compassion or pity, was a word of almost magical significance that described a particular mixture of emotional perception

~~224~~ 27MU

The **sympathetic imagination** is the ability of a person to penetrate the barrier which space puts between him and his object, and, by actually entering into the object, so to speak, to secure a momentary but complete identification with it. "If a sparrow comes before my window," wrote Keats, "I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel."

637

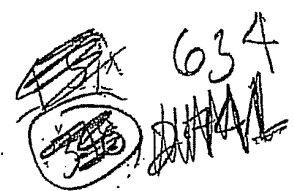
The **sympathetic imagination vs. reason**. By its sympathetic identification the imagination perceives, as abstract reason cannot, the fundamental reality and inner working, the peculiar "truth" and nature of the particular, concrete object.

The **sympathetic imagination vs. empathy, vs. projection**. The act of identification consists not in reading into the object subjective feelings aroused by it in the observer, but in perceiving, by instinctive but sagacious insight, the essential character and reality of the object itself. Empathy or *Einfühlung* emphasizes the dissolving of the boundary between the artist and his object and his identification with it but signifies less an actual entering into the imaginative object, with the consequent perception of its true nature, than the unconscious attribution to it of qualities and responses known and felt by the imagination itself, i.e. the merging of the perceiving mind and the perceived object is largely the by-product of the working of the imagination, projected upon the object.

The **sympathetic imagination and poetry**. Shaftesbury praised the poet as the one who above all else knows the "inward form and structure of his fellow creatures." Keats contended that the true poet "has no character . . . no identity," that he is "annihilated" in the characters of others and concerns himself solely with revealing their essential natures, and that he "has as much delight in conceiving an Imago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher, delights the chameleon poet." Shakespeare has been frequently praised because he "seems to have had the art of the Dervise, in the Arabian tales, to throw his soul into the body of another man, and be at once possessed of his sentiments, adopt his passions, and rise to all the functions and feelings of his situation."

The **sympathetic imagination and morality**. As Adam Smith suggested, almost all knowledge of the inner nature and feelings of others must come through the imagination: "As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation. Though our brother is upon the rack, as long as we ourselves are at our ease, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers. They never did and never can carry beyond our persons, and it is by the imagination we place ourselves in his situation." Moral judgment thus involves sympathetic participation with those, other than the agent himself, who would be affected by the external consequences, good or bad, of an act. Dugald Stewart suggested that "the apparent coldness and selfishness of mankind may be traced, in great measure, to a want of attention and a want of imagination." Thus it has been suggested that the sympathetic imagination in literature and morality are psychologically dependent on each other, that they augment each other's growth and delicacy, and the decline in one necessarily precipitates decline in the other. In any case, whether it comprises the fundamental impulse of morality or not, and in however varying a degree it may exist among individuals, it has been suggested that there is a natural and instinctive sympathy for one's fellow man; that we sympathise with what we see rather than what we hear intellectually delineated; and that, because of its primary importance in the constitution of man, identification by sympathy, which is achieved through the imagination, characterizes the highest moral and aesthetic exertion.

"The Sympathetic Imagination in Eighteenth-Century English Criticism" by Walter Jackson Bate
ELH, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Jun., 1945), pp. 144-164.

634


"Empathy"

[tr. G. Einfühlung (see EINFÜHLUNG) (T. Lipps Leitfaden d. Psychol. (1903) 187),
The power of projecting one's personality into (and so fully comprehending) the object of contemplation.

1904 'V. LEE' Diary 20 Feb. in 'Lee' & Anstruther-Thompson Beauty & Ugliness (1912) 337 Passing on to the æsthetic empathy (Einfühlung), or more properly the æsthetic sympathetic feeling of that act of erecting and spreading. 1909 E. B. TITCHENER Lect. Exper. Psychol. Thought-Processes i. 21 Not only do I see gravity and modesty and pride..but I feel or act them in the mind's muscles. This is, I suppose, a simple case of empathy, if we may coin that term as a rendering of Einfühlung. Ibid. v. 185 All such 'feelings'..normally take the form, in my experience, of motor empathy. 1912 Academy 17 Aug. 209/2 [Lipps] propounded the theory that the appreciation of a work of art depended upon the capacity of the spectator to project his personality into the object of contemplation. One had to 'feel oneself into it'... This mental process he called by the name of Einfühlung, or, as it has been translated, Empathy. . . . 1925, 1929 [see EINFÜHLUNG]. 1928 'R. WEST' Strange Necessity 102 The active power of empathy which makes the creative artist, or the passive power of empathy which makes the appreciator of art. 1958 C. P. SNOW Conscience of Rich xxxiii. 240 It was not only consideration and empathy that held him back. 1963 R. L. KATZ Empathy i. 8 It is true that in both sympathy and empathy we permit our feelings for others to become involved.

"Empathize" trans. To treat something or someone with empathy. intr. To use empathy.

1924 R. M. OGDEN tr. Koffka's Growth of Mind iv. §7. 207 The chimpanzee is able to empathize, or feel itself towards, the end-situation of attaining its goal. 1929 C. J. DUCASSE Philos. Art x. 166 For the most part we empathize inanimate things only in so far as we are interested in them aesthetically. 1931 T. H. PEAR Voice & Personality v. 56 One may..'empathise' with the speaker. 1949 WELLEK & WARREN Theory of Lit. viii. 85 The realist..chiefly observes behavior or 'empathizes'. 1957 G. M. CARSTAIRS Twice-Born 152 One has..to empathise, to 'feel with' him before one can identify his elusive patterns of emotional response.

"Empathetic"

1932 Nation (N.Y.) 13 Apr. 432 The method..condemns the biographer to immerse himself in his subject's mind, to take a view that is more than 'sympathetic', that is indeed empathetic. 1933 Archit. Rev. LXXIV. 222/1 What newly erected buildings have now any 'empathetic' influence on those they contain? 1949 KOESTLER Insight & Outlook xxvi. 359 The richer the personality..the more empathetic understanding of others it will be capable of. 1961 Listener 31 Aug. 326/3 Backache on my part, empathetically produced by those ingenious and toiling rice-planters. 1963 H. READ Contrary Experience III. ix. 280 We both spring from the same yeoman stock., and I think I have a certain 'empathetic' understanding of his personality.

RETHINKING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

The New Empathy and Social
Justice

Nadine Dolby

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

340
226

226

226
340

226

First published 2012
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Simultaneously published in the UK
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2012 Taylor & Francis

The right of Nadine Dolby to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Dolby, Nadine, 1964-

Rethinking multicultural education for the next generation : the new empathy and social justice / Nadine Dolby.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Multicultural education. 2. Social justice--Study and teaching. I. Title.

LC1099.M49 2012

370.117--dc23

2011037922

ISBN: 978-0-415-89606-1 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-415-89607-8 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-0-203-12451-2 (ebk)

Typeset in Bembo

by Taylor & Francis Books

Printed and bound in the United States of America on acid-free paper by IBT Global

Permission credit: Chapter 5, "The Drowning Child and the Expanding Circle." Reprinted with permission from *New Internationalist*, April 1997. www.newint.org.

CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	vii
1 Multicultural Teacher Education for a New Generation: The Challenge of Social Justice and the Rise of Empathy	1
2 Who Are Our Students?	13
3 Multicultural Teacher Education: Past, Present, and Future	29
4 The New Empathy: Rethinking Human Nature	43
5 Empathy for All: Expanding the Moral Circle	65
6 Reaching Our Students: The Journey to Empathy	87
7 The Road from Empathy to Justice	107
8 A Pedagogy for Erin and Brittany: Towards a New Multicultural Teacher Education	123
Appendix	133
<i>Notes</i>	137
<i>References</i>	139
<i>Index</i>	151

they allow us to do what needs to be done, whether healing our conflicts with other animals or among ourselves.

(p. 2)

As research is beginning to suggest, this does not mean that just because empathy is natural, it does not need to be taught. Instead humans have the capacity both for competition and for cooperation and empathy does need to be nurtured. Tony Gross, of the Institute for the Study and Practice of Non-violence, comments that, "You can be taught to be a Spartan or an Athenian—and you can be taught to be both" (Szalavitz, 2010, n.p.). As discussed earlier in the chapter, the "embodied brain" develops in relationship to its environment, not in isolation from it. Thus, teaching empathy is critical to its flourishing. Our empathy, and the empathy we teach, must extend to all living beings: human, animal, and planet. In the following chapter, I examine these three core components of empathy: human, animal, and planet, weaving personal experience and reflections with contemporary research to sketch an outline of a new empathy for the multicultural teacher education classroom.

5

EMPATHY FOR ALL

Expanding the Moral Circle

Empathy is at the heart of progressive thought. It is the capacity to put oneself in the shoes of others—not just individuals, but whole categories of people: one's countrymen, those in other countries, other living beings, especially those who are in some way oppressed, threatened, or harmed. Empathy is the capacity to care, to feel what others feel, to understand what others are facing and what their lives are like. Empathy extends well beyond feeling to understanding, and it extends beyond individuals to groups, communities, peoples, even species. Empathy is at the heart of real rationality, because it goes to the heart of our values, which are the basis of our sense of justice.

(George Lakoff, 2009, n.p.)

Johnny Got His Gun was an incredibly devastating book. We hear of quadriplegics and paraplegics after a war, but these facts become meaningless faces and numbers, we never stop to think of the person involved. If you sit and try to imagine yourself without any legs, arms, mouth, nose, eyes, or hearing, you begin to really feel it.

(Nadine Dolby, October 18, 1984)

Multicultural education's relationship with empathy has been variously non-existent, tangential, or rocky. As I discussed at length in chapter 3, there are powerful historical reasons for this. Multicultural education responded to the urgent need in the 1960s and 1970s to build a more just, equitable society, primarily within the bounds of the United States. As a field, multicultural education fought to make institutional space for conversations about social justice and education and to ensure that the political and legal victories of those decades were a jumping off point for changing the consciousness of all future generations of teachers. Empathy, understood traditionally as emotion or purely a matter of the "heart," was not central to this vision. The revolutionary changes that were heralded to be on the horizon in the 1960s

and 1970s were focused on altering the essential political and economic structures of our society. Much of this forward progress came to an abrupt halt in the 1980s, as the United States entered a fundamentally more conservative era with the election of Ronald Reagan. Like many other progressive movements, multicultural education worked to maintain the ground it had gained and to expand as it could within a context that was decidedly less welcoming.

More than 40 years after the beginning of the multicultural education movement, the world has changed dramatically. A multicultural education that is primarily focused on the United States, and exclusively concerned with human relationships, no longer meets the immense challenges of today's world. The economic problems we face are unquestionably global in nature; trumped up fears of terror paralyze whole continents and global warming is a threat to all life on the planet. Peace, social justice, and progressive values are just as important as they were 40 years ago. The world is still consumed by wars, by inequality, and by suffering. Video games are violent; the physical abuse of women, children, and animals is rampant; right-wing militia movements spread hatred and fear. Yet, despite these crushing and sobering realities, there are signs of hope. There are growing movements against the very roots of how we structure society: structures that are just as important as those that were dismantled in the 1960s and 1970s. Today's most globally influential movements are built on transforming humans' relationships with other humans, humans' relationships with animals, and humans' relationship with the environment. There are thousands of them worldwide: movements for sustainability, slow food (and just "slow!"), community supported agriculture, campaigns for animal welfare and animal rights, dialogues across human differences, "love your neighbor" dinners, buying green, fair trade, Occupy Wall Street, socially responsible investing and creating a new American dream—one outside of hypercapitalism. Some of these ideas have been around for decades if not hundreds of years, but are slowly and steadily becoming mainstream. In other cases, these movements revive ways of life that were lost in the move to urbanization and industrial food production throughout the 20th century. In still other cases, new challenges (e.g., global warming) require new responses. All focus on strengthening and remaking relationships between all living things. Some are directly critical of capitalism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression, and some are not. All, however, provide new ways and frameworks for imagining a different world: one in which empathy for all is a defining concept and pursuit. These are the spaces that multicultural education must look to now for inspiration and for renewed passion.

In this chapter, I first discuss the concept of "informed empathy." Building on Deborah's Meier's (1996) use of the term, I suggest that it can provide a new foundation for multicultural teacher education. Using Peter Singer's "The Drowning Child and the Expanding Circle" as a framework, I argue for the importance of teaching an informed empathy that encompasses all living things, regardless of how "near" or "far" they are from our (current) circle of moral regard. I then expand on

the three necessary components of informed empathy: empathy for other humans (including our own students), empathy for animals, and empathy for the environment. It is true that humans are animals and I could collapse that category into one. And indeed, in this book, I am most concerned with the continuities between "humans" and "animals," with the similarities that count and matter. For the moment, however, I am focused on ways that multicultural education can enlarge its vision and, for most readers, "animals" are still in a fundamentally different sphere than humans. I hope, however, that this book works to begin to gently push those (now) distinct spheres together and eventually challenges the very categories and divisions I employ here. This chapter focuses on why we need to tap the resources of empathy and examines the three necessary components. In the next chapter I directly address the challenges of the multicultural teacher education classroom.

Informed Empathy and the Expanding Moral Circle

Writing in 1996, before scientific research on innate empathy in humans and animals was well known, Meier recognized both its importance and its limitations, commenting that:

our natural inclination to empathize seems not to extend very far. ... We empathize best, of course, with those most like ourselves and for whom we have natural ties and shared self-interest. But in the modern world our long-range self-interest depends upon our going far beyond this, and to do so requires rigorous and continuous schooling directed toward precisely such an end.

(*n.p.*)

As emerging research is beginning to indicate, Meier's assumptions were most likely correct: our biological impulses suggest that we have the most innate empathy and identification for those who are "near" us and less for those who are "far."¹ For example, research done at the Virtual Human Interaction Lab at Stanford University during the 2008 election began to demonstrate patterns between voting behavior and facial similarities between voters and candidates (Bailenson, Iyengar, Yee, and Collins, 2008). In laboratory experiments, researchers took photos of participants' faces and then morphed approximately one third of their photo with a photo of, for example, Bill or Hillary Clinton. As Paul Ehrlich and Robert Ornstein (2010) write:

When asked to pick which Clinton image they preferred, the people on the left [the study participants] chose the one with a part of them morphed into it, although they were unaware of its composition. This is an important finding, for it shows that we like familiar people even more when they are, undetectably, made to look more similar to us.

(*p.* 68)

This research and other similar studies (e.g., Stürmer, Snyder, Kropp, and Siem, 2006) suggest that whether it is biological or cultural (or a combination thereof), we tend to favor, and perhaps empathize more with, individuals who resemble us in some way. Peter Singer's (1997) well-known story of our moral obligations to rescue a drowning child underscores that empathy with those who are near, both geographically and in terms of identification, is not difficult:

To challenge my students to think about the ethics of what we owe to people in need, I ask them to imagine that their route to the university takes them past a shallow pond. One morning, I say to them, you notice a child has fallen in and appears to be drowning. To wade in and pull the child out would be easy but it will mean that you get your clothes wet and muddy, and by the time you go home and change you will have missed your first class.

I then ask the students: do you have any obligation to rescue the child? Unanimously, the students say they do. The importance of saving a child so far outweighs the cost of getting one's clothes muddy and missing a class, that they refuse to consider it any kind of excuse for not saving the child. Does it make a difference, I ask, that there are other people walking past the pond who would equally be able to rescue the child but are not doing so? No, the students reply, the fact that others are not doing what they ought to do is no reason why I should not do what I ought to do.

Once we are all clear about our obligations to rescue the drowning child in front of us, I ask: would it make any difference if the child were far away, in another country perhaps, but similarly in danger of death, and equally within your means to save, at no great cost—and absolutely no danger—to yourself? Virtually all agree that distance and nationality make no moral difference to the situation. I then point out that we are all in that situation of the person passing the shallow pond: we can all save lives of people, both children and adults, who would otherwise die, and we can do so at a very small cost to us.

(Retrieved at <http://www.newint.org> on January 6, 2011, n.p.)

As a philosopher, Singer approaches the story of the drowning child from the perspective of what we, as human beings, are morally obligated to do. He argues that we are under the exact same moral obligation to the child in the pond as to strangers who are dying thousands of miles away. Distance (and nationality, as he frames it) make no difference in our moral responsibility. Singer is correct: we do have such responsibilities to others and to the world. But looking through the lens of new research on empathy can lead us to different insights. First, it is true that our moral obligation is the same. However, the physical experience of imagining the drowning child may summon an empathic reaction in different ways from imagining the experience of people starving half a world away. Most of the undergraduates

in Peter Singer's class at Princeton would have had the experience of a pond, perhaps of playing in one themselves or watching young children play. Singer also personalizes the narrative for them by situating them in a car, driving to class. The building blocks of what we understand to be empathy are present—it is easy for the students to put themselves in the shoes of the drowning child or the drowning child's parent.

What is unmentioned are any differences between the undergraduate hearing the story and the child who is drowning. And this, of course, is a more nuanced understanding of what it means to have empathy for those who are "far": referring not solely to geographic distance but to those who are far from us in life experience and identity, even though we live across the street from them or, if I am a freshman in college, share a room with them. In the example Singer discusses, it is of course possible, and perhaps even probable, that given the lack of details supplied, the typical white Princeton undergraduate naturally envisions a drowning child who is very much like him or herself, perhaps white and wealthy. The holes in the narrative, as presented, allow the listener to create a situation in his/her mind that is intrinsically wired for sameness, not difference.

The drowning child in Peter Singer's narrative is "near" to the listeners of the story both geographically and in terms of the familiarity they can project on the situation. While in the abstract the students in Singer's class agree that they have the same moral obligation to those who are "far" from them, this is not how they act in everyday life. Their empathy for those who are "far" from them is not as well developed. It is equally easy to imagine that when Singer invokes those who are "far" that privileged students at Princeton picture themselves in their own living room, watching the news about yet another famine or war in Africa. The children on their high definition, flat screen television are all black and malnourished—some on the brink of death, undoubtedly. The Princeton students may feel sympathy, but not empathy. They have no experience of being in (or even near) the shoes of starving people: of a classroom of hundreds, perhaps just a handful even have any experience of poverty in Africa or elsewhere.

Thus, Princeton students do what comes naturally to them: they cannot mentally project themselves into a refugee camp in Africa, with all of the sounds, smells, and reality of human suffering. Instead, they place themselves in their dorm room, watching this suffering on television. The distance is simply too great to overcome through the natural instinct for empathy. Morality tells us we must act. But human behavior is grounded in more than simply what is the correct course of action: we must be able to empathize in order to act in a meaningful way. Television news reports about starving children can spur sympathy and can raise money for emergency relief or charity. Informed empathy—empathy that carries with it the potential for change, not charity—is more complex. While it appears that empathy may be biological that does not mean that it happens "naturally" in every situation, as Meier and others (e.g., Brody, 2010) have noted. Instead, empathy may occur most naturally for those who are "closest to us": it is relatively easy to step into

those shoes. For those who are far, the situation is more complicated. It may be easy to conjure up feelings of sympathy, but empathy is more difficult. When we have no understanding of the actual circumstances faced by other human beings, the instinct may be there but is not enough. Empathy for those who are “far” from us must be explicitly nurtured, encouraged, and taught if it is to flourish. Such an approach to empathy builds on the biological impulses that are in all of us but understands that those impulses are merely places to begin. I suggest how difficult this has been for me, personally, with the second epigraph at the beginning of this chapter, which is excerpted from a journal I was required to keep in Howard Zinn’s political science class in 1984. After reading *Johnny Got His Gun*, I seemed to start the challenging work of moving from sympathy to informed empathy. Certainly it is easy to pity someone without any limbs: but to attempt to stretch myself into the reality of someone whose experience was very “far” from my own as an able-bodied teenager, that is the real work of a meaningful, informed empathy.

At this core of incorporating informed empathy into multicultural teacher education is the inherent challenge of strengthening empathy for those who are “far” from us. It goes well beyond the current, limited uses of empathy in multicultural teacher education (and other aspects of preservice teacher education) and instead centers informed empathy as the key organizing principle for introductory classes. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1992) suggested this approach 20 years ago, discussing how teachers from privileged backgrounds can be moved from sympathy to empathy: “Instead of feeling sorry for these students, these teachers learn to feel with students as they guide them to practical and powerful resolutions of problems that are amenable to student-conceived solutions” (p. 388). Building on Ladson-Billings’ insight, this new approach taps into empathy as a gateway to hope: working with our students’ innate impulses to do good in the world, and empowering them to do so.

Singer’s story of the drowning child draws on Irish historian W. E. H. Lecky’s (1869) idea of the expanding moral circle. Despite the strengths of Meier’s and Ladson-Billings’ use of “informed empathy,” their moral circles generally encompass humans only. But following Singer, I suggest that our moral circle must be larger: it must include the drowning dog, bear, insect, and tree. Of course, drowning can be both immediate and literal (do we have an obligation to rescue a dog drowning in the pond in front of us?) and removed and metaphorical (do we have an obligation to save the polar ice caps?). Furthermore, the survival of humans, animals, and the planet are inextricably bound together: we have accomplished nothing if we put our energy solely into remaking the human world, as much of multicultural teacher education has done historically, while destroying the planet. In 1992, David Orr (1992/1993) observed, “For the most part, however, we are still educating the young as if there were no planetary emergency” (p. 1). Twenty years later, the emergency, and the need for an informed empathy that encompasses all living things, is even more urgent.

As I discuss later in the book in chapter 7, any form of empathy—including the one I discuss here—is not enough. Ultimately, informed empathy must be tied to justice so that it is not simply about personal transformation, but uses the new insights gained to improve the lives of all humans and animals. Meier (1996) explains the concept of informed empathy and why it is so critical to democracy:

it [democracy] depends on our developing the habit of stepping into the shoes of others—both intellectually and emotionally. We need literally to be able to experience, if even for a very short time, the ideas, feelings, pains, and mindsets of others, even when doing so creates some discomfort.

(n.p.)

This informed empathy, as I discuss below, must start “near”—with ourselves and with our own students.

Empathy Near and Far: Starting with Our Students

I read *Black Boy* this weekend, and finished it in one sitting. I could not put it down. I think the most astonishing thing about this book was that it took place in this country in this century. It made me think of how hard some people have struggled to get where they are and how others take everything for granted.

(Nadine Dolby, September 25, 1984)

It does not take many weeks for the atmosphere in a multicultural teacher education class to become strained. While some students come in with the belief that the class is just “politically correct” and little more, others are considerably more open, though generally clueless about why they need to be there. After all, they are “caring” and “helpful.” They are good millennials: they volunteer, do charity work, read to seniors, babysit, volunteer at summer camps, pick-up trash, and recycle. Really, what more could we want from them? And it is important to remember that this is all true. Students who want to become teachers are rarely motivated solely by money and dreams of being a millionaire by age 30 (and if they are they are gone by week 2) and most of them are not ruthlessly competitive nor arrogant. Yet, by week 3 or 4, who they actually are starts to seep out after the guarded pleasantries of the first two weeks have passed. And the picture that begins to emerge is usually the same one that we saw last semester, last year, and the year before that: a group of students who understand very little about the world, who have not reflected on their own identities at all, and who have almost no experience with anyone who is different from themselves. To some of us, as instructors (and adults), they seem to exist in a little, protected bubble. It is easy to critique them and many scholars do. What is more difficult, however, is to understand and empathize: to begin to take a walk in the shoes of a 19 year old with limited

those donated toys within the stark reality and troubling context of contemporary Haiti, and to begin to do the only things we can do that will really bring joy, laughter and hope: ask difficult questions, move beyond sympathy and reflect on what needs to be done to bring about global change.

Empathy and the Expanding Circle: Moving Beyond Humans

The question is not, Can they *reason*? nor, Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*?
(Jeremy Bentham, 1948/1823, p. 311, emphasis is the author's)

On the outside of all of the cats' cages are cards that tell prospective adopters something about the cat. Often there is little to say, except "found at such and such an address" and "a sweet cat." But sometimes there are stories about cats who have been abandoned when owners move out of an apartment building or animals who have been badly injured.

Flint had such a story. The brief description on Flint's cage indicated that he had been thrown from a car. I tried to imagine the type of person who would do such a thing. And then I started thinking about the 300 undergraduates I educate every semester: what if they came out of my multicultural education classes understanding respect for humans, but still capable of throwing a cat out of a car window? Am I content with a syllabus that underscores respect and equality for humans, but says nothing about animals?

It is difficult enough to volunteer at an animal shelter. It is hard to imagine working there. Day after day, animals arrive who are neglected, abused, sick, and/or abandoned: some survive to make it to the "adoptables" areas of the shelter, others do not. Cats and dogs who have been abandoned when their owners moved out of apartments and left them locked inside with no food or water while pregnant (Deedee); 17-year-old cats (Garfield and Arlene) who have been given away near the end of their lives; puppies rescued from deplorable conditions in puppy mills. Those who are eligible for adoption can face long waits: there are cats who wait two or more years to be adopted, particularly and sadly black cats. Two years is a very long time to live in a cage. Some shelters (not the one where I volunteer) are forced to euthanize just for space. Shelter staff must make horrible choices each day.

Our relationships with animals begin early and naturally in childhood. This idea, termed biophilia by the biologist and conservationist E. O. Wilson (2002), is "defined as the innate tendency to focus upon life and lifelike forms, and in some instances to affiliate with them emotionally" (p. 134; see also Wilson, 1984). Gail Melson (2001), whose research focuses on the social development of young children, explains:

The biophilia hypothesis ... suggests that a predisposition to attune to animals and other living things is part of the human evolutionary heritage, a product of our coevolution as omnivores with the animals and planets on which our

survival depends. Biophilia depicts children as born assuming a connection with other living things.

(p. 19)

Animals are part of childhood. Animals appear in the vast majority of children's books, from "real" animals to the animal-like characters who populate children's books from classics such as *Goodnight Moon* to the more contemporary *Maisy*. My daughter, who was three when I was writing this book, has 137 books (at last count). Of these only three books do not feature animals. Approximately 10 of the 137 books were acquired (purchased, gifts, etc.) to specifically teach about animals. In the other 127, the animals are incidental. Of the three books that do not feature animals, two still portray them in some way: there is a rubber duck or a stuffed animal on the floor. Only one book about trains has no animals at all. Clearly, animals are an intrinsic part of childhood, whether our human relationship with them is openly discussed or not. Melson's (2001) extensive analysis of the role of animals in children's lives recognizes how relationships between humans and animals change during the course of one's life and schooling:

Many cultures recognize the affinity of children for animals and build on its images that link children to animals. At the same time, children in Western cultures gradually absorb a worldview of humans as radically distinct from and superior to other species, the human as "top dog" on the evolutionary chain of being.

(p. 20)

As Nel Noddings (2006) suggests, such perspectives are intrinsic to Judeo-Christian beliefs about the relationship between humans and animals, though other, non-Western religious traditions (e.g. Buddhism) are less dualistic in their thinking about the human-animal boundary (Haraway, 1993).

Educational scholarship and research has been slow to recognize the importance of animals to education. Helena Pedersen (2010), whose scholarship explores the human-animal boundary, notes that despite what is termed the "animal turn" in multiple subfields of the humanities and social sciences, "education science seems largely absent from these developments" (p. 241). Pedersen argues there are three primary reasons for this absence: the "humanist" tradition (which I discussed in the previous chapter) that centers the rational human subject as the "instrument and end product of education" (p. 241); the Judeo-Christian tradition (echoing Noddings, 2006); and the school as a byproduct of the capitalist production system, which "not only continually reinscribes and 'closes' categories of 'human' and 'animal' but also tends to sustain and reinforce the incorporation of animals into capitalist-specific modes of production and consumption" (pp. 241-42). As Bradley Rowe (2009) comments, even philosophers of education have not explored these connections. Marcus Weaver-Hightower (2011) in his analysis of why food is not included in

THE EMPATHIC CIVILIZATION

THE RACE TO GLOBAL
CONSCIOUSNESS IN
A WORLD IN CRISIS

JEREMY RIFKIN

JEREMY P. TARCHER/PENGUIN

A MEMBER OF PENGUIN GROUP (USA) INC.

New York

233

233

233

233

13. The Emerging Era of Distributed Capitalism 512
14. The Theatrical Self in an Improvisational Society 554
15. Biosphere Consciousness in a Climax Economy 593

Notes 617

Bibliography 643

Index 657

About the Author 675

503-546

234

234

INTRODUCTION

This book presents a new interpretation of the history of civilization by looking at the empathic evolution of the human race and the profound ways it has shaped our development and will likely decide our fate as a species.

A radical new view of human nature is emerging in the biological and cognitive sciences and creating controversy in intellectual circles, the business community, and government. Recent discoveries in brain science and child development are forcing us to rethink the long-held belief that human beings are, by nature, aggressive, materialistic, utilitarian, and self-interested. The dawning realization that we are a fundamentally empathic species has profound and far-reaching consequences for society.

These new understandings of human nature open the door to a never-before-told journey. The pages that follow reveal the dramatic story of the development of human empathy from the rise of the great theological civilizations, to the ideological age that dominated the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the psychological era that characterized much of the twentieth century, and the emerging dramaturgical period of the twenty-first century.

Viewing economic history from an empathic lens allows us to uncover rich new strands of the human narrative that lay previously hidden. The result is a new social tapestry—The Empathic Civilization—woven

234

234

from a wide range of fields, including literature and the arts, theology, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, political science, psychology, and communications theory.

At the very core of the human story is the paradoxical relationship between empathy and entropy. Throughout history new energy regimes have converged with new communication revolutions, creating ever more complex societies. More technologically advanced civilizations, in turn, have brought diverse people together, heightened empathic sensitivity, and expanded human consciousness. But these increasingly more complicated milieus require more extensive energy use and speed us toward resource depletion.

The irony is that our growing empathic awareness has been made possible by an ever-greater consumption of the Earth's energy and other resources, resulting in a dramatic deterioration of the health of the planet.

We now face the haunting prospect of approaching global empathy in a highly energy-intensive, interconnected world, riding on the back of an escalating entropy bill that now threatens catastrophic climate change and our very existence. Resolving the empathy/entropy paradox will likely be the critical test of our species' ability to survive and flourish on Earth in the future. This will necessitate a fundamental rethinking of our philosophical, economic, and social models.

Toward this end, the book begins with an analysis of the empathy/entropy conundrum and the central role this unlikely dynamic has played in determining the direction of human history. Part I is given over to an examination of the new view of human nature that is emerging in the natural and social sciences and in the humanities, with the discovery of *Homo empathicus*. Part II is devoted to exploring the empathic surges and the great transformations in consciousness that have accompanied each more complex energy-consuming civilization, with the aim of providing a new rendering of human history and the meaning of human existence. Part III reports on the current race to global peak empathy against the backdrop of an ever-quickenening entropic destruction of the Earth's biosphere. Finally, we turn our attention to the fledgling Third Industrial Revolution that is ushering in a new era of

“distributed capitalism” and the beginning of biosphere consciousness. We are on the cusp, I believe, of an epic shift into a “climax” global economy and a fundamental repositioning of human life on the planet. The Age of Reason is being eclipsed by the Age of Empathy.

The most important question facing humanity is this: Can we reach global empathy in time to avoid the collapse of civilization and save the Earth?

of power. Rarely do we hear of the other side of the human experience that speaks to our deeply social nature and the evolution and extension of human affection and its impact on culture and society.

The German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel once remarked that happiness is “the blank pages of history” because they are “periods of harmony.” Happy people generally live out their existence in the “microworld” of close familial relations and extended social affiliations.

History, on the other hand, is more often than not made by the disgruntled and discontented, the angry and rebellious—those interested in exercising authority and exploiting others and their victims, interested in righting wrongs and restoring justice. By this reckoning, much of the history that is written is about the pathology of power.

Perhaps that is why, when we come to think about human nature, we have such a bleak analysis. Our collective memory is measured in terms of crises and calamities, harrowing injustices, and terrifying episodes of brutality inflicted on each other and our fellow creatures. But if these were the defining elements of human experience, we would have perished as a species long ago.

All of which raises the question “Why have we come to think of life in such dire terms?” The answer is that tales of misdeeds and woe surprise us. They are unexpected and, therefore, trigger alarm and heighten our interest. That is because such events are novel and not the norm, but they are newsworthy and for that reason they are the stuff of history.

The everyday world is quite different. Although life as it’s lived on the ground, close to home, is peppered with suffering, stresses, injustices, and foul play, it is, for the most part, lived out in hundreds of small acts of kindness and generosity. Comfort and compassion between people creates goodwill, establishes the bonds of sociality, and gives joy to people’s lives. Much of our daily interaction with our fellow human beings is empathic because that is our core nature. Empathy is the very means by which we create social life and advance civilization. In short, it is the extraordinary evolution of empathic consciousness that is the quintessential underlying story of human history, even if it has not been given the serious attention it deserves by our historians.

There is still another reason why empathy has yet to be seriously examined in all of its anthropological and historical detail. The difficulty lies in the evolutionary process itself. Empathic consciousness has grown slowly over the 175,000 years of human history. It has sometimes flourished, only to recede for long periods of time. Its progress has been irregular, but its trajectory is clear. Empathic development and the development of selfhood go hand in hand and accompany the increasingly complex energy-consuming social structures that make up the human journey. (We will examine this relationship throughout the book.)

Because the development of selfhood is so completely intertwined with the development of empathic consciousness, the very term “empathy” didn’t become part of the human vocabulary until 1909—about the same time that modern psychology began to explore the internal dynamics of the unconscious and consciousness itself. In other words, it wasn’t until human beings were developed enough in human selfhood that they could begin thinking about the nature of their innermost feelings and thoughts in relation to other people’s innermost feelings and thoughts that they were able to recognize the existence of empathy, find the appropriate metaphors to discuss it, and probe the deep recesses of its multiple meanings.

We have to remember that as recently as six generations ago, our great-great-grandparents—living circa mid-to-late 1880s—were not encultured to think therapeutically. My own grandparents were unable to probe their feelings and thinking in order to analyze how their past emotional experiences and relationships affected their behavior toward others and their sense of self. They were untutored in the notion of unconscious drives and terms like transference and projection. Today, a hundred years after the coming of the age of psychology, young people are thoroughly immersed in therapeutic consciousness and comfortable with thinking about, getting in touch with and analyzing their own innermost feelings, emotions, and thoughts—as well as those of their fellows.

The precursor to empathy was the word “sympathy”—a term that came into vogue during the European Enlightenment. The Scottish

economist Adam Smith wrote a book on moral sentiments in 1759. Although far better known for his theory of the marketplace, Smith devoted considerable attention to the question of human emotions. Sympathy, for Smith, Hume, other philosophers, and literary figures of the time, meant feeling sorry for another's plight. Empathy shares emotional territory with sympathy but is markedly different.

The term "empathy" is derived from the German word *Einfühlung*, coined by Robert Vischer in 1872 and used in German aesthetics. *Einfühlung* relates to how observers project their own sensibilities onto an object of adoration or contemplation and is a way of explaining how one comes to appreciate and enjoy the beauty of, for example, a work of art. The German philosopher and historian Wilhelm Dilthey borrowed the term from aesthetics and began to use it to describe the mental process by which one person enters into another's being and comes to know how they feel and think.¹⁰

In 1909, the American psychologist E. B. Titchener translated *Einfühlung* into a new word, "empathy."¹¹ Titchener had studied with Wilhelm Wundt, the father of modern psychology, while in Europe. Like many young psychologists in the field, Titchener was primarily interested in the key concept of introspection, the process by which a person examines his or her own inner feelings and drives, emotions, and thoughts to gain a sense of personal understanding about the formation of his or her identity and selfhood. The "pathy" in empathy suggests that we enter into the emotional state of another's suffering and feel his or her pain as if it were our own.

Variations of empathy soon emerged, including "empathic" and "to empathize," as the term became part of the popular psychological culture emerging in cosmopolitan centers in Vienna, London, New York, and elsewhere. Unlike sympathy, which is more passive, empathy conjures up active engagement—the willingness of an observer to become part of another's experience, to share the feeling of that experience.

Empathy was a powerful new conceptual term and quickly became the subject of controversy among scholars. Those wedded to a more rational Enlightenment approach quickly attempted to strip the term

of its affective content, suggesting that empathy is a cognitive function wired into the brain but requires cultural attunement. American philosopher and psychologist George Herbert Mead argued that every human being takes on the role of another in order to assess that person's thoughts, behavior, and intentions, and thus create an appropriate response. Jean Piaget, the child development psychologist, concurred. In the child developmental process, according to Piaget, the youngster becomes increasingly adept at "reading" others in order to establish social relations. The cognitive proponents, in their theories, came close to suggesting—although not overtly—that empathy is an instrumental value, a taking of measure of the other to advance one's own social interest and maintain appropriate social relations.

Others in the field of psychology more inclined to the Romantic bent viewed empathy as essentially an affective or emotional state with a cognitive component. The empathic observer doesn't lose his sense of self and fuse into the other's experience, nor does he coolly and objectively read the experience of the other as a way of gathering information that could be used to foster his own self interest. Rather, as psychology professor Martin L. Hoffman suggests, empathy runs deeper. He defines empathy as "the involvement of psychological processes that make a person have feelings that are more congruent with another's situation than with his own situation."¹² Hoffman and others don't discount the role cognition plays—what psychologists call "empathic accuracy." But they are more likely to perceive empathy as a total response to the plight of another person, sparked by a deep emotional sharing of that other person's state, accompanied by a cognitive assessment of the others' present condition and followed by an affective and engaged response to attend to their needs and help ameliorate their suffering.

Although most people probably would view empathy as both an emotional and cognitive response to another's plight, empathy is not just reserved for the notion that "I feel your pain," a phrase popularized by former president Bill Clinton and later caricatured in pop culture. One can also empathize with another's joy.

Oftimes empathizing with another person's joy comes from a deep personal knowledge of their past struggles, making their joy all the

more valued and vicariously felt. Another person's empathic embrace can even transform one's own suffering to joy. Carl Rogers put it poignantly:

[W]hen a person realizes he has been deeply heard, his eyes moisten. I think in some real sense, he is weeping for joy. It is as though he were saying, "Thank God, somebody heard me. Someone knows what it's like to be me."¹³

There has been a steady rise in interest in the import and impact of empathy on consciousness and social development over the past century. That interest has mushroomed in the past decade as empathy has become a hot-button topic in professional fields ranging from medical care to human resources management.

Biologists talk excitedly about the discovery of mirror neurons, the so-called empathy neurons that establish the genetic predisposition for empathetic response across some of the mammalian kingdom. The existence of mirror neurons has touched off a wide-ranging debate in the academic community over long-held assumptions about the nature of biological evolution and especially the nature of human evolution.

Edward O. Wilson, the Harvard biologist, turned upside down centuries of thinking about the nature of human beings' relationship to other animals with his essay on biophilia. Christian theologians had always taken a utilitarian view of our fellow creatures, arguing that God had given humankind dominion over the other animals to dispose of them as we chose. For the most part, with the exception of Saint Francis of Assisi, the Church's perspective was that animals, like human beings, were fallen creatures, useful but of little intrinsic value. Even the Enlightenment philosophers showed little regard for the other animals that populate the Earth. Most shared René Descartes's view of living creatures as "soulless automatons" whose movements were little different from those of the automated puppetry that danced upon the Strasbourg Clock.¹⁴

Wilson argues to the contrary, that human beings have a genetic predisposition—an innate hankering—to seek empathic affiliation and

companionship with other creatures and the wild, and dared to suggest that increasing isolation from the rest of nature results in psychological and even physical deprivation, with profound consequences for our species.¹⁵

Educators have picked up the banner of empathic attunement in the burgeoning field of "emotional intelligence," suggesting that empathic extension and engagement is an important marker by which to judge the psychological and social development of children. Some schools in the United States have begun to revolutionize curricula to emphasize empathetic pedagogy alongside the more traditional intellectual and vocational programs.

New teaching models designed to transform education from a competitive contest to a collaborative learning experience are emerging as schools attempt to catch up to a generation that has grown up on the Internet and is used to interacting and learning in open social networks where they share information rather than hoard it. Meanwhile, service learning has revolutionized the school experience. Millions of youngsters are now required to perform public service in neighborhood organizations where they assist others in need and advance the quality of life of the community.

All of those educational innovations are helping to nurture a more mature empathic sensibility. The traditional assumption that "knowledge is power" and is used for personal gain is being subsumed by the notion that knowledge is an expression of the shared responsibilities for the collective well-being of humanity and the planet as a whole.

Early evaluations of student performance in the few places where the new empathic approach to education has been implemented show a marked improvement in mindfulness, communications skills, and critical thinking as youngsters become more introspective, emotionally attuned, and cognitively adept at comprehending and responding intelligently and compassionately to others. Because empathic skills emphasize a non-judgmental orientation and tolerance of other perspectives, they accustom young people to think in terms of layers of complexity and force them to live within the context of ambiguous realities where there are no simple formulas or answers, but only a constant search

for shared meanings and common understandings. The new empathic teaching experience, though still nascent, is designed to prepare students to plumb the mysteries of an existential universe where the ultimate questions are not just “how to” but also “why”?

In the law, the traditional concept of meting out justice has been broadened to include the idea of reconciliation—a radically new approach to addressing wrongdoing on the basis of restoring relationships between perpetrators of crimes and their victims, rather than merely imposing punishment on the guilty party.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission instituted in South Africa in the 1990s after the end of apartheid was the first of several such bodies established in the aftermath of mass violence in various countries. Similar commissions have been established in Ireland, Argentina, and East Timor.

Reconciliation commissions bring together those who have committed the crimes and their victims. The victims bear public witness to the atrocities committed and talk openly about the physical and emotional suffering they experienced at the hands of the perpetrators. The perpetrators, in turn, are given the opportunity to make a full and truthful disclosure of their crimes in front of their victims and, if they choose, to ask for forgiveness. The experience is designed to provide a “safe environment” to allow for an empathic catharsis, reconciliation and healing among the parties.

A similar process called restorative justice is being implemented in court jurisdictions in several countries. Imprisoned felons and their victims are encouraged to come together in carefully choreographed therapeutic settings to talk face-to-face and share their feelings about the crime. The hope is that the perpetrator, after hearing the victim recount the experience and the suffering and anguish that resulted, might feel guilt, thereby activating an empathic response, remorse and an effort to seek forgiveness.

The reconciliation commissions and restorative justice programs are a formal recognition that the question of morality extends beyond the issue of fairness to include the equally important issue of caring and that

righting a wrong includes emotional reparations as well as criminal convictions. These novel legal entities are a new way of dealing with conflict resolution that puts as much emphasis on empathy as on equity. Such bodies would have been unheard of in previous periods of history. Their success in mitigating future abuses and criminal behavior, while mixed, is nonetheless encouraging and suggests a broadening of the vision of criminal justice and the role of law in addressing wrongdoing in society.

Even economics, the dismal science, has undergone a partial makeover. For two centuries Adam Smith’s observation that nature inclines each individual to pursue his or her own individual self-interest in the marketplace seemed the undisputable last word on the nature of human nature. In his *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), Smith contended that

[e]very individual is continually exerting himself to find out the most advantageous employment for whatever capital he can command. It is his own advantage, indeed, and not that of society, which he has in view. But the study of his own advantage naturally, or rather necessarily, leads him to prefer that employment which is most advantageous to the society.¹⁶

Smith’s characterization of human nature, while still gospel, is no longer sacrosanct. The IT (Information Technology) and Internet revolutions have begun to change the nature of the economic game. Network ways of doing business challenge orthodox market assumptions about self-interest. Caveat emptor—let the buyer beware—has been replaced with the belief that all exchanges should be, above all, completely transparent. The conventional notion that views market transactions as adversarial has been undermined by network collaboration based on win-win strategies. In networks, optimizing the interest of others increases one’s own assets and value. Cooperation bests competition. Sharing risks and open-source collaboration, rather than Machiavellian-inspired intrigues and manipulations, become the norm. Think Linux—a business model that simply would have been unimaginable twenty years ago.

The idea behind this global software business is to encourage thousands of people to empathize with the plight of others who are experiencing glitches with their software programming and codes and freely give time and expertise to help solve their problems. The notion of economic altruism no longer seems like an oxymoron. Adam Smith would, no doubt, be incredulous. Nonetheless, Linux works and has become a competitor with Microsoft on the world stage.

The new insights into human beings' empathic nature has even caught the attention of human resources management who are beginning to put as much emphasis on social intelligence as professional skills. The ability of employees to empathize across traditional ethnic, racial, cultural, and gender boundaries is increasingly regarded as essential to corporate performance, both within the workplace and in external market relations. Learning how to work together in a thoughtful and compassionate manner is becoming standard operating procedure in a complex, interdependent world. (We will examine the powerful paradigmatic impact the new empathic surge is having across the global society in Part III: The Age of Empathy.)

What does this tell us about human nature? Is it possible that human beings are not inherently evil or intrinsically self-interested and materialistic, but are of a very different nature—an empathic one—and that all of the other drives that we have considered to be primary—aggression, violence, selfish behavior, acquisitiveness—are in fact secondary drives that flow from repression or denial of our most basic instinct?

The first hint that such might be the case—at least in scientific literature—occurred in an obscure laboratory study by psychologist Harry Harlow in 1958 at the University of Wisconsin. Harlow and his team conducted an experiment on infant monkeys to observe their affectional responses. What they found shook the world of biology, with ripple effects that spread into the social sciences and other fields.

Harlow and his team erected two artificial surrogate mothers. The first was a wood block with sponge rubber around it and draped in cotton terry cloth. A lightbulb radiating heat was placed behind the surrogate. The second surrogate mother was far less comfortable. It was made of wire mesh, warmed by radiant heat. Both surrogates lactated milk.

The infants all preferred to nestle up to the cloth surrogate. However, even when the cloth mother stopped lactating, the infants clung, refusing to take the few necessary steps over to the wire-mesh surrogate for nourishment. They persisted, to the point of starvation and death.

Writing in *American Psychologist*, Harlow reported that even

[w]ith age and opportunity to learn, subjects with the lactating wire mother showed decreasing responsiveness to her and increasing responsiveness to the nonlactating cloth mother.¹⁷

Astounded by what they observed, Harlow and his fellow researchers concluded with the suggestion that

the primary function of nursing as an affectional variable is that of insuring frequent and intimate body contact of the infant with the mother. Certainly, man cannot live by milk alone.¹⁸

Researchers need not have torn the infant monkeys from their mothers and subjected them to such a cruel experiment. Evidence was already well in hand by then, showing that human infants exhibited similar behavior in foundling hospitals earlier in the century. These public institutions were built and administered during the great waves of immigration to America—between the 1880s and 1930s—to house and care for orphaned and abandoned infants or infants taken from indigent families that could not take care of them. Influenced by the progressive-era dogma that emphasized a combination of modern hygiene and strict detached care designed to transform a child quickly into an independent and autonomous being—touching was looked on as potentially unhygienic and a way to spread germs and infection—hospital administrators frowned on nurses caressing or stroking infants. It was thought that affection would retard children's moral development, make them more dependent, and impede their speedy maturation into self-possessed little human beings. The infants were, for the most part, well-fed, well-supervised, and kept in germ-free environments.

Although attended to, thousands of these children languished. They exhibited high degrees of depression and stereotypical behavior of the kind that occurs in extreme isolation. Despite ample food, adequate medical attention, and reasonably comfortable surroundings, the mortality rate was far above the norm for children raised with biological parents or even foster or adoptive parents.

It wasn't until the 1930s that psychologists began to urge a change in infant care. Nurses were instructed to pick up and caress the infants, rock them, soothe and comfort them, and develop a sense of intimate contact. Infants responded almost immediately. They came to life and became engaged, affectionate, and vital.

What had been missing in the foundling homes was one of the most important factors in infant development—empathy. We are learning, against all of the prevailing wisdom, that human nature is not to seek autonomy—to become an island to oneself—but, rather, to seek companionship, affection, and intimacy. The conventional belief that equates self-development and self-consciousness with increasing autonomy has begun to lose its intellectual cachet. A growing number of child development psychologists now argue the contrary—that a sense of selfhood and self-awareness depends on and feeds off of deepening relationships to other people. Empathy, in turn, is the means by which companionate bonds are forged.

Were the seeking of companionship not so basic to our nature, we wouldn't so fear isolation or ostracization. To be shunned and exiled is to become a nonperson, to cease to exist as far as others are concerned. Empathy is the psychological means by which we become part of other people's lives and share meaningful experiences. The very notion of transcendence means to reach beyond oneself, to participate with and belong to larger communities, to be embedded in more complex webs of meaning.

William Fairbairn, Heinz Kohut, Ian Suttie, Donald Winnicott, John Bowlby, Mary Ainsworth, and others—whom we will hear from shortly—were among a growing number of psychiatrists and pediatricians who broke with Freud in the late 1930s and 1940s, taking umbrage with his notion of the reality principle. Recall that Freud believed that

every newborn seeks to satisfy his or her libidinal drive—the pleasure principle. It is only later—at around the age of eighteen months to two years—that parents introduce their children to the reality principle. For Freud, reality is imposing restraints and constraints, first in the form of toilet training and scheduled feedings. The baby, says Freud, needs to be taught to delay gratification, to repress his or her instinctual drives in order to conform with the norms that make social life possible. Socialization for Freud meant repression of basic drives, which he viewed as ultimately self-destructive and antisocial.

Many of the renegade psychologists of the 1930s and 1940s thought differently. They argued that children are born with a reality principle, and that principle is to seek affection, companionship, intimacy, and a sense of belonging. The search to belong, they suggested, is the most primary of all drives. Society often tempers or represses the drive for affection and intimacy to serve socially constructive ends, but it remains the essential nature of human beings. (We will turn our attention to the new scientific understandings about human beings' empathic nature in Part I: Homo Empathicus.)

If in fact human beings are, at the get-go, social animals who seek companionship and use empathetic extension to transcend themselves and find meaning in relationship with others, how do we account for the incredible violence our species has inflicted on each other, our fellow creatures, and the Earth we inhabit? No other creature has left such a destructive footprint on the Earth. Cultural historian Elias Canetti once remarked that “[e]ach of us is a king in a field of corpses.”¹⁹ Canetti said that if we reflected on the vast number of creatures and Earth's resources each of us has expropriated and consumed in the course of our lifetime to perpetuate our own existence, we would likely be appalled by the carnage. Yet there may be an explanation for this perplexing duality. There is, I believe, a grand paradox to human history. At the heart of the human saga is a catch-22—a contradiction of extraordinary significance—that has accompanied our species, if not from the very beginning, then at least from the time our ancestors began their slow metamorphosis from archaic to civilized beings thousands of years before Christ.

First, we must understand that widespread wanton violence has not been the norm in human history but, rather, the exception, that is, if one considers the entire span that anatomically modern human beings have existed on Earth. Granted, some expropriation of other animals and manipulation of our environment is essential to maintain human sustenance, as is the case with every other mammalian species. For 93 percent of our species' existence we lived as foragers/hunters in small tribal groups of between 30 and 150 people. Archaic men and women were nomadic and communal. While aggression and violence existed among our Paleolithic ancestors, it generally was limited in scale and confined to maintaining territorial migratory grounds against intrusion or conflicts over mate selection. Like our closest chimpanzee relatives, far more time was spent on grooming, play, and other pro-social behavior.

Even in the early European garden/agricultural societies of the Neolithic Age, archeologists find virtually no weapons or remains of military fortifications and little evidence of violent warfare or occupation.²⁰ Archeologist Marija Gimbutas notes that the early European agriculturalists lived a relatively peaceful existence. Their societies were largely egalitarian and matrilineal. Craft technology was advanced and the archeological findings of the period reveal a highly artistic culture.

Beginning around 4400 BC, however, Europe was rocked by a wave of invasions from the East.²¹ Nomadic horsemen of the Eurasian steppes swept into southern and eastern Europe, destroying the tranquil agricultural life that had existed for several thousand years. Known as the Kurgan people, the invaders bred horses that could carry human mounts. The mounted horse gave them a superior military advantage, allowing them to surprise, overrun, and occupy village communities across much of Eurasia in the ensuing centuries.

These ancient cowboys brought with them a new warrior sensibility. Equally important, they learned to domesticate the bovine and herd large numbers of animals. The herds were forms of capital. In fact, the very word "cattle" comes from the same etymological root as the word "capital."²² Cattle meant property. Cattle were regarded as movable

wealth, an asset that could be used as a standard medium of exchange and a tool for exerting power over people and territory.

It wasn't long before the lessons of how to transform animals into capital and a source of wealth and power were applied to human beings. In the Middle East, around the fourth millennium BC, we see the beginnings of societies based on the herding of thousands of human beings into giant work groups to build canals, erect dikes, and create the first large-scale hydraulic agricultural civilizations.

The creation of what Lewis Mumford called the human "megamachine" ushered in a radical restructuring of human society. Matriarchal forms of familial relations gave way to new patriarchal forms of power. Governance, which traditionally had been structured around cohort groups, marking the passage of life from infancy to old age, made way for abstract rule in the hands of a single ruler who exercised absolute power. That power was administered by centralized bureaucratic authority designed to rein in and regiment the lives of tens of thousands of people to the task of exploiting the Earth's largesse and creating ever-greater surpluses to extend the bounds of human empire. It is at this juncture—the dawn of civilization—that our story begins. It is a hopeful yet discouraging tale built on what is surely the strangest contradiction in history.

The reality is that each new, more complex energy-consuming civilization in history increases the pace, flow, and density of human exchange and creates more connectivity between people. Increased energy flow-through also creates surpluses and allows for growing populations and more expanded commercial relations and trade with near and faraway communities. The very complexity of more advanced civilizations—the hydraulic agricultural societies based on large-scale irrigation systems, and the industrial societies based on fossil fuel utilization—require greater differentiation and individuation in the form of specialized talents, roles, and responsibilities, in ever more interdependent social milieus. The differentiation process pulls individuals away from the collective tribal "we" to an ever more individual "I." Role differentiation, in turn, becomes the path to selfhood.

Small family and extended kinship units of 30 to 150 people, which are so characteristic of forager/hunter-based oral cultures, exhibit only minimal role differentiation and thus little to distinguish the individual as a unique self. Archaic man and woman lived collectively, but not as a collection of self-aware individuals. Their life contrasts sharply with the setting in midtown Manhattan in 2010, where an individual is exposed to potentially 220,000 or more people within a ten-minute radius of their home or office, and each of these thousands of people have their own unique roles, responsibilities, and identities that set them apart from the group. Yet they function together in a highly interdependent and integrated economic and social organism.

The awakening sense of selfhood, brought on by the differentiation process, is crucial to the development and extension of empathy. The more individualized and developed the self is, the greater is our sense of our own unique, mortal existence, as well as our existential aloneness and the many challenges we face in the struggle to be and to flourish. It is these very feelings in ourselves that allow us to empathize with similar existential feelings in others. A heightened empathic sentiment also allows an increasingly individualized population to affiliate with one another in more interdependent, expanded, and integrated social organisms. This is the process that characterizes what we call civilization. Civilization is the detribalization of blood ties and the resocialization of distinct individuals based on associational ties. Empathic extension is the psychological mechanism that makes the conversion and the transition possible. When we say to civilize, we mean to empathize.

Today, in what is fast becoming a globally connected civilization, empathic consciousness is just beginning to extend to the far reaches of the biosphere and to every living creature. Unfortunately this comes right at the very moment in history when the same economic structures that are connecting us are sucking up vast reserves of the Earth's remaining resources to maintain a highly complex and interdependent urban civilization and destroying the biosphere in the process. We have come to empathize with the polar bears and penguins at the far corners of the Earth, as the ice beneath them begins to melt away from

industrially induced global warming. The poles have been encased in ice for million of years, but now our scientists say that by 2030, "we may have no ice at all in the Arctic Ocean in summer."²³ And everywhere people are beginning to ask a question never before entertained in history: Can we continue to sustain our species?

The thought of extinction, first raised with the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945 by the U.S. government, now takes on an even more dramatic urgency with the report by James Hansen, the head of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, that human-induced climate change, brought on by a voracious global economy, might lead to a six-degree rise in the Earth's temperature by the end of the century, or shortly thereafter, and the demise of civilization as we've come to know it. He warns that

if humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed and to which life on Earth is adapted, paleoclimate evidence and ongoing climate change suggest that CO₂ will need to be reduced from its current 385 ppm to at most 350 ppm, but likely less than that.²⁴

This would require a reduction beyond any current benchmark being discussed by the nations of the world.

If there were any lingering doubt as to how close our species is coming to the very limits of its sustainability on Earth, a single statistic is revealing of our current state of affairs: Our scientists tell us that the nearly seven billion human beings now inhabiting the Earth make up less than 1 percent of the total biomass of all the Earth's consumers.²⁵ Yet with our complex global economic and social infrastructure, we are currently consuming nearly 24 percent of the net primary production on Earth—"the net amount of solar energy converted to plant organic matter through photosynthesis."²⁶ (We will investigate the extent of the global environmental crisis in Chapter 12, *The Planetary Entropic Abyss*.)

The irony is that just as we are beginning to glimpse the prospect of global empathic consciousness we find ourselves close to our

own extinction. We rushed to universalize empathy in the last half of the twentieth century. In the aftermath of the Holocaust in World War II, humanity said “never again.” We extended empathy to large numbers of our fellow human beings previously considered to be less than human—including women, homosexuals, the disabled, people of color, and ethnic and religious minorities—and encoded our sensitivity in the form of social rights and policies, human rights laws, and now even statutes to protect animals. We are in the long end game of including “the other,” “the alien,” “the unrecognized.” And even though the first light of this new biosphere consciousness is only barely becoming visible—traditional xenophobic biases and prejudices continue to be the norm—the simple fact that our empathic extension is now exploring previously unexplorable domains is a triumph of the human evolutionary journey.

Yet the early light of global empathic consciousness is dimmed by the growing recognition that it may come too late to address the specter of climate change and the possible extinction of the human species—a demise brought on by the evolution of ever more complex energy-consuming economic and social arrangements that allow us to deepen our sense of selfhood, bring more diverse people together, extend our empathic embrace, and expand human consciousness.

We are in a race to biosphere consciousness in a world facing the threat of extinction. Understanding the contradiction that lies at the heart of the human saga is critical if our species is to renegotiate a sustainable relationship to the planet in time to step back from the abyss.

The essential task at hand is to examine the depths of the conundrum of human history, to fully explore its workings and pathways and twists and turns so that we might find a way out of our predicament. Our journey begins at the crossroads where the laws of energy that govern the universe come up against the human inclination to continually transcend our sense of isolation by seeking the companionship of others in ever more complex energy-consuming social arrangements. The underlying dialectic of human history is the continuous feedback loop between expanding empathy and increasing entropy.

THE LAWS OF THERMODYNAMICS AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Albert Einstein once mused about which laws of science were most likely to withstand the test of time and not be subject to deconstruction, irrelevance, or abandonment by future generations. He chose the first and second laws of thermodynamics. Einstein noted that

[a] theory is more impressive the greater is the simplicity of its premises, the more different are the kinds of things it relates and the more extended its range of applicability. Therefore, the deep impression which classical thermodynamics made on me. It is the only physical theory of universal content which I am convinced, that within the framework of applicability of its basic concepts, will never be overthrown.²⁷

The first and second laws of thermodynamics state that the “total energy content of the universe is constant, and the total entropy is continually increasing.”²⁸ The first law, the conservation law, posits that energy can neither be created nor destroyed. The amount of total energy in the whole universe has been fixed since the beginning of time and will remain so until the end of time.

Although the energy in the universe remains constant, it is continually changing form but always in one direction, from available to unavailable. This is where the second law of thermodynamics comes into play. According to the second law, energy always flows in one direction—from hot to cold, concentrated to dispersed, ordered to disordered. Consider the burning of a piece of coal. The energy remains but is transformed into sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide, and other gases that spread into space. While no energy has been lost in the conversion process, we can never reburn the original piece of coal again and get useful work out of it. The second law states that whenever energy is transformed, some amount of available energy is lost in the process: that is, it is no longer able to perform useful work. This loss of usable

unable to empathize. The UCLA brain imaging studies showed a “clear link between a child’s inability to imitate expressions on the faces of other people and a lack of activity in the mirror–neuron system.”¹¹ Mirella Dapretto, associate professor of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at UCLA, suggests, on the basis of her teams’ findings, that “a dysfunctional mirror–neuron system may underlie the impairments in imitation and in empathizing with other people’s emotions typically seen in autism.”¹²

Researchers at the cutting edge of cognitive science are justifiably excited about the discovery of mirror neurons and resonance circuitry, and the potential implications. Still, they caution that the new findings are just the beginning of a journey to map the pathways of cognition. What they are finding is that the biological circuitry becomes activated by social exercise. In other words, parental and community nurture of infants is essential to trigger mirror neurons’ circuitry and establish empathic pathways in the brain. These findings are reopening the age–old question of the relationship between biology and culture and sparking a rigorous debate across the natural and social sciences disciplines.

It’s long been assumed that biology and culture operate on different tracks, despite efforts over the years by scholars like C. P. Snow to find a connection and an accommodation. Just as the discovery of mirror neurons breaks the hold of Cartesian dualism, it also suggests that the split between biology and culture is equally erroneous. Mirror neurons, says Patricia Greenfield, a psychologist at the University of California at Los Angeles,

provide a powerful biological foundation for the evolution of culture. . . . [N]ow we see that mirror neurons absorb culture directly, with each generation teaching the next by social sharing, imitation and observation.¹³

We used to believe that only human beings evolve by creating culture and that all other creatures are imprisoned by their biological design. It was fashionable, as late as the 1960s, for most biologists to

believe that while human beings pass cultural capital on by teaching their young, other creatures operate by a rigid preprogrammed behavior—popularly referred to as instinct. The idea of animals teaching their young would have seemed far–fetched among most biologists until recently.

Now we know that for many species, behavior is as much learned as inherited. For example, we used to believe that geese migrate south each year to specific destinations because it’s wired into their biology. We now know that geese have to teach their young by showing them the route.

Researchers at Emory University in Atlanta and the University of St Andrews in Scotland report on an experiment with chimpanzees that showed the passing of newly learned skills to other chimpanzees—in effect creating a new, acquired skill set by way of cultural transmission. Two chimps were taught two different techniques for freeing a piece of food from a container. After the chimps returned to their respective groups, they began to use the new techniques. The other chimps observed what the chimps had learned and began to use the new techniques as well. Two months later, the chimps in both groups were still using the new techniques.¹⁴

Biologists have discovered a whole range of learned behavior in the animal kingdom, especially among mammals that are social and that nurse their offspring, which means that at least a rudimentary form of culture exists within many species. The point is that with many species, ways of acting and behaving in the world are passed down from one generation to the next.

A case in point. Several years ago, zoologists noted a bizarre change in behavior among adolescent elephants in an animal park in South Africa. They began to taunt rhinos and other animals and even began to kill them, something never before seen. Scientists were puzzled by the strange behavior and unable to find a satisfying explanation. Then one of the zoologists recollected that years earlier they had culled out the older male elephants in order to ease crowding. They reasoned that there might be a correlation but were not sure what it could be. Nonetheless, they airlifted two older male adults back into the park

and within just a few weeks the teenagers had stopped exhibiting what amounted to antisocial behavior and began to fall in line with the behavior of the older male elephants. What the zoologists observed is that young elephants learn from their elders, just like human children, and when the role models are absent they have no guide to teach them what appropriate social behavior should be.¹⁵

The discovery of the mirror neuron system in human beings and primates is precipitating a fundamental shift in the way we think about the nature-nurture relationship. These neural circuits are giving us a window into the very complex way that biology connects with psychology. Vilayanur Ramachandran, a neuroscientist at the University of California at San Diego, says that the discovery of the biological mechanisms that make empathic consciousness possible and the cultural catalysts that activate them allow us to begin to understand how nature and nurture interact to create human nature. Ramachandran suggests that the study of the mirror neurons will change our way of thinking about psychology as significantly as DNA has for biology.¹⁶

Scientists studying animal behavior believe that many animal species besides primates probably have rudimentary mirror neuron systems. Elephants, dolphins, dogs, and other “social animals” are high up on the list of suspected species that might have the biological mechanisms for at least primitive empathic response. Elephants—and perhaps dolphins—are particularly good candidates because, like chimpanzees, they are able to grasp the notion of their selfhood. Many cognitive scientists believe that in order to read another creature’s feelings and intentions, some kind of self-awareness is required.

We’ve long known that chimpanzees are aware of the self as a separate identity. In the mirror test used by scientists to see if an animal has self-awareness, chimps pass with flying colors. If a lipstick mark, for example, is put on the forehead of a chimp and the chimp is then put in front of a mirror, he will examine the mark and even touch it or try to erase it, showing that he knows that the reflection in the mirror is his.

Recent experiments conducted by researchers at the Yerkes Primate Center in Atlanta and the Wildlife Conservation Society show that

elephants also pass the lipstick test in the mirror. Researchers painted a white X on the left cheek of an elephant named Happy. She stood before the mirror and repeatedly touched her trunk to the mark, a feat that requires an understanding that the mark is not in the mirror but on her body. Another elephant, Maxine, used the mirror to examine the inside of her mouth and her ear—a kind of self-directed behavior that zookeepers had never witnessed before.¹⁷

Elephants also exhibit behavior that can only be described as empathic. In his book *When Elephants Weep*, Jeffrey Masson recounts the story of an elephant attempting to rescue a rhino calf who had become stuck in the mud at a salt lick. An adult elephant approached the young rhino, running its trunk gently over it. The elephant then knelt, placed its tusks underneath the calf’s belly, and attempted to lift it from the mud. The mother rhino, spotting the elephant, charged over to it, forcing the elephant to retreat. After repeated attempts by the elephant to dislodge the calf, only to be rebuffed by a charging rhino mother, the elephant left. The most plausible explanation for the elephant’s behavior is its sense of empathy for the plight of the calf and its determination to come to the calf’s aid.¹⁸

Scientists suspect that dolphins might also self-identify. Other species, as far as we know, don’t self-identify. When they see themselves in the mirror, there is no sense whatsoever of self-reflection. They simply don’t know that the image in the mirror is their own.

While only a few species pass the mirror test for self-identity and despite the fact that mirror neuron systems, to date, have been found in only a few species—most species have not yet been studied—experiments show that many species demonstrate in their behavior that they possess theory of mind.¹⁹

Experiments conducted by Brian Hare of Harvard University and Michael Tomasello of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig showed that “domestic dogs understand what is meant when a human being points at something (as in ‘the food’s under this one!’).”²⁰ While we take for granted that when one person points to an object, another knows how to look over at it, for a dog to do the same, he needs to know that “your movements aren’t about your

arm and hand but about the mind that drives them."²¹ That recognition requires that the dog be able to read the person's mind and understand their intention in making the gesture. In other words, he must have a theory of mind.

Some animal species even understand the idea of fairness, which requires a sophisticated awareness of oneself in relationship to another. Anthropologist Sarah Brosnan at Emory University coordinated several experiments in which monkeys were taught to exchange a "token" with a trainer in return for food. If the monkeys saw a cagemate exchange a token for a highly coveted grape, while they were only offered a lowly cucumber for a token, they would more often than not refuse to give over the token because of the unfair nature of the exchange.²²

THE DARWIN WE NEVER KNEW

Charles Darwin anticipated the recent breakthroughs in cognitive science—especially the importance of sociability in evolution—in his own keen observation of animals. In his later works, *The Descent of Man* and *Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, Darwin noted the social nature of most animals and even their emotions and moral responsibilities. Of their social nature, he wrote:

Every one must have noticed how miserable horses, dogs, and sheep are when separated from their companions, and what strong mutual affection horses and dogs, at least, show on their reunion.²³

Darwin also took note of the grooming behavior of animals. He said he was intrigued with how "social animals . . . perform many little services for each other. Horses nibble, and cows lick each other on any spot that itches. Monkeys search each other for external parasites."²⁴

Darwin was particularly taken by other creatures' sense of humor. He observed that

[d]ogs show what may be fairly called a sense of humor, as distinct from mere play. If a bit of stick or other such object is thrown to one, he will often carry it away for a short distance and then squatting down with it on the ground close before him, will wait until his master comes quite close to take it away. The dog will then seize it and rush away in triumph, repeating the same maneuver and evidently enjoying the practical joke.²⁵

Although Darwin is unduly portrayed as a fierce believer in the idea that nature is red in tooth and claw and a battleground where only the fit survive, his views were actually far more tempered and nuanced. He observed that, "[m]ost of the more complex emotions are common to the higher animals and ourselves" and, "animals not only love, but desire to be loved."²⁶ (The mischaracterization of his views is largely the fault of Herbert Spencer, who widely distorted his theory to fit his own social agenda. Historians would refer to the misconception of Darwin's hypotheses as "social Darwinism.")

In his later years, Darwin saw evolution from a far different perspective from what was laid out in his master work *The Origin of Species*. He viewed many of the higher animals as social beings, full of emotions and endowed with a capacity to care for the plight of their fellows. Perhaps most striking is Darwin's remarks about animals extending sympathy for other animals in trouble. He remembered his own experience with a dog "who never passed a cat who lay sick in a basket, and was a great friend of his, without giving her a few licks with his tongue, the surest sign of kind feeling in a dog."²⁷ He wrote that "[m]any animals certainly sympathize with each other's distress or danger."²⁸

Near the end of his life Darwin spent far more time describing the social nature and even affectionate bonds among creatures, all of which might come as quite a surprise to orthodox Darwinians. Nonetheless, Darwin came to believe that survival of the fittest is as much about cooperation, symbiosis, and reciprocity as it is about individual competition and that the most fit are just as likely to enter into cooperative bonds with their fellows.

Despite the fact that Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest, articulated in *The Origin of Species*, seems to provide a biological justification of the self-interested utilitarian ethos of the period, in his last writings he challenged John Stuart Mill and other utilitarian thinkers of the day, arguing that human "impulses do not always arise from anticipated pleasure."²⁹ To illustrate his point, Darwin uses the example of a person rushing to the rescue of a stranger in a fire at great personal peril without the least thought of a utilitarian reward. Darwin says that such behavior comes from a more deeply ingrained human impulse than the drive for pleasure—the social instinct.³⁰

Darwin lived before the heyday of psychological consciousness, in a world where the very word "empathy" had yet to be invented. Still, he gleaned the importance of the empathic bond. In the case of the man saving a victim from the fire, the rescuer instinctually senses the victim's struggle as if it were his own and comes to his aid and comfort. This is what Darwin meant by "the social instinct."

In a remarkable passage, Darwin writes presciently of a coming age when humanity will stretch its social instincts and sympathetic impulses, "becoming more tender and more widely diffused until they are extended to all sentient beings." As to how this might come about, Darwin muses that

[a]s soon as this virtue is honored and practiced by some few of us it spreads through instruction and example to the young and eventually becomes incorporated in public opinion.³¹

DEEP PLAY AND DEVELOPMENT

Today cognitive scientists are putting flesh on Darwin's intuitions about nature and, in the process, changing the way we view human evolution. What they are finding is that when it comes to the most important aspects of social life, many of the other mammalian species exhibit behavior that is remarkably similar to human beings. Social species—especially mammals—have to be able to read the feelings and

intentions of their offspring and peers and have some basic empathic sensibility if they are to nurture their progeny and create social bonds with their fellows.

Many zoologists now believe that "play" performs a powerful role in the development of empathy and the establishment of pro-social behavior among animals, just as it does with humans. Play is the means for creating attachment, mindfulness, trust, affection, and social bonds when growing up and a way to maintain sociability in adulthood.

When denied play opportunities, young animals often fail to develop the social skills that allow them to behave appropriately later on in life in an adult community. Horse breeders, for example, have observed that when a foal is raised without play experience with other foals, he or she often exhibits inappropriate social skills and antisocial behavior as an adult and is never fully accepted into the herd. Dr. Karen Hayes, an equine reproduction specialist, observes that like human infants, after bonding with their mothers, foals begin to play with other horses. "If foals don't learn social skills," says Hayes, "they're in for a life of confusion and certain stress . . . they'll learn to survive but they'll always be stressed."³²

Neural scientist Jaak Panksepp observes that all young animals are biologically wired to engage in play. In his book *Affective Neuroscience*, Panksepp points out that the same brain circuitry that prompts play also stimulates joy and is found in all mammals.³³

For humans, play becomes a defining feature of development. American physician and neuroscientist Paul MacLean writes that "[f]rom the standpoint of human evolution, no behavioral developments could have been more fundamental" than the brain's potential for play. MacLean believes that play "set[s] the stage for a family way of life with its evolving responsibilities and affiliations that has led to worldwide acculturation."³⁴ The social bonding that comes from play, says MacLean, "favored the evolution of the human sense of empathy. . . ."³⁵

To understand the importance of play in the development of empathic potential, we need to step back and examine its essential features. To begin with, play is deeply participatory in nature. It is an embodied experience. We generally don't think of play as something

entered into voluntarily. One can't be forced to play. The players give themselves freely "for the love of the game." The goal is joy and a reaffirmation of the life instinct. It is through the experience of play in the cultural sphere that one learns to participate equally and openly with one's fellow human beings. We revel in one another. Human beings can never be really free until we are able to fully enter into play. It was the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre who said, "As man apprehends himself as free and wishes to use his freedom . . . then his activity is to play."⁴⁰ Does anyone ever feel more free than when engaged in play?

Play, then, is far from a trivial pursuit. It is where we stretch our empathic consciousness and learn to become truly human.

THE EMPATHIC ROOTS OF LANGUAGE

New insights into the role of mirror neurons and play in social development have sparked interest in the question of the origin and development of language. The older disembodied notion that language is innate and an autonomous biological mechanism—most recently articulated by Noam Chomsky et al.—is now being challenged by a new generation of neurocognitive scientists.

The mirror neuron system hypothesis, put forth by Michael Arbib, traces language development back to our primate ancestors' neural mechanisms that support imitation of hand movements. He sees an evolutionary progression from hand movement to more complex pantomime in which one communicates rather than just manipulates an object and then to protosigns, all of which extend the repertoire of manual communication and provide a foundation for "protospeech."⁴¹

Animal behaviorists are beginning to study our closest relatives, the great apes and other primates, both in the wild and in laboratory environments, to try to understand how language might have evolved. What they suspect is that language is, in reality, a sophisticated mechanism for expressing empathic communication and may have evolved through the exercise of hand movements in play and grooming in primates.⁴²

The lives of primates, in many ways, parallel our own, albeit on a more primitive scale. Chimpanzees are particularly interesting to observe because their behavior is remarkably similar to what one might expect of a two- or three-year-old child. Like humans and other social animals, chimpanzees organize their social lives in hierarchies. While they don't create grand conceptual narratives to rationalize their relationships to each other and the world around them, they do have rudimentary culture. They teach their young to use tools, engage in reciprocal activity, cooperate and compete in play, entertain one another, express a wide range of emotions, have a primitive self-awareness and, most important, express empathy toward one another. On this last point, based on decades of research, a growing number of primatologists suggest that a nascent form of empathy is at the root of chimpanzees' communicative nature. Dutch primatologist Frans de Waal goes so far as to suggest that

empathy [in primates] is the original, pre-linguistic form of inter-individual linkage that only secondarily has come under the influence of language and culture.⁴³

Dr. de Waal, like Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and other primatologists, argues that "communication among nonhuman primates is thought to be emotionally mediated."⁴⁴

Dr. de Waal notes that natural selection must have favored mechanisms that allow individuals to read one another's feelings and intentions in order to respond accordingly and build cooperative links and social solidarity. This is, after all, the heart of what communication is all about. If that's the case, says de Waal, then "[e]mpathy is precisely such a mechanism."⁴⁵ In other words, the empathic impulse is the biological means of fostering communication, at least among the more evolved mammalian species.

Close observation of other species shows a steady progression of the empathic impulse in biological evolution. For example, in a classic study conducted more than half a century ago, researchers found "that rats that had learned to press a lever to obtain food would stop doing

so if their response was paired with the delivery of an electric shock to a visible neighboring rat.⁴⁶ Subsequent experiments with rhesus monkeys yielded the same results—except, in the latter case, the emotional response was more long-lasting and had deeper consequences. One monkey stopped pulling the lever for five days, another for twelve days, after seeing the shocking effect on another monkey. The monkeys would rather starve than be responsible for meting out pain on a fellow.⁴⁷ The behavior of the rats and the rhesus monkeys would simply be unexplainable if the empathic impulses were not in play.

Most empathic responses are seen within a species. Still, researchers have recorded countless examples of animals extending the empathic bond beyond their kind, like the example cited earlier about the elephant coming to the assistance of a rhino calf.

Dr. de Waal recounts witnessing a bonobo named Kuni capturing a starling. The chimp gathered up the starling and proceeded to climb up a tree. She then delicately unfolded the bird's wings and threw the bird toward an outer wall. Although the bird fell in the moat, Kuni went over to it and guarded it. De Waal notes that Kuni could not have done what she did without somehow adopting the bird's viewpoint and plight. De Waal explains that

[w]hat Kuni did would obviously have been inappropriate towards a member of her own species. Having seen birds in flight many times, she seemed to have a notion of what would be good for a bird, thus offering us an anthropoid version of the empathic capacity.⁴⁸

Primatologists have also noted chimpanzees' ability to console—an emotional act that requires a fairly advanced empathic communication. It is not uncommon in chimpanzee communities for a third party to intercede after a conflict, and to attempt to console the victim of the aggression. This level of emotional sophistication is not seen in macaques and other monkeys. While researchers have recorded numerous examples of reconciliation in many different species, consolation is different. De Waal points out that reconciliation is driven more by

self-interest and the desire to restore social harmony, whereas consolation is purely an empathetic act without any other intention but to acknowledge another's plight and comfort them. Scientists suggest that the reason they may be able to console is that chimpanzees, unlike macaques, exhibit a sense of self-awareness—they pass the mirror test for identity and are therefore better able to distinguish themselves from others, which enables them to console the other, aware that their feelings are directed solely to the other's condition.⁴⁹

While consoling behavior plays a meaningful role in the life of chimpanzees, no less important is the experience of gratitude, an emotional quality we've long believed to be the exclusive preserve of human social relations. Gratitude is most often communicated in chimpanzee society by extending gifts of food to those who have performed grooming services. It can be rightfully argued that grooming is among the most important social activities in chimpanzee society and takes up a sizable portion of the chimpanzees' waking time. De Waal reports on an experiment in which researchers measured hundreds of spontaneous grooming events among chimpanzees during the morning hours. At noon, the chimpanzees were each given two bundles of leaves and branches to eat. Researchers then recorded nearly seven thousand interactions over food. They found that chimpanzees are more likely to share their rations with those who had provided grooming services.⁵⁰ De Waal emphasizes that substantial time elapsed between the grooming events and the sharing of food, meaning that the chimpanzees remembered the kindness extended and expressed their gratitude later by sharing their food. Gestures of gratitude link members of the community into more intimate social bonds.

Grooming is not only important in establishing gratitude. Animal behavioralists and a growing number of cognitive scientists believe that it may also be a key to the development of empathic pathways in the brain and even the evolution of communication from gestures, to protosigns, to protolanguage, and finally to human speech. The progression of communications, in turn, provides ever richer means of reading feelings, understanding intentions, and making empathic connections.

Like play, grooming creates bonds of sociability. In otherwise

hierarchically stratified social arrangements—typical of social species—play and grooming often provide a time and place to relax distinctions and status barriers and allow individuals to connect on a “more intimate and egalitarian basis.” In some species, more than 20 percent of each day is given over to grooming activity.⁵¹

Both play and grooming promote empathy and deeper communication. Play, however, is often a group exercise, while grooming is always a one-to-one affair. In the practice of grooming, the two participants use the full range of their senses to explore the other’s physicality and mentality. Grooming another requires a mindfulness of their needs and feelings—what pains them and pleases them. The individual being groomed, in turn, has to be able to communicate his or her needs and feelings—cooing, snapping, nudging, snuggling, stroking—in a way that the groomer can understand. Grooming is the most intimate form of communication—far more so than sexual encounters—for other species, and it is also the most important way for animals to get to know each other’s inner being. The grooming experience begins with nursing and parental care and, along with play, is the way animals learn to communicate with one another. Grooming stimulates the release of the body’s natural opiates, the endorphins, and has a narcotic effect, relaxing the animal.⁵² Equally important, however, is that grooming establishes trust and bonds of friendship, both essential to maintaining social life.

If grooming, along with play, is the most basic form of communication between social animals, what, if any, connection might it have to the development of human language—one of the great unsolved mysteries of biological evolution?

British anthropologist and evolutionary biologist Robin Dunbar, in his book *Grooming, Gossip and the Evolution of Language*, offers an interesting yet controversial thesis. He starts with the assumption that grooming is the essential mechanism by which animals create bonds of intimacy, trust, and sociability. He then notes an interesting biological phenomenon, namely that, in large part, the size of the neocortex in mammals’ brains defines the social group size. The neocortex is the part of the brain where conscious thought occurs. He observes that in

most mammals, the neocortex amounts to approximately 30 percent to 40 percent of the total brain volume, whereas among primates it ranges “from a low of 50 percent among some prosimians to 80 percent of total brain volume in humans.”⁵³

It turns out that the size of the neocortex correlates quite closely to the group size of a species. That is, the larger the size of the neocortex relative to the total volume of the brain, the larger the number of animals in a social group. The reason for this, Dunbar speculates, is that social animals need to continuously keep track of each other’s feelings and interactions and adjust to each other’s needs and moods in order to maintain the proper social cohesion of the group.

The larger the neocortex, the greater the capability of organizing complex social relationships among larger numbers of individuals. Human beings, with the largest neocortex among the primates, also live in the largest extended social groups. The primary group is the clan, which usually contains upward of 150 people or so. Clans organize in larger, more loosely affiliated groups called mega-bands, usually comprised of 500 or so people, and mega-bands affiliate in even larger groups called tribes, which are united by language or dialect and vary between 1,500 to 2,000 people.⁵⁴

If we look to our closest primate relatives and further down the line to other mammals, we see that group size is directly related to the time devoted to social grooming because of the cultural function it performs in establishing and maintaining social relations and group cohesion. As mentioned earlier, the other primates spend up to 20 percent of their day in grooming activity and live in groups of only about 40 to 50 animals. Studies of existing forager/hunter societies show that men and women spend, on average, about 25 percent of their day socializing, which roughly corresponds to the time given over to social grooming among some of our primate relatives.⁵⁵ But for human beings that live in clans of up to 150 people or so, it would mean that at least 40 percent of the social time would need to be taken up in social grooming to maintain a measure of social cohesion. Thus, Dunbar speculates that when human groups become so large that they require more than 30 percent of their time be spent in social grooming—which would have

compromised the time necessary to forage and hunt and perform other survival activities—some form of vocal as opposed to physical grooming came into play to facilitate more extended social bonds. Dunbar suggests that language started as gossip—which is a way of vocalizing grooming and establishing more extensive social relations.⁵⁶

The development of oral language, then script, print, and now electronic connections, has allowed human beings to vastly extend their social networks and to live in more densely populated and complex social environments. At every stage of our social evolution, the primary task of communications has been to expand the empathic domain, whether it be grooming each other or gossiping over the Internet, so that we can express our social nature and our deep desire for companionship with our fellows.

Understanding the importance of play and grooming in the making of human culture is critical to rethinking the nature of human nature. It is important to note that animal behavioralists used to believe that play was a means to sharpen instinctual competitive skills useful in the hunt and in warfare in the case of males, and domestic skills useful in overseeing the brood in the case of females. The utilitarian functions were emphasized. Similarly, with grooming it was long suspected that the primary purpose was hygienic and designed to keep each other and the pack physically fit. Although animal behavioralists and cognitive scientists don't dismiss these strictly utilitarian functions, they are now more apt to regard the social bonding function as far more important. The growing awareness that play and grooming are, first and foremost, means of connecting feelings, emotions, intentions, and desires and establishing social bonds, has sparked a rich new debate around the origin of language. In both play and grooming, researchers note that communication between animals is experienced physically, which has led to the theorization that language might have developed from bodily gestures.

Arbib suggests that biological evolution provided human beings with a “‘language-ready brain’ able to master language as the child matures within a language-using community” but that the development of language itself is culturally driven. In other words, a child

doesn't just begin to speak at two years of age because of an innate universal grammar but, rather, learns to speak by progressing through prior stages of gesturing tied to empathic extension. At each stage of infant development, more complex gestural communication patterns trigger mirror neurons and establish more elaborate resonance circuitry, laying the foundation for the most complex form of empathic communication—speech itself. The point is we aren't born with the ability to speak.⁵⁷ Rather, it is the final stage in the increasing complexity of gestural communications made possible via empathic extension and cultural transmission.

David McNeill, professor of linguistics and psychology at the University of Chicago, argues that gestures and language develop together. In his book on the subject, *Hand and Mind*, McNeill concludes that “gestures are an integral part of language as much as are words, phrases, and sentences—gesture and language are one system.”⁵⁸

The early gestural forms of communication remain with us and accompany speech throughout life. Communication by speech is virtually always accompanied by hand movements, facial expressions, and bodily gestures. They provide the visual nuances that amplify, qualify, and modify our utterances. They ground our communications in a spatial and temporal gestalt and help others interpret what we really mean and are as important as tone and inflection in conveying intent.

The notion that the evolution of language lies in hand movement would seem to add credence to the argument that communication began with play and social grooming among the primates. In the act of grooming, primates' hands become probes of, as well as responders to, another individual's feelings, emotions, needs, and desires. The hands become the intimate language of communication during the grooming process. The groomers' hands cue into the bodily reactions and facial gestures of the recipient and continually readjust to the felt presence of the other. That is to say, the hands become the organs and touch becomes the primary source for early empathic communication. It's not difficult to imagine how the grooming process might then evolve into more abstract pantomime and symbolic protosigns to express bodily feelings and intentions and extend the empathic bond.

Arbib and others claim that without a functioning mirror neuron system, language would be impossible. We simply would not be capable of learning how to read another's mind and be able to respond in kind—in other words, we would be unable to communicate. Severely autistic children who have an impoverished mirror neuron system are unable to learn language because they don't have the potential empathic building blocks—mirror neurons—and therefore are unable to learn about and from others.

The Arbib thesis on the evolution of human language and other recent biological discoveries and insights is giving us a much clearer picture of the emotional, cognitive, and even communicative biological origins of human evolution. What scientists are finding is that human beings share a much richer history with our fellow mammals than previously thought. We now know that mammals feel, play, teach their young, and show affection and, at least some species, have a rudimentary culture and express primitive empathic distress.

We are finding kindred spirits among our fellow creatures. Suddenly, our sense of existential aloneness in the universe is not so extreme. We have been sending out radio communications to the far reaches of the cosmos in the hopes of finding some form of intelligent and caring life, only to discover that what we were desperately seeking already exists and lives among us here on Earth. This discovery can't help but awaken a new sense of communion with our fellow beings and advance the journey toward biosphere consciousness.

With the recent discovery that many animals and humans are wired for empathic distress, researchers have the scientific grounding for a far more rigorous exploration of how nature and nurture interact to create a social being. What they are learning about the way children evolve changes our most basic thinking about what it means to be a human being.

FOUR

BECOMING HUMAN

PARENTS HAVE NOT always viewed their children the same way over history. A Christian parent at the close of the first millennium AD might look into the eyes of a newborn for clues as to whether the devil lurked somewhere deep inside, ready to possess them. Today, at the beginning of the third millennium AD, a parent is more likely to scrutinize a child's inner being for signs of his or her inherent good nature and sociability. That's not to say that parents expect their children to grow up to be a Mahatma Gandhi or a Nelson Mandela or a Martin Luther King, Jr. Only that they expect them to be more like them than, say, an Adolf Hitler or a Joseph Stalin. All of which points to the fact that while most human beings are neither saints nor monsters, we expect pro-social behavior rather than antisocial behavior of one another. That's because it is in our nature to be affectionate and caring and not remote and hateful. The misanthrope is always the exception and never the norm in any culture. We are born to nurture.

Today a new generation of psychologists, developmental biologists, cognitive scientists, and pediatric researchers are probing deeply into the complex pathways of human development and pinpointing the critical role that empathic expression plays in making us into fully formed human beings.

All of our truths are just a systemizing of our existing relationships and commonly shared understandings. The truth of our existence is that it is inseparable from our relationships. In this sense, an embodied philosophical approach is a radical departure from faith and reason, both of which discount our experiential existence.

When we begin to ponder the question of the meaning of existence, we are really attempting to know if there is some purpose or direction to life and, if so, how we each fit into it. The Scholastics would argue that the ultimate purpose is bound up in faith in God's grace and obedience to his will in order to secure a place in heaven. The rationalists would say it's to optimize pleasure via the pursuit of material progress. The Darwinians would say it's to survive and produce offspring. The embodied experience philosophers, however, would argue that the meaning of life is to enter into relationships with others in order to deeply experience, as much as one can, the reality of existence. The meaning of life is to celebrate it as fully and expansively as possible.

This very basic difference in how we think about the meaning of life changes our notions about freedom. Freedom was a core concept of the Age of Reason. To be free, argued the rationalists, is to be autonomous and not dependent on or beholden to others. Freedom in the modern age has been closely associated with the ability to control one's labor and to secure one's property, because that is the way to optimize pleasure and be happy. Freedom has also been closely aligned with representation in the political arena and choice in the marketplace. The French revolutionaries exclaimed that each person is a sovereign in the public sphere. The classical economists argued that every individual is free to the extent he or she can pursue their individual self-interest in the material world. Both are seen as means to secure one's autonomy. Freedom, in the rational mode, is a negative freedom—the freedom to exclude, to be independent of others, and to be an island to oneself. To be free is to be “self-possessed” and self-sufficient.

The embodied approach to freedom is based on the opposite premise. Freedom means being able to optimize the full potential of one's life, and the fulfilled life is one of companionship, affection, and belonging, made possible by ever deeper and more meaningful personal experiences

and relationships with others. One is free, then, to the extent that one has been nurtured and raised in a society that allows for empathetic opportunities.

The litmus test for which definition of freedom is more salient is the deathbed judgment. When looking back on one's life, few would measure the meaning of their existence in terms of the money they amassed or the autonomy they achieved. In fact, as we've learned, greater wealth and autonomy tend to isolate one from meaningful relationships with others. Our lived reality becomes more insular and restricted, our lives more lonely. When near death, most people reminisce about the experiences of deep connections they had with others—family, friends, and colleagues. It is the empathetic moments in one's life that are the most powerful memories and the experiences that comfort and give a sense of connection, participation, and meaning to one's sojourn.

These two very distinct ideas about freedom are accompanied by two very different ideas about the nature of strength and what it means to be courageous. When we think of freedom, we generally associate it with being independent and brave. The U.S. national anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner,” ends with the phrase “the land of the free and the home of the brave.” In an era in which we have come to regard freedom as something to fight for and claim as a possession, bravery becomes a sign of our fiercely independent determination to be “the captains of our fate and the masters of our soul.” We think of freedom as liberation from bondage. Many “freedom fighters” go so far as to equate freedom with invulnerability—the totally self-contained and self-sufficient person glorified in the sagas of the American frontier. The pioneers, mountain men, and cowboys who set out alone to tame the wilderness are romanticized as truly free spirits.

Although the pioneering spirit is certainly laudable, the embodied school takes a different approach, asserting that real freedom requires that one exercise vulnerability rather than invulnerability. If freedom is the ability to live out the full potential of one's possibilities and if the measure of one's life is the intimacy, range, and diversity of one's relationships, then the more vulnerable one is, the more open he or she will be to creating meaningful and intimate relationships with others.

Vulnerable in this sense does not mean being weak or a victim or prey but, rather, being open to communication at the deepest level of human exchange.

Real courage, embodied advocates contend, is allowing oneself to be exposed—warts and all—to another person. It is the willingness to place the most intimate details of our lives in the hands of another. To be vulnerable is to trust one's fellow human beings. Trust is the belief that others will treat you as an end not as a means, that you will not be used or manipulated to serve the expedient motives of others but regarded as a valued being. When one is treated by others as an end, not as a means, one becomes truly free. One can't really be free in a world where everyone mistrusts each other. In such a world, freedom is immediately reduced to a negative, the ability to close oneself off from others and be an island unto oneself. Authoritarian societies that promote paranoia and mistrust and pit each against the other squash the spirit of freedom.

The very basis of freedom, then, is trust and openness among people. Freedom is never a solitary affair, as the rationalists contend—John Wayne alone in the frontier—but a deeply communal experience. We are only really free when we come to trust one another and allow ourselves to be open to sharing each other's struggle to be and flourish. Trust, in turn, opens up the possibility of extending empathetic consciousness into new more intimate domains.

Nelson Mandela is a good case study of the embodied sense of freedom. In the more than twenty-three years he was imprisoned, often in solitary confinement, he chose to befriend his jailers. He reached out to them as unique individuals with their own personal struggles. Rather than attempting to be invulnerable and stoic, he chose to be humane. His jailers began to experience him as a human being. Their preconceived biases melted away as they came to admire Mandela and finally trust him as a fellow human being whose struggles were not unlike their own.

Part of the reason the embodied notion of freedom resonates with most of us is that it draws on a deeper sense of what an individual is made of. The impregnable model—the lone wolf in complete control of his emotions—is a rare breed and not someone most of us have ever experienced. To be invulnerable is not to be in need of others and to

be able to live one's life apart. Although there are ascetics and misanthropes able to live this way, their lives are less than complete. They have closed up the emotional channels that make human beings the most social of animals.

Invulnerability conjures up the idea of a super human being, unencumbered by the frailties and foibles that make us vulnerable, less than perfect, in need of each other and, therefore, human. Psychologists are quick to point out that a person feigning invulnerability and exhibiting an extreme libertarian sense of personal entitlement, devoid of emotions and compassion, is often someone so frightened by his own sense of vulnerability that his macho persona becomes a mask for hiding his fear.

One can't truly empathize with the vulnerability and struggle of another unless he is able to acknowledge the same vulnerabilities and struggles in himself. If a person locks up whole parts of his emotional make-up, he is truly unfree, imprisoning parts of his own psyche and closing off his unique being from meaningful expression and engagement with the world. He becomes the jailer of his own persona. No one ever gets to know the "real him" and establish a meaningful relationship. He is truly alone, as much as the individual who has been ostracized or banished.

The idea of freedom has also historically gone in tandem with the idea of equality. The American and French revolutionaries viewed the two ideas as inextricably linked. They became the alpha and omega of the New Order of the Ages. Equality, in the rationalist mode, is a calculable legal phenomenon. Laws are enacted to guarantee political sovereignty, individual civil rights, and market access.

The embodied philosophers define equality more in psychological terms. They ask how one comes to think of others as equal to themselves and vice versa. They view empathetic extension as the great leveler, the force that breaks down the myriad forms of status and distinctions that separate people into subjects and objects. They remind us that as long as equality is narrowly measured in material terms—the opportunity to succeed in the marketplace, even if it's by merit rather than by hereditary claims—the end result will always be defined in

In India, like the Middle East and China, empathic consciousness emerged in tandem with the introduction of hydraulic civilizations. In India, however, it took a different turn. By the fifth century BC, the doctrine of karma had become widely accepted. Unlike the Abrahamic religions, which viewed each life as a onetime experience, followed by death and, in the case of Christianity and Islam, passage to the other world for the rest of eternity, the Vedic religions in India emphasized reincarnation. Every living being is caught up in an endless cycle of eternal return. During each lifetime, one's karma, attitudes, and behavior determined what kind of being they would be reincarnated as to live out the next time around. One might, for example, be reincarnated as a blade of grass or a king depending on how one lived out the last incarnation and the lessons one learned.

Like the Middle East, by the sixth century BC parts of India were undergoing a massive change from small-time agriculture to hydraulic civilization. Populations were increasing, cities were emerging, and diverse peoples were thrown together and consolidated into larger social units. Tribal bonds were giving way to kingdoms, and labor was becoming differentiated. Craftsmen, manufacturers, shopkeepers, and merchants were becoming prominent, literacy was on the rise, and a sense of individualism was emerging, at least among a privileged few. While the old Vedic rituals, with their heavy emphasis on karma and fate, still found ready acceptance among the more traditional and static rural-based tribal communities, they were less appealing to a new, highly mobile urban class. The idea of being constrained by one's karma was particularly unappealing among tradesmen and merchants who, through personal initiative, were bettering their lives in this world and seemingly defying their fate.

Concerned over the loss of traditional values, the growing avarice of merchants, and the alarming debauchery and moral decay that seemed to accompany urban life, a new set of voices emerged calling for a third way. They were called the "renouncers," and they called upon people to mend their ways and take a new spiritual path that would liberate people from the dreary cycle of death and rebirth by way of "enlightenment." But unlike the Hebrew prophets, who called on the people

to reform the institutionalized practices of society, the renouncers asked people to withdraw from the life of worldly desires and lead a life of asceticism and meditation. New spiritual leaders—gurus—sprung up, each with their own set of practices designed to free people from their karma.

One of the renouncers was a man named Gosala who lived between 497 and 425 BC. He was called Mahavira, or the "Great Hero," by his disciples. Mahavira traveled far and wide in the Ganges Valley, practicing an extreme form of asceticism. He went naked, lived outside in the elements, did not take shelter, and allowed himself only the minimum food to ensure survival. Mahavira believed that the road to enlightenment required renouncing bodily desires, treading lightly on the Earth, and living a life dedicated to harmlessness. He extolled the idea that every human being and every other creature, even inanimate things like water, rocks, fire, and air, had a divine soul and that they all had come back to the present state because of their karma from their past life. Because everything has a divine soul (*jiva*), all things needed to be treated with the same respect and sensibility that one would expect to receive in return. Mahavira taught his followers to befriend all beings and to never harm another, however lowly their state of being. If they followed these tenets and practices, they could become a *jina*, a spiritual leader. His followers were called Jains, and their spiritual community still exists in India and elsewhere today. The Jains were committed to nonviolence.

All breathing, existing, living, sentient creatures should not be slain, nor treated with violence, nor abused, nor tormented, nor driven away. This is the pure, unchangeable, eternal law, which the enlightened ones who know have proclaimed.⁶⁵

Practicing harmlessness required incredible vigilance. One had to be careful to ensure that every movement and activity in life took into consideration the well-being of another. Even walking had to be engaged in with caution, lest one inadvertently step on a small insect. Jains are encouraged to limit their activity to the bare minimum, to avoid doing harm to another being.

The Jains were committed to befriending the totality of living beings and showing compassion to all. Ironically, their empathic engagement and commitment to extending compassion was so extreme that to practice it they needed to curtail the living of their own lives. By pulling away from the living of life, however, one is less available to others and less able to extend empathy.

If compassion requires engaging fully in life with others, but if so much of life is bound up in self-gratification and the pursuit of desires, how does one transcend personal ego? In the fifth century, a twenty-nine-year-old named Siddhartha Gautama—later known as Buddha—left a young wife and child and a comfortable home behind to search for the meaning of life. Troubled by the pain and suffering he witnessed around him and plagued by the inevitable decay and death that stalked life, he was determined to find out if there was another side of the story that might justify existence and even exalt life.

One day, according to the popular lore, Gautama remembered an incident in his childhood. He was sitting under the shade of a tree, watching the field next to him being plowed. He noticed that the plow had mowed down and killed several insects. As he peered closer at the dead bodies, he became overwhelmed with a sense of grief, as if it had been his own family that had been killed. The empathy he felt for their deaths released a strange sensation of pure joy. He instinctively moved into a yoga position and entered into a trance.⁶⁶

At the time, he was unaware of why these feelings were aroused. But as an adult he came to realize that what he was experiencing was a moment that transcended earthly desires. Although it would have to wait until the late nineteenth century before the proper words could be put together to explain the empathic state of mind, the young Gautama learned its importance. Perhaps this sense of disinterested compassion was the way toward human enlightenment.⁶⁷

Before this time, traditional yoga was based on the principle of withdrawal from the suffering around one by renouncing life and becoming an ascetic. Gautama reasoned that the yoga tradition took humanity the wrong way and needed to be reversed. By becoming mindful and attuned to others people's suffering and developing a distinctive sense

of compassion, one could find the way to enlightenment. Instead of fighting against life by repressing and renouncing it, one needed to engage life and find meaning by one's universal connection to and deep feelings for others.

His yoga meditations enfolded in four stages. In the first stage, one becomes attuned to extending friendship to every human being. In the second stage, one learns to experience other people's suffering and pain as if it were one's own. In the third stage, one experiences "sympathetic joy" in the happiness of others. In the final stage, one becomes so immersed in universal compassion toward all other living beings that he transcends the pleasures and pains of life and experiences a sense of equanimity toward others—this is the stage of universal, disinterested compassion.⁶⁸

Like today's object-relations theorists and philosophers of embodied experience, Buddha taught that the idea of an autonomous self was an illusion that leads to desires that can never be met. Our identities, he believed, are always made up of the relationships we have with others. If we are the sum total of the relationships that make us up, then "loving thy neighbor as thy self" is tautological and descriptive rather than prescriptive. The key to enlightenment is putting away the misguided notion that there is an "I" and realizing that there are only many unique "we's." If one begins to change one's frame of reference regarding the nature of self-awareness and individual identity and sees it as being made up of empathic relationships, then ego-driven libidinal desires become less important and even irrelevant to a fully lived embodied existence.

THE ENTROPIC DECLINE OF HYDRAULIC CIVILIZATION

The vast hydraulic empires of the Middle East, India, and China gave rise to a great leap forward in human consciousness and the first bloom of universal empathic sentiment. But in the end, they were unable to escape the verity of the Second Law of Thermodynamics. A strong body of research into the rise and fall of hydraulic civilizations has

of the critical questions in the modern era has been which of the two—feeling or thinking—is the most relevant to understanding “human nature.” How do the two modes interact? Is one a better measure of consciousness than the other? The era of ideological consciousness is all about the ideological struggle between two competing ideas of which mental activity is the authentic window to “the soul” and which is only auxiliary or, worse, a distraction or impediment.

Enlightenment philosophers were at odds on the question. John Locke, as we already noted, took the view that bodily sensations travel to the brain and there the mind organizes them into ideas and rational modes of action. In other words, our mind tells us how to feel. Hume disagreed. He argued that our feelings create our ideas.¹ We first feel things and then abstract them into categories—like, love, hate, desire—and then use the categories as metaphors for interpreting like-minded experiences.

The philosophers of the early modern era were, with but a few exceptions, inclined to the more rational approaches to defining human nature. The novelists, playwrights, and poets, however, were more interested in plumbing the emotional recesses of the human psyche and spirit. They found plenty of material for their stories, as a newly emerging bourgeoisie became enthralled with its own individuality and more curious about the workings of human emotions.

The growing interest in expressing one’s feelings was, to some extent, a reaction to the strict asceticism of Calvinist theology and the detached rationalism of the Enlightenment philosophers. In many ways, the ascetic Calvinist reformers and the rational Enlightenment philosophers shared much in common. They both were dedicated to finding certainty in the universe. For the Protestant reformers, certainty was to be found in the theology of “election” and God’s grace. For the Enlightenment philosophers, it was to be found in the certainty of the laws of physics that govern the movements of the universe. They were united in the repudiation of feelings and emotions, which the religious reformers viewed as depraved and the Enlightenment philosophers saw as irrational.

The ascetic Calvinists, dedicated to improving their calling, and the

Enlightenment philosophers, equally dedicated to the task of bringing rational principles of organization to a fledging capitalist marketplace and the growing bureaucracies of national governments helped create a new cosmological narrative that would govern Europe, America, and much of the world in the nineteenth century. The new “man” of the new age would be alone with his God, alone in the marketplace, and alone in the new urbanized culture, but armed with reason so that he might efficiently navigate a mechanistic universe operated by rational laws of physics, buoyed by faith that eternal salvation awaited him in the next world or, at least, that a material utopia lay just ahead on Earth.

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

The severe asceticism and austere rationality did not go unchallenged. A powerful countermovement, first evidenced in what historians call the “Age of Sentimentalism” in the eighteenth century and later in the “Romantic Era” in the early nineteenth century, reared up, creating a countervailing narrative grounded in an outpouring of feelings and emotions. It was from the bowels of these countermovements that a second great empathic surge emerged in the early modern era, which would deepen and expand the empathic swell that began with the humanists in the sixteenth century at the tail end of the Middle Ages.

The newfound interest in emotions can be seen in the changing definition of the word “sensible,” which originally referred to one’s perceptiveness and the ability to reflect. By the eighteenth century, it was increasingly used in literary works to refer to feelings and one’s ability to express refined emotions, as in the word “sensibility.”

Although schoolchildren are instructed that the eighteenth century in Europe and America was the Age of Reason, that only describes part of the story. The century was far more than that. It became the playing field for a grand tug of war between reason and emotion as two very different social movements vied to become the new narrative for a secular age. The author Louis Bredvold makes the point that

[w]e no longer accept . . . that the eighteenth century was an age of prose and reason; we are well aware that it was also an age of sentiment and that more tears were probably shed both in literature and in real life in that century than in the nineteenth.²

The late British barrister and philosopher Owen Barfield observed that the individual during this period lived an “imaginative double life,” one caught up in “the order and reason of the moral and material universe” and the other in “sensibility in the little universe of himself.”³

The disenchantment of the world brought on by the cold analytical logic of human reason was met head-on by what sociologist Colin Campbell calls “the re-enchantment of experience.”⁴ The author Eleanor Sickels defines sentimentalism as “the doctrine or practice of cultivating—and expressing—the emotions for their own sake.”⁵

Though emotions cut a wide swath, the sentimentalists more narrowly viewed the emotions associated with tenderness, caring, and compassion as cardinal. Whereas the Calvinist stoics and the heroes of chivalric romances were admired for keeping a stiff upper lip, the new bourgeois sentimentalists were applauded and elevated in esteem for shedding a tear at a moment’s notice and expressing their vulnerabilities in countless ways. The French dramatist Louis-Sébastien Mercier quipped that “[w]e must judge the soul of every man by the degree of emotion he displays in the theatre.”⁶

The glorification of emotional vulnerability, to the point of public spectacle, was a phenomenon never before seen in any culture, at any previous time in human history. Sickels describes the over-the-top sensibility of the new Man of Feeling.

He is exquisitely attuned to the slightest touch of joy or pain either in himself or in another. He is capable of swooning with joy or dying of a broken heart, or rejoicing in the good fortune of a rival or weeping over the sad tale from the antipodes or the death of a pet mouse. If poetically

inclined—as he usually is—he may write love elegies, not only about Negroes, whom he does not understand, but even about a turtle-dove who dies of a broken heart, or a nightingale who has lost her mate.⁷

While it’s easy to poke fun at the specter of grown men weeping or jumping for joy at the drop of a hat, underneath the emotional excesses is the incredible change that was taking place in the human psyche, especially among males in the middle and upper middle classes. The very fact that the virtuous and admired male was increasingly judged by his vulnerability was an extraordinary turn of history. What’s more important, the emotional outpouring, expressed both in social discourse and in the literature of the period, is geared primarily to the concern for the plight of others. The British academic Sir Brian Vickers described sensibility as

an ideal sensitivity to—and spontaneous display of—virtuous feelings, especially those of pity, sympathy, benevolence, of the open heart as opposed to the prudent mind.⁸

To be sure, the new sensibility came with its own emotional baggage. As the movement became fashionable, many an individual became overly concerned that they were not expressing the appropriate level of emotional solidarity and would question their own emotional deficit or, worse, feign emotional exuberance for fear of social ostracization. Lady Louisa Stuart, after reading Henry Mackenzie’s *The Man of Feeling*, confided that she was “secretly afraid lest she should not cry enough to gain the credit of proper sensibility.”⁹ Campbell points out that, for others, emotional catharsis became pleasurable in and of itself, making it more of a hedonistic experience.¹⁰

Still, it would be hard to exaggerate the importance of a public outpouring of sentiment. By legitimizing such feeling in the social arena, millions of individuals took a new cue on what it means to be a human being and ran with it. They began to dig deep into their own psyches

I know I am deathless,
I know . . . I shall not pass like a child's carlacue cut with
a burnt stick at night.⁶³

Nussbaum makes the point that “to teach that death is not really a loss, or not really death, is to undercut the entire attitude toward eroticism and loss that the poetry, at its finest, has been promoting.”⁶⁴

SCHOPENHAUER'S TOUR DE FORCE

If there was an epiphany in the Romantic movement, a single moment that captured the tenor of the times, it was the publication of an essay on morality by Arthur Schopenhauer. The essay was written in response to a contest sponsored by the Royal Danish Society of Scientific Studies in 1837, offering a prize for the best essay on the question:

Are the source and foundation of morals to be looked for in an idea of morality lying immediately in consciousness (or conscience) and in the analysis of the other fundamental moral concepts springing from that idea, or are they to be looked for in a different ground of knowledge?⁶⁵

Schopenhauer sent in his submission in 1839. His was the only entry. Nonetheless, he was denied the prize. The Royal Danish Society said he had failed to understand the question. But that was only a subterfuge. Their real reason for denying him the prize became clear later on in their explanation. Schopenhauer had dared to suggest, against all the prevailing wisdom of the time, that compassion, not pure reason, was the basis of morality and that emotions and feelings animated the compassionate instinct. Sheer heresy. In a last but telling rebuke, the jurors expressed their displeasure at the abusive manner in which Schopenhauer treated “several distinguished philosophers of recent times.”⁶⁶ Although they didn't mention specific names, they had Immanuel Kant in mind. Schopenhauer savaged Kant, belittling

his purely rational-based, prescriptive ethics as intellectual fantasy, out of touch with the way moral behavior unfolds in the real world. Like Hume, Schopenhauer believed that reason is the slave of the passions.

Recall Kant's categorical imperative mentioned in Chapter 5. First, “act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law,” and second, “act in such a way that you treat humanity whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end and never really as a means to an end.”⁶⁷ While at first glance, Kant's categorical imperative would seem to posit a secular version of the Golden Rule and be closely aligned with the empathic impulse, in reality it suffers from the same moral deficit as the earlier religiously and philosophically oriented maxims. Both view human emotions as an inadequate basis for morality and believe that people should treat others as they would be treated out of obedience to God's commands, in the first instance, and out of duty to reason in the second instance. Left behind is any heartfelt connection to another's plight as if it were one's own and the desire to comfort them because of a felt understanding of one's common humanity.

Schopenhauer finds Kant's idea that moral laws exist a priori and are knowable “independent of all inner and outer experience ‘resting simply on concepts of pure reason’” without any empirical basis.⁶⁸ He pointed out that Kant rejected the very idea that morality might be bound up in consciousness and connected to natural feelings “peculiar to human nature,” which would give morality an empirical grounding. Kant is very clear on this point. In the *Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals*, he writes that moral law

must not be sought in man's nature (the subjective) or in the circumstances of the world (the objective) . . . here nothing whatever can be borrowed from knowledge relating to man, i.e., from anthropology . . . indeed we must not take it into our heads to try to derive the reality of our moral principle from the particular constitution of human nature.⁶⁹

What we are left with, argued Schopenhauer, is an ethics that exists a priori of human experience and which is “entirely abstract, wholly insubstantial, and likewise floating about entirely in air.”⁷⁰

So, if morality is not found in human nature but, rather, exists a priori and independent of human nature, what compels someone to be moral? Kant says one acts in a morally responsible way because of “[t]he feeling that it is incumbent on man to obey the moral law . . . from a sense of *duty*, not from *voluntary inclination*.” Kant specifically dismisses feelings as a basis for morality.

Feelings of compassion and of tenderhearted sympathy would even be a nuisance to those thinking on the right lines, because they would throw into confusion their well-considered maxims and provoke the desire to be released from these, and to be subject only to legislative reason.⁷¹

Schopenhauer finds Kant’s categorical imperative unpersuasive. Human beings simply don’t act in a disinterested, moral way, because of a duty to uphold an a priori moral code. Unless, that is, there is some reward or punishment attached. On a closer examination of Kant’s categorical imperative, Schopenhauer concluded that it sounded an awful lot like a theological ethics absent God’s presence. After all, the Abrahamic religions are based on God’s Ten Commandments, an a priori moral code handed down by God that exists independent of human nature but is expected to be obeyed because God wills it.

Schopenhauer argues that the moral code that accompanies theological consciousness is purely prescriptive. If human nature is “fallen,” as the Abrahamic religions suggest, then there is no moral basis within an individual’s being that would predispose him to do the morally right thing. God’s commandments, therefore, are a prescriptive device telling human beings that this is the way they “ought” to behave if they are to be rewarded by God’s grace and not punished by his wrath. But if there is nothing in the biological nature of a human being that would predispose him to be morally good, then why would he choose to do

so out of pure duty to some a priori existing moral code, as Kant suggests, especially when there is no reward for doing so or punishment for not.

What Schopenhauer is really saying here is that Kant is attempting to offer a moral defense for the Age of Reason using a prescriptive device borrowed from the Age of Faith. In the end, concludes Schopenhauer, Kant fails to show how reason alone, as an abstract idea, can be the basis of a moral ethic.

The question then becomes whether there is any other source within the human animal itself that might be the basis of morality. Can we describe some quality of human behavior that predisposes people to be moral so that we don’t run the risk of having to slip from what is to what ought to be—the famous is/ought gap? If we can’t find such a predisposition burrowed deep in the nature of human beings, then the only way to save morality is to journey back to an earlier theological consciousness and view morality as always prescriptive and never descriptive.

After deconstructing Kant’s categorical imperative, Schopenhauer offers a detailed description of moral behavior that he argues is embedded in the very sinew of human nature—with the qualification that it needs to be brought out and nurtured by society if it is to be fully realized. He argues that “compassion” is at the core of our human nature. Here’s how he describes the phenomenon. In feeling compassion for another,

I suffer directly with him, I feel *his* woe just as I ordinarily feel only my own; and, likewise, I directly desire his weal in the same way I otherwise desire my own. . . . At every moment we remain clearly conscious that *he* is the sufferer, not *we*; and it is precisely in *his* person, not in ours, that we feel the suffering, to our grief and sorrow. We suffer *with* him and hence *in* him; we feel his pain as *his*, and do not imagine that it is ours.⁷²

In this single statement, Schopenhauer becomes the first person in history to clearly define the empathic process. All that is missing is the

term itself. But he goes further, describing not only the mental acrobatics involved in an empathic extension but also the action that naturally flows from it—in other words, the moral component. The compassionate predisposition, when fixed on someone's immediate plight, leads to

the immediate *participation*, independent of all ulterior considerations, primarily in the *suffering* of another, and thus in the prevention or elimination of it; for all satisfaction and all well-being and happiness consist in this.⁷³

Schopenhauer's description of compassion was broader than the way the term was used at the time. What he really described is the empathic process, within which compassion is the action component. Schopenhauer viewed compassion as the basis of all morality, although he admitted that he could not explain its psychological origins. He referred to it as the "great mystery of ethics."⁷⁴ The physiological and psychological basis would remain a mystery until the twentieth century and the birth of psychological consciousness.

Although the origins of man's capacity for empathy was a mystery to Schopenhauer, the teleology was clear. By feeling another's plight as if it were our own and by extending a hand to comfort and support them in their struggle to persevere and prosper, we recognize the unifying thread that connects each of us to the other and to all of life on Earth. Schopenhauer writes that

[i]n the last resort, it is this knowledge to which every appeal to gentleness, leniency, loving-kindness, and mercy instead of justice, is directed. For such an appeal is a reminder of that respect in which we are all one and the same entity.⁷⁵

THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT was more than a philosophical, literary and artistic movement. The ideas had consequences. The period from 1790 to 1848 was marked by social activism on a wide front. The new activism went far beyond the traditional charitable activities associated

with religious practices, to include social engagement in a fledgling civil society.

By the time the Romantic era had peaked in the European revolutions of 1848, fundamental changes had taken place in the conventions of marriage, family relations, and the raising of children. The first civil society organizations to address the problems of the poor were created—the Friendly Societies. The cooperative movement was launched, providing an alternative business model based on cooperation rather than competition, and the first societies to prevent cruelty to animals were formed.

ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

The Romantic movement's most enduring impact was on romance itself. The idea of companionate marriage based on affection, first popularized in the seventeenth century, was ratcheted up in intensity to include romantic love. Much of the impetus for this radical new approach to mate selection came from the widespread popularity of the new genre of romance novels, which dramatically changed expectations among young people of what they wanted out of a relationship. Marriage, which for eons of history was an economic enterprise, and which in the preceding two centuries had become a companion enterprise, was quickly becoming what British sociologist Anthony Giddens called an "emotional enterprise."⁷⁶

The very idea of a man and woman entering into an "intimate" relationship was revolutionary. It is here at the most basic level of human relationships that the democratic spirit began to have its first real impact. Romance, after all, is entered into willingly, by choice. One cannot force another person's affection. In this sense, romance brings with it a certain sense of equality between the sexes. It's probably fair to say that the notion of gender equality began with the invention of romance. Equal participation in romantic courtship prepared the way for the demand for equal participation in the political arena in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham was the first to raise the question of compassion toward animals in a celebrated 1780 essay. Bentham suggested that “the question is not, can they reason? nor can they talk? but can they suffer?” Bentham compared the plight of domestic animals to that of slaves and said he hoped the day would come when “the rest of animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withholden from them but by the hand of tyranny.”⁹⁹

Bentham’s words found a welcome audience among the early visionaries of the Romantic era. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) was established in Britain in 1824. Other animal anticruelty organizations started to appear across Britain. These organizations began to educate the public on showing greater compassion for wild and domestic animals and lobbied for legislation to protect animals against human cruelty. The RSPCA and other groups also opened up the first veterinary hospitals and shelters to take care of abandoned and lost animals. In 1842, the term “vegetarian” was coined and the Vegetarian Society—the first of its kind—was founded in Britain in 1847.¹⁰⁰ Similar organizations began to pop up on the Continent and North America.

It’s hard to exaggerate exactly how extraordinary the idea of animal compassion was at the time. Except for the kind utterances of Saint Francis of Assisi in the medieval era, never before had human beings coalesced around a movement on behalf of other species. Many of the early advocates of animal protection were active in the antislavery and early women’s suffrage movements, as well as in child labor reforms. In the United States, Horace Greeley, a firebrand antislavery advocate, as well as prominent women’s rights advocates like Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, Amelia Bloomer, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were vegetarians and outspoken in their defense of animals.¹⁰¹ These men and women were the harbingers of a universalizing empathic process that would come of age in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

As increasing numbers of urban middle-class and working people began to feel the pain of a harsh new industrial order, they became more sensitive to the struggles of others, including other species. We

have to remember that at the time these animal protection groups came on the scene, the abuse and torture of animals was quite common. Cats were routinely set on fire, dogs, roosters, and other animals were made to fight to their deaths in sporting arenas, and horses were savagely beaten.

Dick Martin’s Act, named after a member of the British Parliament who introduced the first animal anticruelty statute, was passed by Parliament in 1822 and amended in 1833 and 1835. The legislation prohibited starving or beating cattle, baiting and fighting of dogs, bulls, bears, and cocks, and placed restrictions on the length of confinement in slaughterhouse yards. Similar legislation was passed in New York State in 1829 and in Massachusetts in 1836.¹⁰²

The animal protection movement is a poignant example of the tremendous impact the Romantic movement had on changing the consciousness of the public. There is probably no other similar period in history when the empathic sensibility took such a giant leap forward in the human psyche and made such impressive inroads in transforming private life, social conventions, and public policies.

What made the Romantic era unique within the context of the evolutionary history of empathic consciousness is the great stress placed on what Rousseau, and later Wordsworth and Whitman, called the “Sentiment of Being.” The Romantics argued that at the core of being there is an authentic self that is pure in nature, although corruptible by society. Lionel Trilling makes the point that authenticity is not to be confused with sincerity, which is being true to one’s social self. Authenticity runs deeper—it is, in the words of Trilling, a “primitive” strength that is continually compromised by society. Maintaining one’s core authenticity, for Rousseau and the Romantics, required a life of personal suffering and constant attention and sympathy to the plight of others. Only the alienated could enter into this world. Sartre, the French existential philosopher of the mid-twentieth century, defined the sentiment of being as the place where

each of us finds himself as well as the others. The common place belongs to everybody and it belongs to me; in me, it

and those of others. One hundred years after Freud psychoanalyzed himself, becoming the first psychoanalyst, millions of people around the world regularly engage in some form of personal psychological counseling on a regular basis.

As is so often the case in history, those regarded as founders of a new way of thinking turn out, in hindsight, to be more reformers of the conventional wisdom they are challenging than trailblazers of a revolutionary new paradigm. Certainly in retrospect, Freud appears less of a revolutionary than a reconstructionist. Like the rational architects of the Enlightenment, he believed that sexuality, the core of corporeal existence, was “animal like”—a toxic brew of unpredictable, explosive, and aggressive drives that needed to be repressed in the service of rational human development. Yet by opening up the realm of sexuality to public scrutiny and personal introspection, he unwittingly raised the profile of sensuality, sensibility, affection, nurturing, and intimacy—all of which share a relationship with sexuality. This was the Achilles’ heel that allowed the object relations and attachment theorists to kick open the door to a different interpretation of human nature—one centered on the biological predisposition for companionship, in which empathic expression, rather than pent-up sexual aggression, becomes the driving force in infant and child development.

We’ve already looked at the impact the object relations and attachment theorists had on redirecting the theory and practice of psychology to an embodied empathic view of human nature. There was, however, a parallel current that shared common ground with the object relations and attachment schools of thought, many of whose leading lights were either influenced by the central tenets or at least supportive of the general approach to human nature, child development, and adult therapeutic counseling.

GROUP THERAPY AND SELF-HELP GROUPS

While Freud’s disciples—particularly Adler, Rank, Jung, and Reich—were battling with each other to revise his ideas and even challenge

some of his central tenets and behaviorists like Watson were challenging the Freudians with their own views, a movement of a very different kind began to emerge within the field of psychology. Its essential assumption, like that of the attachment theorists, was that an individual’s identity is a composite of the relationships that make up his or her own unique life experiences. In other words, we each exist in relation to the other. David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson put it this way in their book *Cooperation and Competition: Theory and Research*. They write:

From the moment we are born to the moment we die, relationships are the core of our existence. We are conceived within relationships, are born into relationships, and live our lives within relationships.⁷¹

And because we are, at our core, deeply social animals whose primary drive is for companionship and belonging, affection, and nurturance within a community, the best way to address mental health issues is not in isolation, on the couch, or in the laboratory, but rather in intimate group engagement—or group therapy.

Interestingly, group therapy began not with psychologists or psychiatrists but with a chance meeting between a New York stockbroker and a surgeon in Akron, Ohio, in 1935. Bill Wilson was a recovering alcoholic, while Dr. Bob Smith was a drunk. Bob, like virtually all alcoholics at the time, believed that his alcoholism reflected a moral lapse. Bill convinced him otherwise, explaining that alcoholism is a mental and physical disease and that it can be cured. That simple fact helped Bob toward recovery.

The insight led to the creation of Alcoholics Anonymous, the first self-help group. AA was based on the idea that the best way to treat the disease is for recovering alcoholics and active alcoholics to come together in intimate group settings, share their stories, and help each other toward recovery. Although the recovery process eventually evolved into a twelve-step program, the central driving force that made recovery work was the empathic engagement between recovering and

active alcoholics. By sharing their plights openly with one another, they were able to create the social trust that allowed the members to counsel and care for one another and facilitate recovery. As word of the remarkable success rate of AA quickly spread, so too did the movement. By 1955, the movement claimed more than two million members.⁷²

AA bridged the gap between the object relationship theorists and behavioralists by acknowledging the critical relational and emotional aspects of social well-being and the important role that empathic engagement plays in recovery, while at the same time creating a twelve-step program that contained elements of behavioral conditioning.

At the same time that AA was getting off the ground, psychologists were beginning to use group intervention techniques in psychotherapy. The original impetus was the large number of psychological casualties in World War II, people suffering from traumatic stress disorders that overwhelmed the limited treatment capacity of government psychologists.

A number of psychologists, including Carl Rogers, John Rawlings, and William Sargant in the United States, and Eric Trist in Britain, began to see patients in group settings. Their work built off of earlier efforts dating back to the 1920s. Alfred Adler, who was one of Freud's leading disciples, began using "collective therapy" with adults and children in his child guidance clinics. Trigant Burrow, one of the founders of the American Psychoanalytic Association, began experimenting with bringing patients and family members together in what he called "group analysis." Unlike Freud, who believed that mental illness is essentially intra-psychic in nature—although not without cultural feedback—Burrow believed that mental illness is bound up in one's social interactions and relationships and, therefore, requires a group therapeutic setting if mental health is to be restored.⁷³

The most innovative of the group therapy approaches was psychodrama, the brainchild of Jacob L. Moreno. Psychodrama as a form of group therapy started with premises that were quite alien to the Freudian worldview. Nonetheless, Moreno's influence in shaping psychological consciousness in the twentieth century was considerable. Moreno, who

was both a psychologist and a sociologist, believed, like the Romantics, that the nature of human beings is to be creative and that living a creative life is key to human health and well-being. But he also believed that creativity is rarely a solitary process—a work of genius—but, rather, something that is brought out by social intercourse. He relied heavily on theatrical techniques, including role-playing and improvisation, as a means to promote creativity and generate social trust. His most important theatrical tool was what he called role reversal—asking participants to take on another's persona. The act of pretending "as if" one were in another's skin was designed to help bring out the empathic impulse and to hone it to higher levels of expression.

Moreno argued that the human imagination is tapped into by empathic engagement. It is by imagining and experiencing the feelings and thoughts of others as if they were one's own that one unleashes personal creativity. But he didn't regard empathy simply as an instrumental means to advance the individual creative spirit. Rather, he believed that empathy was at the very core of what it means to be a fully aware and responsible human being. That awareness can't help but spark one's "creative faculties," which is just another way of saying one's "self-development." The more empathic one is, the more self-developed one becomes.

Moreno was so taken by the theatrical setting as a way to promote psychic health, greater tolerance of others, and a more benign society, in part, because it provided a safe play space to explore human emotions, become more introspective and reflective, and develop more sophisticated cognitive skills. In the psychodrama environment, one could create any kind of reality imaginable and test wholly new empathic pathways. Moreno called this expanded universe "surplus reality."⁷⁴

Moreno believed that mobilizing people's awareness—their physical movements, feelings, emotions, and cognitive responses—in a dramatic encounter is likely to lead to greater insight and more successful reengagement back into the community of social relations than endless talking about one's childhood memories to a psychiatrist while reclining on the couch.

He also butted heads with the orthodox notion that controlling one's

emotions was more important than expressing them. While Freudian therapists regarded emotional outbursts with alarm, referring to such behavior as “acting out,” Moreno chose to harness emotional potential in a positive manner. His psychodramas put a great deal of emphasis on “emotional catharsis,” believing that such moments provide a means of resolving a long-festering conflict while affording at least a temporary sense of transcendence and a feeling of connectedness.⁷⁵

Finally, Moreno fine-tuned the role-playing experience to allow participants the opportunity to enmesh their affective and cognitive responses into higher stages of resolution. To accomplish this goal, Moreno asked participants to engage in role-playing on three levels: thinking of oneself as an actor in a play, remaining aware that one has a life separate from the one he is playing in a therapeutic setting, and taking directions from the psychotherapists and other players on how he might improve his performance in the role. By splitting his attention into three realities, the participant can continually hone his reflective capacity, get feedback, and adjust his cognitive response more accurately to his emotional state.

Moreno was convinced that psychodrama provided a pedagogy that was applicable to every kind of human setting and, if properly applied and widely employed, could not only help restore individuals to good mental health but also improve the society at large. Psychiatrist Dr. Adam Blatner observes that “skillfulness in communications, interpersonal problem-solving, and self-awareness” that psychodrama teaches are the foundation of “psychological literacy” and argues that

competence in such skills is becoming as necessary for adaptation in a rapidly changing world as becoming basically literate—knowing how to read and write—was in the last century.⁷⁶

Moreno’s ideas would play an important role in the “outing” of the human psyche and the development of psychological consciousness in the twentieth century. His influence would extend even further, affecting the transformation from psychological to dramaturgical

consciousness in the last two decades of the twentieth century and the opening decade of the current century. (Dramaturgical consciousness will be examined in Chapter 14.)

At the same time that Moreno was advancing his revolutionary new ideas about human nature and experimenting with the new pedagogy for psychotherapy and social psychology, Max Wertheimer, a Czech émigré to the United States, began challenging the central thesis of the two main psychological schools of thought. He took aim at introspection and behaviorism as mental tools for understanding the unconscious as well as consciousness. Wertheimer argued that both approaches to the workings of the human mind are reductionist in nature—that is, attempting to understand the whole by analyzing the sum of the parts. Recording data about elementary units like sensations and stimuli and then trying to build up a model of how the human mind functions by assembling all of the individual components that make up the physiology is doomed to failure.

The new line of argument goes like this:

There are wholes, the behavior of which is not determined by that of their individual elements, but where the part[s] are themselves determined by the intrinsic nature of the whole.⁷⁷

Wertheimer used the German word *Gestalt*—which roughly translates into “unifying whole”—to explain the importance of this new approach to the study of phenomena, which requires viewing from above rather than building up from below. Wertheimer argued that his methodology was equally applicable to physiology as well as psychology. He observed, for example, that the cells that make up an organism are parts of the whole and their excitations only make sense within the context of the workings of the entire organism and unified system.

Gestalt psychology reinforced the ideas of Moreno while providing a philosophical frame of reference. Wertheimer made the point that

[w]hen a group of people work together it rarely occurs . . . that they constitute a mere sum of independent Egos. Instead

Walters revealed in her autobiography that she had secretly had a serious affair with a black senator, Edward Brooke of Massachusetts, back in the 1970s. She said she was warned about the relationship becoming public at the time, for fear it would create a backlash and hurt both of their careers. Today few young people would give such a relationship a second thought. Many prominent Americans are in black-white marriages, including former U.S. Senator Carol Moseley Braun, civil rights leader Julian Bond, former defense secretary William Cohen, and actor Robert De Niro.

Children of interracial marriages are becoming commonplace. Barack Obama and Tiger Woods immediately come to mind. There are more than 3 million interracial children in the United States.¹¹⁶

Interracial marriages are extending the empathic bond into domains that would have been beyond the realm of possibility just thirty years ago. Stanford University sociologist Michael Rosenfeld observes that “the racial divide is a fundamental divide . . . but when you have the ‘other’ in your own family, it’s hard to think of them as ‘other’ anymore.”¹¹⁷ More than one in five American adults—22 percent—say that one of their close relatives is married to someone of a different race.¹¹⁸ When individuals of two different races or, for that matter, different ethnic groups, come together in marriage, they bring with them all of their relatives’ and their relatives’ friends and associates as well. The circle of “the we” is widened, exposing many more people to each other. As populations become more culturally and racially diverse, the familial sphere becomes a multicultural, multiracial space, a common ground for discovering each other’s shared humanity.

EMPATHIZING WITH OUR FELLOW SPECIES

The profound change in attitudes concerning women, homosexuals, and the disabled, and the phenomenal growth in interreligious, interethnic, and interracial dating and marriage patterns is impressive, by any standard, and a clear sign that the traditional boundaries separating people are beginning to give way to a more cosmopolitan sensibility

and, with it, the extension of empathic consciousness to wholly new domains.

The expansion of empathic consciousness, however, doesn’t stop at the last outpost of human considerations. A new movement has emerged, with the potential to extend human empathy beyond the human race, to our fellow creatures. The notion of granting recognition to other creatures is controversial and regarded as cutting edge by some and absurd by others. Stretching human imagination to regard other species as we do our own has forced open a profound debate about our relationship to the other beings that inhabit the planet.

Concern for the welfare and protection of animals came of age in the nineteenth century with the creation of the Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in England and the United States. The modern environmental movement came in on the tail of these early reforms at the beginning of the twentieth century. Protecting natural habitats and preserving species was an integral part of the Progressive-era movement to establish more efficient and rational means to manage natural resources. The mainstream environmental movement, even today, is to a great extent guided by a utilitarian ethos dedicated to maintaining a proper store of natural resources for human purposes. Land easement and conservation practices are designed to ensure a reserve of flora and fauna for future human-development needs.

The creation of the great national parks in the United States—Yellowstone, Yosemite, Acadia, Glacier—in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was justified by the government as a means of preserving the country’s largesse of natural resources. The rationale, however, included an aesthetic sensibility as well—to conserve the beauty and majesty of America’s great natural monuments for enjoyment and recreation.

The modern ecology movement that was spawned in the late 1960s and officially launched with the Earth Day celebration in 1970 introduced the idea of acknowledging the intrinsic value of species, along with their utilitarian value. Battles were waged from the 1970s onward over the question of preserving rare species versus economic development. The struggle to save the now-infamous northern spotted owl

against the threat posed by clear-cutting in the Pacific Northwest created a national controversy over the worth of a single species versus the loss of employment of thousands of loggers. Similarly, whaling practices that threaten the extinction of the world's great sea mammals put Norwegian and Japanese whalers at odds with environmental activists and have stirred global public debate.

But generally in those debates, the environmental discussion has centered on the question of the interconnectedness of ecosystems' dynamics and the need to preserve species' habitats in order to ensure the proper functioning of the whole. Even discussions of the intrinsic values of species had less to do with their existential right to exist and more with the instrumental role they play in the ecological scheme of things. That's not to say that the love of nature has not also been a prime motivating theme. A younger generation of environmentalists feel a deep affinity to nature—what E. O. Wilson calls *biophilia*—and a passion to commune with their fellow creatures. Still, in public policy debates, the rational utilitarian arguments have figured far more prominently. What's new and revolutionary is the sudden and powerful emergence of the animal rights movement—a force that was virtually nonexistent forty years ago.

My wife, Carol Grunewald, a longtime animal rights activist, makes the telling point that unlike the conventional environmental organizations, whose frame of reference is more abstract and deals with the well-being of whole species, animal-rights advocates begin with a deep emotional commitment to alleviate the suffering of individual creatures, whom they regard as having the same right to exist and flourish as themselves. Although the animal-rights activists acknowledge that the rights of other creatures differ in degree and kind from human rights, they are steadfast in the belief that their individual journey is no less significant and meaningful than our own.

For a long time these two movements shared little common ground and were like two ships passing in the night. Even today there is very little interaction between the two, despite the fact that the animal-rights movement is becoming increasingly involved in broader environmental

issues, as activists are realizing that the suffering of individual animals can't be divorced from the macroenvironmental policies that affect their well-being. For their part, the environmentalists have also begun to give some acknowledgment to the rights of individual creatures. International organizations like Greenpeace, for example, engage in antiwhaling campaigns and protest the inhumane mass slaughters of seal pups in Canada each year that speak to the suffering of individual animals.

The divide between the environmentalists and animal-rights people is illustrative of the difference between an older ideological consciousness, with its emphasis on rationality, utility, and efficiency, and an emerging biosphere consciousness grounded in personal participation, emotional identification, and empathic extension.

Emotional affiliation with animals has a long history. But it was in the twentieth century that the new medium of film brought millions of people into an intimate relationship with animals, albeit vicariously. In 1946, the novel *The Yearling*, which was published in 1938 and won the Pulitzer Prize a year later, was made into a film and released to audiences around the world.

The story revolves around the intimate friendship between a young, backwoods youth and an orphaned fawn and the cruel realities of survival in the frontier, which forced him to choose between his family's security and the fawn's life.

Millions of moviegoers wept in empathy with both the boy's plight and his animal companion's fate. Sharing such experiences en masse, in public places, helped legitimize newfound feelings of empathy for other creatures.

Walt Disney productions exploited similar themes, especially in animated films like *Bambi*, helping condition generations of youngsters to vicariously experience a bond of empathy with other creatures.

Critics argued that sentimentalizing and anthropomorphizing the human/animal bond not only painted an inaccurate picture of other creatures but also trivialized the harsh realities that separated the human and animal worlds—the Disneyfication of nature. True! But

such portrayals on film also awakened the empathic imagination of millions of youngsters—and adults—to the plight of other creatures, opening up a new empathic domain for human consciousness.

As it turns out, in hindsight, Disney fared better in the portrayal of animals than many of the scientific experts of the day, with their belief that animals were little more than stimulus-response mechanisms, locked into instinctual behavioral patterns and unable to learn by doing or experience feelings.

In the 1990s, a new genre of animal films like *Babe*, as well as TV channels, like Animal Planet, and popular TV programs, like *The Crocodile Hunter*, awakened the biophilia connection for millions of people.

The media interest in animals reflects the growing real-time exposure and interaction humans enjoy with other animals as companions. In the United States alone, the pet industry has burgeoned into a \$38-billion-a-year business.¹¹⁹ A total of 63 percent of American families have a dog, cat, or other nonhuman companion.¹²⁰ According to a recent survey, in upward of 69 percent of American families, companion dogs and cats sleep on the bed with their human companions each night.¹²¹

The reconnection with other animals, both through the media and in the home, has not only made people more aware of and sensitive to the plight of other species, but also more activist in their defense of other creatures. According to a 2008 Gallup Poll concerning the treatment of animals, 64 percent of the public favor “passing strict laws concerning the treatment of farm animals,” 38 percent of those polled approve of “banning sports that involve competition between animals, such as horse or dog races,” and 35 percent would like to see a ban on “all medical research on laboratory animals.” On the overarching question of animal rights, 25 percent of Americans believe that “animals deserve the exact same rights as people to be free from harm and exploitation,” while 72 percent believe “animals deserve some protection from harm and exploitation, but that it is still appropriate to use them for the benefit of humans.”¹²²

Sentiment to protect the rights of animals is even higher in the EU and has led to landmark legislation. The EU has the strictest laws

protecting farm animals in the world, and is the first government to issue a directive “that efforts must be undertaken to replace animal experiments with alternative methods.”¹²³

Nor is this just an American or European phenomenon. A survey conducted in 2005 in China, South Korea, and Vietnam, traditionally thought of as societies where animals are less well treated, found that 96 percent of the public believe “we have a moral duty to minimize suffering” of animals, and the vast majority said they favor legislation to protect animals.¹²⁴

We have to bear in mind that just fifty years ago, these opinions about the rights of other creatures barely existed in public consciousness. While a small percentage of Americans favored a minimum standard of animal-welfare protection, the vast majority would have considered the idea that animals have feelings and rights to be sheer lunacy.

In recent years, the University of Pennsylvania, Stanford, Duke, and 88 other law schools in America have introduced law courses on animal rights. The European Union has recognized in law that animals are sentient beings, with feelings and consciousness. In 2002, Germany became the first country in the world to guarantee animal rights in its constitution. In 2008, the Spanish parliament became the first national legislature in the world to prepare legislation to grant limited legal rights to the great apes—chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans.¹²⁵

A study done at Kansas State University to measure children’s empathy found that children with a high pet bond and more empathy for animals also had higher scores on empathy for other children. The researchers concluded that children exposed to animals at an early age and made partially responsible for their care were more likely to develop pro-social behavior toward peers.

Companion animals are increasingly being prescribed by therapists to help awaken empathic consciousness among troubled children. Youth detention centers have initiated programs with local humane societies to allow youth offenders in prison to help train homeless dogs and prepare them for adoption. Developing a close bond with the animals allows young teenage males, in particular, to express tenderness and care and extend empathy in ways that might be considered inappropriate among

their peers out on the streets. This newfound emotional expression often makes the difference in turning a young man from violent and aggressive behavior to more pro-social behavior.¹²⁶

The extension of empathy to include all living beings is a significant milestone for the human race. While the animal rights movement is still nascent, it is a possible harbinger of the coming Age of Empathy.

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION TO GLOBAL EMPATHY

Is it possible that the establishment of strong empathic bonds across formerly taboo human and animal domains could ripple out across the world, picking up momentum as it goes, with the potential of transforming human consciousness within just a few decades? To even suggest such a possibility just a few years ago would have been laughed off or dismissed as fantasy. While the skeptics still vastly outnumber the optimists on this score—and I'm not sure in which camp I reside—new developments in global Internet connections suggest that it might be possible to imagine a paradigmatic shift in human thought and a tipping point into global consciousness in less than a generation.

The new possibility is being raised by IT researchers at the cutting edge of social networking theory. Social networks like MySpace and Facebook, educational networks like Wikipedia, and business networks like Linux are beginning to venture into what is known as the small world theory. What they are discovering is mind-boggling in its implications.

The small world theory posits that there are only "six degrees of separation" between any two strangers on Earth. According to the theory,

if a person is one step away from each person they know and two steps away from each person who is known by one of the people they know, then everyone is an average of six "steps" away from each person on Earth.¹²⁷

In other words, every person alive today—all 6.8 billion—could be connected by only six or so acquaintances.

The small world theory, which has been part of popular folklore for eighty years, began in 1929, with the musings of a Hungarian author, Frigyes Karinthy, in a book of short stories titled *Everything Is Different*. In one story, "Chain-links," he suggested that the world was shrinking because of technological advances in travel and communications that were compressing distances, shortening durations, and connecting people in denser human networks. As a result, the characters in his short story opined that any two people in the world could be connected by five or so other acquaintances. The characters in the story go on to create an experiment to test their hypothesis.

One of us suggested performing the following experiment to prove that the population of the Earth is closer together now than they have ever been before. We should select any person from the 1.5 billion inhabitants of the Earth—anyone, anywhere at all. He bet us that, using no more than five individuals, one of whom is a personal acquaintance, he could contact the selected individual using nothing except the network of personal acquaintances.¹²⁸

Karinthy's speculation spawned a cottage industry of research among sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists studying social networks. Michael Gurevich, in a 1961 doctoral dissertation at MIT, did an empirical study on social networks. Gurevich's work was picked up by an Austrian mathematician, Manfred Kocher, who used the results of Gurevich's study to create a mathematical extrapolation of the small world theory. Kocher concluded that in a country with a population the size of the United States and without social restrictions, "it is practically certain that any two individuals can contact one another by means of at least two intermediaries."¹²⁹

The American psychologist Stanley Milgram at the City University of New York, along with Jeffrey Travers at Harvard, followed up on Gurevich's work in "network" theory in the 1960s. Milgram's studies

that in previous times property was also defined as the right not to be excluded from the use or enjoyment of something. The late University of Toronto professor Crawford Macpherson resurrects the older sense of property, the right of access to property held in common—the right to navigate waterways, walk along commonly used country lanes, and enjoy access to the public square.

While this dual notion of property still exists, the right of public access and inclusion became increasingly marginalized and diminished by the right of private ownership and exclusion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as the market economy came to dominate more and more of the social domain.

Now, says Macpherson, at least for the developed countries, interest is turning to the more expansive and deeper issue of securing a “quality of life.” Macpherson argues, in turn, that property needs to be redefined to include the “right to an *immaterial* revenue, a revenue of enjoyment of the quality of life.” He suggests that “such a revenue can only be reckoned as a right to participate in a satisfying set of social relations.”²⁷

In a collaborative economy, the right of inclusion becomes more important in establishing economic and social relationships than the right of exclusion. As we’ve seen, traditional property rights, in the form of intellectual and real property, can act as a damper on the commercial and social possibilities opened up by the new distributed communications technologies and energies that make up the operating infrastructure of a Third Industrial Revolution economy.

In a collaborative society, immaterial values assume greater importance, especially the pursuit of self-fulfillment and personal transformation. The right not to be excluded from “a full life”—the right to access—becomes the most important property value people hold. Property in the new era, argues Macpherson, “needs to become a right to participate in a system of power relations which will enable the individual to live a fully human life.”²⁸

The individual and collective struggle to secure “access rights” in the twenty-first century will likely be as significant as was the struggle to secure property rights in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

A COLLABORATIVE AND CARING WORLD

The Third Industrial Revolution, with its emphasis on distributed information, communications and energy and peer-to-peer collaboration, continues the process of greater individualization in more integrated and complex human organizations while flattening hierarchical forms of managing economic, social, and political life.

The Internet is transforming the world into a giant global public square where literally billions of people can connect, collaborate, and create value together simultaneously and in real time. It’s probably not an understatement when Tapscott and Williams claim that “the ability to pool the knowledge of millions (if not billions) of users in a self-organizing fashion demonstrates how mass collaboration is turning the new Web into something not completely unlike a global brain.”²⁹ They note that the Net generation numbers more than two billion young people who have grown up using the Internet as a collaborative medium.³⁰

Their nonhierarchical, networking way of relating to each other and the world, their collaborative nature, their interest in access and inclusion rather than autonomy and exclusion and their greater sensitivity to human diversity, predisposes the millennial generation to being the most empathic generation in history. A distributed, collaborative, non-hierarchical society can’t help but be a more empathic one.

The statistical trends outlined in Chapter 11 show that the Internet generation consistently outpaces their older cohorts when it comes to acknowledging gender equality, championing ethnic diversity, respecting the rights of minorities and previously outcast groups, and being more accepting of sexual differences, more open to marriage across racial and religious lines, and more sensitive to the rights of other creatures.

The new nonhierarchical and collaborative way of thinking among the younger generation is even beginning to slowly penetrate the interior of organizations and the management styles of some of the world’s global companies. Although the evidence of a change from hierarchical

to networked types of management is still cursory and anecdotal, it appears that a company like Cisco is not alone in encouraging a more transparent and less hierarchical approach. A growing number of companies are abandoning the old corporate pyramids and the top-down command-and-control structures favored by twentieth-century management. In their place, they are instituting networking and collaborative arrangements, in part to accommodate the new productive potential and market opportunities afforded by distributed ICT, but also, in large measure, to accommodate a younger workforce that has grown up on and is comfortable with transparent, nonhierarchical, collaborative ways of engagement.

When I was a student at the Wharton School more than forty years ago, the hierarchical approach to decision making, with its emphasis on unconditional acceptance of commands from the top and robotic feedback of efficient results from the bottom, was taken for granted. Today that style of management has become increasingly problematic because it is slow, cumbersome, and at odds with the new distributed information and communications technologies that allow for a more flat and collaborative approach that is more efficient at collecting information, solving problems, and executing market operations.

Empathic sensibility lies at the heart of the new management style. In their book *The New Leaders*, Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee examine the new empathic approach to management that is just beginning to gain traction as the global business community is forced to rethink the way it conducts business in the wake of the colossal failure and near collapse of the global capitalist economy. The simple reality is that distributed information technologies and a distributed communications and energy infrastructure are giving rise to distributed capitalism and necessitate a new type of management that is compatible with the Third Industrial Revolution.

Goleman et al. start with the importance of establishing transparency at every level of management. By transparency they have in mind not just sharing information but also expressing “an authentic openness to others about one’s feelings, beliefs, and actions.”³¹ Emotional transparency builds trust among employees and fosters collegiality and

collaboration. Being more open with one’s feelings, in turn, encourages more empathic engagement.

Goleman is unequivocal in his belief that “empathy is the sine qua non of all social effectiveness in working life” and the key to the collaborative management style of a twenty-first-century distributed capitalist economy. He writes,

Empathetic people are superb at recognizing and meeting the needs of clients, customers, or subordinates . . . They listen carefully, picking up what people are truly concerned about, and they respond on the mark. . . . Finally, in the growing global economy, empathy is a critical skill for both getting along with diverse workmates and doing business with people from other cultures.³²

Empathic sensibility, according to Goleman, becomes indispensable to managing the emerging collaborative work environment. He notes that

as the tasks of leadership become more complex and collaborative, relationship skills become increasingly pivotal. . . . [A]s organizations realize that the old functional silos—marketing over here, strategy there, compensation here—must be broken down, more leaders routinely work with their peers as part of cross-functional teams. . . . And that means establishing close and smooth relations so that everyone can share information easily and coordinate effectively.³³

Goleman et al. refer to this new empathic style of management as “affiliative” and suggest that it “represents the collaborative competence in action.”³⁴

The Columbia University Business School in New York City is one of a number of business schools that has introduced social intelligence pedagogy directly into its MBA curriculum. Its Program on Social Intelligence (PSI) “is organized around the psychological capabilities

involved in collaborating with, motivating, and leading others” and draws together faculty from the psychology department and the business school to provide experiential opportunities, both in the classroom and in the community, to develop empathic skills.³⁵

While classical economic theory states that individuals rationalize the sale of their labor power to maximize their income and profit, it turns out that most employees put a higher value on a caring boss, adding credence to the new empathic style of management. A Gallup study of more than two million employees found that workers rank “a caring boss” higher in priority than more money and benefits.³⁶ Similarly, a number of studies have shown that productivity at the workplace is positively correlated with an emotionally positive feeling about one’s colleagues.³⁷

THE NEW DREAM OF QUALITY OF LIFE

The new empathic spirit shows up most prominently in the shift in personal dreams. For a long time, the American dream, with its emphasis on personal opportunity and material success, was the gold standard to which much of the world looked for inspiration and guidance. In the twenty-first century, the emerging European dream of quality of life is beginning to attract the Net generation. Although the American dream is still the standard for many, it has lost some of its hegemony as young people turn their attention to tackling global climate change, restoring the health of the biosphere, protecting the Earth’s other species, maintaining safe communities, providing universal access to health care, ensuring a high-quality and affordable universal education, living a less materialistic and more experiential lifestyle, and creating communities rich in cultural diversity. Quality of life is a shared dream that can only be realized collaboratively. While still a minority vision, held largely by a younger middle-class generation, the dream of quality of life is gaining currency among young people around the world.

The shift in emphasis from the individual to the community’s well-being can be seen in the election of Barack Obama as president

of the United States. Although his personal life history epitomizes the American Dream, he made a critical decision early in life, just out of law school, to take a different path. As the first black president of the *Harvard Law Review*, Obama could have written his ticket and followed generations of individual Americans before him in pursuit of personal financial success. He chose instead to become a grassroots activist in the poorest section of Chicago’s South Side—in a neighborhood just blocks away from where I grew up—to improve the lot of the community.

The older American dream and the newer European dream reflect two very different ideas about human nature. The American dream puts a premium on individual autonomy and opportunity and emphasizes material self-interest as a means to secure both personal freedom and happiness. While the European dream doesn’t discount personal initiative and economic opportunity, it tends to put equal weight on advancing the quality of life of the entire society. The dream is an acknowledgment that one doesn’t thrive alone in autonomous isolation but, rather, in deep relationship to others in a shared social space. Quality of life emphasizes the common good as an important means to securing the happiness of each individual member of the community.

Quality of life of late has become an important factor in rethinking many of the central assumptions of twentieth-century economic theory. At the top of the list is the near obsession with recording the gross domestic product, or GDP. It has long been the compass for judging the well-being of America and other countries.

GDP was created by the U.S. Department of Commerce in the 1930s to provide a gauge for assessing the economy’s recovery from the Depression. The problem with GDP is that it only measures the value of the sum total of economic goods and services generated over a twelve-month period. It does not, however, distinguish between economic activity that actually improves the quality of life of the society and negative economic activity that takes away from it. Every type of economic activity is calculated in the GDP, including the building of more prisons, enlarging the police force, military spending, spending for cleaning up pollution, increased health-care costs resulting from cigarette smoking, alcohol, and obesity, as well as the advertising spent