

**ALL IS ONE :  
TOWARD A SPIRITUAL WHOLE LIFE EDUCATION  
BASED ON AN INNER LIFE CURRICULUM**

**by**

**Irene van Kessel**

**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education  
University of Toronto**

**© Copyright by Irene van Kessel 2012**

**ALL IS ONE :**  
**TOWARD A SPIRITUAL WHOLE LIFE EDUCATION**  
**BASED ON AN INNER LIFE CURRICULUM**  
**Doctor of Philosophy, 2012**  
**Irene van Kessel**  
**Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education**  
**University of Toronto**

**Abstract**

The intent of this thesis is to understand how we as educators and learners in our Western system of education can bridge and heal the fundamental principles of a constructed divide embedded in our consciousness that continues to be reproduced in our Western academy. The primary goal is to make visible this divide that is based on the intellectualization of Western education in the absence of spiritual aspirations, thus revealing the potential of spiritual transformation within the academy and our everyday lives.

In my literature-based thesis research I explored, analyzed and discussed two bodies of literature: the historical intellectualization of Western education on the one hand, and, on the other, Eastern Philosophy with the emphasis on Higher Self Yoga, African Philosophy and North American Aboriginal Spirituality. I investigated these bodies of literature employing a research paradigm that has its foundation in a spiritual ontology and epistemology. I analyzed my findings using such methodologies as appreciative inquiry, content analysis and textual analysis, including anti-colonial and indigenous knowledges theoretical frameworks.

I found that the synthesis and integration of the inner life wisdom revealed in the three philosophies is an integral component fundamental toward a whole life vision of

education, an educative vision that has the potential to serve as a catalyst to open the gates for life-enhancing change in the academy and our everyday lives.

Change implies becoming aware of our true origin, who we truly are, and what our intrinsic purpose is. Change implies becoming aware of humanity's accelerated transition toward a higher level of spiritual planetary consciousness, a spiritual evolution as an inner quest of unity with nature, the larger human community, the universe, and the divine Source itself. Change implies whole life educational processes, inclusive of the unfoldment of inner life wisdom, the authority of the human spirit, and the sense of divinity, as useful bridging work in healing the divide in our aware consciousness and our educational institutions. Whole life change needs to be the responsibility of academic education, as well our self-responsibility of realizing ourselves as citizen of the world living within one-world consciousness. All is one.

## Acknowledgements

My profound gratitude I extend to N.V. Hucknall whose inspirational thoughts and wisdom, together with her guidance and support, contributed towards the conceptual vision of this thesis.

I wish to sincerely thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Njoki Wane, for her kind understanding, guidance and support throughout while writing this thesis. Thank you, Njoki Wane for answering all those many questions that kept me focused and centered as I proceeded on the path. Thank you for your confidence and your willingness to allow my own intuition to inspire me throughout my thesis journey.

I wish to thank my supervisory committee members, Dr. Jack Miller and Dr. Jean-Paul Restoule, for bringing clarity and understanding to numerous spiritual ideas in this thesis. Thank you for your assistance, critical questions and insights in bringing this thesis to fruition. A special thank you to Dr. Rinaldo Walcott who agreed to serve as a voting committee member. My sincerest gratitude to Dr. Andrew Allen for kindly agreeing to serve as the External Examiner.

My warmest thank you to my spiritual family whose presence in my life continuously inspired me in my endeavor. Many of their inspirational comments I found truly valuable while working on this thesis.

I am also deeply grateful to my daughter R. D. van Kessel, and my son K. M. van Kessel, for their response of enthusiasm and warm-hearted support throughout this process. To my husband, K. H. van Kessel, the depth of my gratitude. His patience and love throughout contributed toward making this thesis journey so enjoyable.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to N. V. Hucknall,  
MM, MH, and H  
with love, devotion and gratitude.

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
Dedication .....	vii
Introduction .....	1
My Personal Journey: Spiritual .....	2
My Personal Journey: Academic .....	7
The Spiritual in the Academy .....	11
Toward coming Home in Spirit .....	14
The Path of this Thesis .....	15
Chapter One – Theoretical Frameworks and Methodologies .....	21
Indigenous Knowledges Framework .....	21
Anti-colonial Framework .....	25
Methodology .....	27
Appreciative Inquiry .....	28
Textual Analysis .....	30
Content Analysis .....	32
Chapter Two – The Western Intellectual Mind .....	35
The Mind .....	35
The Greek Origin .....	40
Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes .....	40
Parmenides and Anaxagoras .....	41
Pythagoras .....	41
The Sophists .....	42
Socrates .....	43
Plato .....	44
Aristotle .....	47
The Christian Worldview .....	50
The Medieval Era .....	54
Secular Humanism .....	57
The Modern Worldview .....	61
The Scientific Revolution .....	64
The Philosophic Revolution .....	68
Toward the Western world of today .....	72
Reflective Thoughts .....	81
Chapter Three – Eastern Philosophy: with the emphasis on	
Higher Self Yoga .....	86
Higher Self Yoga: a spiritual teaching given to humanity	
at this time .....	86
Spiritual Evolution .....	89

Hinduism .....	89
Buddhism .....	92
Taoism .....	95
Reflective Thoughts .....	98
Spiritual Teaching .....	99
Theosophy .....	99
Agni Yoga .....	103
Higher Self Yoga: What is It? .....	106
Whole Life Education .....	111
Spiritual Practice .....	114
Meditation .....	115
Dialoguing with the higher Self .....	117
Joy of Beauty .....	120
Reflective Thoughts .....	126
 Chapter Four – African Philosophy .....	 130
African historical philosophy .....	132
Ancient Khamitic Nubian Cosmology .....	134
Divinity of Life .....	138
African Philosophy of Life Today .....	141
Cosmic Rhythm and Order .....	144
Education .....	145
Meditation .....	147
Art, music, dance, and the joy of sacred beauty .....	148
The feminine principle and woman .....	150
Reflective Thoughts .....	154
 Chapter Five – North American Aboriginal Spirituality .....	 157
Aboriginal Worldview .....	158
Community – Place – Space .....	160
Aboriginal Creation Story .....	164
Spirit – Matter – Energy .....	169
Earth – Mother – Woman .....	172
Sun – Father .....	176
The Elders .....	177
Education .....	183
The Medicine Wheel .....	185
Vision .....	191
Dreams .....	192
Prayer .....	192
Reflective Thoughts .....	193
 Chapter Six – Reflective Analysis .....	 198
The unconscious, the archetypal, the dialectic, the participatory .....	199
Our kinship with cosmos .....	204
Toward a new spiritual planetary consciousness .....	206

The Western consciousness today .....	213
Toward a transformative future .....	216
Reflective Thoughts .....	220
Conclusion .....	223
References .....	238



## Introduction

Education is, in the fullest sense, a spiritual experience. It changes the way we experience our being in the world, ... it connects us to the cosmos and it transforms us in ways that affect our everyday relations with others and makes it possible for us to struggle and grow.

D. Carlson (in Dantley 2003 : 8).

These are truly profound words! Indeed, education in its fullest sense is a spiritual experience! Such a spiritual experience signifies a deeply meaningful vision of education that does not resonate with my own learning experiences in our Western mainstream system of higher education. Throughout my years in higher education I have come consciously aware of the intellectualization of Western education in the absence of spiritual aspirations. I have come to the critical realization that our contemporary Western mind is based upon the fundamental principles of a divide. Embedded in the consciousness of each of us and perceived to exist between the West and the East and North American Aboriginal people, this divide continues to be reproduced in our Western academy. Developed through education and socialization, it is a constructed divide in our consciousness that has become so normalized in our contemporary Western mind and way of being in the world that we have come to think and act in ways that reproduce it in our every thought, word and deed.

What is the divide that delineates the world, education and our experiences within it? What does “education... in the fullest sense” try to convey? How can we, as educators and students in higher education, bridge and heal that divide and awaken education to its fullest sense so that education can be transformed into a whole life experiential and

spiritual reality? How can we bring about such a spiritual transformation in our contemporary system of education? How can such an educative spiritual experience connect us to the cosmos and transform us in ways that affect our everyday lives? How is it that I came to explore this divide in education and my being in the world? How is it that I came to be inspired to struggle for spiritual growth?

To answer these questions I investigate the historical intellectualization of Western education on the one hand. And on the other hand, I explore Eastern Philosophy with the emphasis on Higher Self Yoga, African Philosophy and North American Aboriginal Spirituality. These constitute the divide in my thesis work. However, it is important that I begin by looking at my own personal spiritual journey.

### ***My Personal Journey: Spiritual***

I was born in the Ukraine, spent my childhood years in Germany, and as a teenager emigrated to Canada with my family. I was raised Lutheran; however, this religious tradition never resonated with my inner being. As a child I felt confused and wondered as to who I am. I began to follow my inner yearning by finding solace in the wonder of nature. I continued my academic studies. In time I became employed as legal assistant to Counsel of the Royal Commission Inquiry Into Civil Rights. I married and had two children. Throughout I continued my quest for a deeper meaning to life. I immersed myself in reading spiritual philosophies and sincerely questioned: Who am I? This questioning began to be answered when I met my spiritual teacher who introduced me to Higher Self Yoga.

Higher Self Yoga is a spiritual path to become one with the true or higher Self. The higher Self is our authentic essence, our transcendent core, it is pure consciousness,

wisdom itself. Higher Self Yoga is a spiritual path of becoming aware of our true or higher Self, awakening it, bringing it into our aware consciousness, and in so doing, becoming one with it.

My personal journey that began to come to a deeper understanding of myself and my relationship to others and all of life in all its forms, developed into a sacred spiritual path of self-discovery, self-development and self-transformation. This inward directed awareness assisted me in how to utilize my spiritual heart center, the gateway to my true or higher Self, to come to know and experience who I really am. It assisted me in how to dialogue with my own true or higher Self to resolve problems and to receive messages. It also assisted me in how to open the gates to my own imagination, intuition, inspiration and creativity to become the best I can be and to fulfill my highest potential. I came to explore, get to know and experience who I really am, from where I have come, to where I strive to return and my intrinsic purpose in life.

Experiencing who I really am signifies a spiritual journey of connecting to my inner being, and, in so doing, coming to a fuller and deeper understanding of the foundation of my existences and my role and destiny in the universe. Fundamentally, my spiritual journey betokens the broadening of my spiritual vision and the expanding of my aware consciousness that relates to the divine purpose and interconnectedness of humanity with cosmos.

Of prime significance of this spiritual journey is that I studied and practiced Eastern Philosophy, with the emphasis on Higher Self Yoga, for numerous years prior to entering and continuing my formal education. As a quest to discovering who I am, this sacred spiritual journey awakened my innate knowing and profoundly changed my own

aware consciousness. This consciousness made me aware of a limitless potential for knowledge and wisdom. With the awareness of this potential I learned to connect my inner journey of spiritual striving with my external creative way of being in the world. With my emphasis on Higher Self Yoga, practicing meditation and contemplation, and working through internal and external psychological challenges of perceived values and boundaries, I began to open the gateway to my own divine within. Foremost, I became increasingly aware that I am a spiritual being having a human experience and not the other way around.

With this realization I came to comprehend that the emphasis of this philosophic approach conveys education as a whole life experience. Whole life education suggests a process of opening and expanding one's consciousness that draws out and stimulates the intellectual as well as the spiritual faculties. The word "education" comes from the Latin word "educare" meaning "to lead out" (Tacey 2002 : 172). In a sense this means to lead out, to draw out, to bring forth and unfold that which is innate within each of us, and, according to Glazer (1999), means to "lead forth the hidden wholeness, the innate integrity" (35). In essence, whole life education elicits out from within our limitless potential all that is latent within our inner being. Whole life education opens and expands our aware consciousness and leads forth not only our intellectual knowledge but also our inner wisdom.

Essentially, whole life education means not merely filling our minds with information that is presumed to be important, an approach to education that Thomas Moore calls "inducation – forcing in" (in Miller 2000 : vii). Rather, whole life education means creating a learning environment that experiences no separation or fragmentation

between the intellectual mind and the wisdom within the spiritual heart center. This denotes an educative process that is congruent with our sacred and spiritual being as one whole. Our Western system of education does not acknowledge the nature and sacredness of such wholeness. From such a whole life educational perspective one may deduce that our contemporary Western mainstream system of education does not adequately fulfill the commitment and meaning inherent in the word “education” itself.

A fundamental component in the process of opening the inner wisdom and expanding one’s aware consciousness involves the existential and spiritual quest to seek one’s true or higher Self. By way of spiritual contemplative practices, such as meditation and dialoguing with the still small voice within, that is by tuning into our spiritual heart center in the middle of our chest, the higher Self reveals itself.

Seeking my true or higher Self translates into an ongoing process of expanding my aware consciousness and being centered in my authentic essence. This indicates a process that involves a transformative shift of aware consciousness for self-perfectment and requires observation and discernment of my own thought formations and behavior patterns. This indicates an ongoing process of increasingly becoming consciously aware of my internal sensations and external actions, and with this aware consciousness learning to take responsibility for all my experiences in life. Accepting self-responsibility entails not merely consciously looking at and observing my inner feelings and emotions, but also examining and reviewing my external experiences and conflicts and then learning to balance and harmonize them within myself.

In the process of accepting self-responsibility at times I have come to touch upon and experience aspects of my lower nature. These aspects I examine and analyze in order

to reveal them, to bring them more fully into my aware consciousness, to transmute and transform them. These are moments that prove to be transformative shifts in my spiritual development. They are moments that continue to hold within them my deepest potential for the unfoldment and growth of whole life experiences. These experiences I then come to harmonize within the light of all that is innately good within me. These experiences betoken my internal challenges of becoming wholly human, my eternal yearning for human excellence. Such transmuting and harmonizing experiences continue to develop within me an acceptance of my own true nature, my own innate essence. Such transformative experiences continue to unfold, draw out, and bring forth my own true or higher Self. As such, my personal spiritual journey portrays a self-transformation that leads to a more meaningful and spiritually enlightened life, and a more balanced and synthesized scholarly education.

Thus, experiencing the higher Self within entails the opportunity to become aware of it, to awaken it, to surrender to it, and then incorporate and integrate it into my conscious being. The purpose for this is to become consciously aware of who I really am. Awareness of this entails invoking the essence of my whole being; that is, my intellectual knowledge as well as my innate spiritual wisdom, and this for balance and harmony within myself. For, it is this balance and harmony and the awakened spirit that develops into awareness and knowing the true or higher Self. This knowing awareness as a process toward a synthesized wholeness is a fundamental development in each individual's evolution. Spiritual in nature, this evolution transforms us in ways that affects our relationship with ourselves, with all others, and with all there is in all its forms. This spiritual evolution connects us to the cosmos. Integral to this process is my awareness

and comprehension of the impact of the wisdom of this philosophic knowing on my being in the world and my experiences in academic education.

### **My Personal Journey: Academic**

I entered higher education with this philosophic foundation, a spiritual philosophic journey that I continue to this day. It is this ongoing spiritual journey that initiated and spearheaded my return to academic studies and continues to encourage me with enthusiasm and determination to research and write this doctoral dissertation. As well, the philosophic internal and external transformational challenges and changes I come to encounter along this path continue to deeply affect not only my experiences in graduate education but also my experiences of being in the world.

As part of this quest I have come to realize the importance of interconnecting my inner journey of spiritual striving with my academic endeavor. The knowledge and wisdom I attained, and continue to attain through my spiritual practice, unlock and continue to open for me in a most profound way a vast vista of a clear sense of focus, inspiration, understanding and comprehension of what is meant by education as a whole life experience. As well, this quest profoundly changed, and continues to transform, the way I experience my being in the world. For me, this philosophic foundation continues to bring about profound internal and external changes that affect both my academic experiences and everyday life.

What were some of my experiences in my endeavor to integrate into my academic work my own experiential and spiritual way of knowing? What were, and continue to be, some of my transformative experiences in an intellectual environment without denying

my spiritual reality? How has the approach of bringing my whole being into synthesis, balance and harmony affected my academic studies and my everyday life?

The philosophic perspective of my spiritual journey provided me with a spiritually balanced context that allowed me to deeply reflect upon the divide in our mainstream system of education and the way we experience our everyday lives. I have come to comprehend more clearly how the intent of our Western academy has been defined and formulated in terms of the development of the intellectual faculties and these primarily from an individualistic viewpoint of the world. This is an approach to scholarly education that reveals to me that the Western educational perspective of standardized measurements and logical consequences is based upon the scientific, analytical, competitive and objective. This denotes an educational approach that is one of exclusive identification with intellectual knowledge, the intellect of the mind, and this primarily from the Eurocentric epistemology derived from a social history of a post-colonial worldview.

What has become clear to me is that this system of education focuses its conventional source of knowledge on developing primarily one aspect of knowing. It is not that intellectual knowledge is not important. It is! Yet, from my whole life philosophic perspective, this perceived-to-be superior and all-important intellectual knowing, lacks balance, harmony and unity.

Over the years in higher education I have come to realize with heightened awareness that at times I experienced an imbalance in my own academic endeavor. Most academic discourses in which I took part were such that any mention of spirituality, especially with the course material at hand, was construed as unimportant and not



relevant to knowledge production. I began to feel disengaged from this secular over-identification with intellectual academic knowledge. This intellectual over-identification in the academic process of learning and living exclusively through cognitive rationality and the power of the intellectual mind made me feel fragmented and deeply disconnected from my own inner wisdom of knowing.

The first challenge I encountered was to seek a way to balance and harmonize my academic learning with my own spiritual way of knowing. This meant that my intellectual development needed to be synthesized with the wisdom of my innate inner knowing. Thus, while being engaged in my academic process, it meant simultaneously to study and practice Higher Self Yoga. In this way I became consciously aware of my own inner knowing and the necessity, therefore, of connecting and balancing my own inner journey of spiritual striving with my outer intellectual academic studies. For me, this endeavor culminated into a greater sense of interconnectedness and wholeness not merely in my academic work but also in my everyday life.

With this conscious awareness I came to realize that to incorporate balance, harmony and unity into Western higher education and my experiences of being in the world, that which is needed is to synthesize education as we know it with the transformative wisdom knowledge derived through the gateway of the spiritual heart center. When tuning into our spiritual heart center, we connect the energy in our heart center with that of our divine spirit. This internal bond with our true essence can be felt as a movement, as a subtle vibration, as radiating warmth, or as a soft pressure at the spiritual heart center. When linked with our authentic Self through the divine spiritual center within, we can experience centeredness, calmness and peace even when all around

us there is chaos and disharmony. By connecting with and focusing on this spiritual center with full concentration and intention, it serves as an inner pathway to engage and communicate with our inner knowing, our inner wisdom.

Throughout my years in higher education and while simultaneously pursuing my spiritual practice, I have come to realize and acknowledge that what is missing in our system of education is the whole life learning process grounded not merely in acquiring intellectual knowledge but also in revealing wisdom. This pertains to a whole life learning process in academic education inclusive of an inward striving toward self-discovery. Self-discovery intimates a learning experience that may be framed within the context of waking up educators and students to the discovery of the inner life. The discovery of the inner life indicates a process that signifies that we can get to know and experience our authentic being. This inner life perception of getting to know who we really are needs to be integrated within each of us in an endeavor to become whole within ourselves, whole in our experiences as human beings, and whole in our evolution as a human community. That which we need is to come home in spirit.

Coming home in spirit implies a learning process that seeks to balance, harmonize and synthesize our innate inner wisdom of the divine spirit revealed through our spiritual heart center with that of our acquired rational knowledge of the intellectual mind. Coming home in spirit necessitates the integration of the transformative spiritual wisdom knowledge of our inner life that incorporates deeper dimensions of knowing and formulates the intent and purpose of education in terms of the holistic, unitive and wholeness. This unitive wholeness denotes a process of developing an inner life curriculum that can bridge and heal the divide that currently exists in our Western

academy and that can create a shift in our aware consciousness toward whole life education.

### **The Spiritual in the Academy**

I graduated with a Master of Arts degree from the Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education, OISE/University of Toronto. After reading my Master of Arts Thesis, titled: *Engaging Wisdom Knowledge in Pedagogical Practice*, a friend commented that she can well imagine the barriers that will confront me in my continuing academic endeavor to integrate such revolutionary ideas into Western education. As well, she continued, the challenges I personally may experience in the academy. But, she reiterated, this is a revolutionary perspective whose time has come for integration into our Western system of education. Such comments consolidated my own striving with respect to embracing within the academy a new spiritual perspective and validated the knowing in my heart that I would find and meet spiritually-enlightened scholars who would be open and receptive to my spiritual endeavor.

As I continued my studies in higher education and entered my PhD program in the same department at OISE/University of Toronto, that which brought me hope and trust that spirituality is in the process of being awakened and centered in the academy is when I encountered such spiritually-enlightened scholars as Professors Njoki Wane, Meenaz Kassam, Jack Miller, Jean Paul Restoule and George Dei. This community of scholars had already begun to center and integrate their own spiritual ways of knowing within their teaching methodologies and writing practices. Taking courses with Professors Njoki Wane, Meenaz Kassam, Roxana Ng and Jack Miller, scholars who acknowledge their own spiritual ontology and epistemology by integrating their spiritual awareness into

their academic process, helped me to open my heart with joy in my own academic endeavor. I began to present at conferences on spirituality and to speak more openly about my own spiritual way of knowing.

The teaching practices of these spiritually-enlightened scholars assisted me to question the existing Eurocentric secular worldviews of academic knowledge. I became increasingly aware that knowledge as taught is derived from a post-colonial social history (Dei, 2008; Wane 2002, 2007, 2008). I became more fully aware that there are multiple ways of knowing and, therefore, to critically examine the existing reductive modes of knowledge production. I became aware of the importance to construct knowledge beyond merely the rational. I came to the realization that something was absent, that some part of us was not being acknowledged. Instead of theorizing knowledge toward an expanded level of consciousness that there is more to our existence, that there is intrinsically more to our way of knowing, often that awareness was denied and remained obscured.

I began to question: What are the multiple ways of knowing and the multiplicity of knowledge production? What epistemologies are used to study spirituality in education? What are some of the different spiritual ontologies and traditional ways of knowing as taught by these spiritually-enlightened scholars, and how can such diverse knowledges be integrated into our teaching methodologies? How can these diverse spiritual ontologies and epistemologies be validated in the academy?

Taking courses with Professor Jack Miller on holistic education, spirituality and contemplation, helped me to ground my own way of knowing in the academy. It assisted me to acknowledge that by centering spirituality as an integral part of life, I could navigate the academic process without feeling disengaged from the educational curricula

or disconnected from my own inner life reality. It helped me to validate that my own spiritual practice can become one with my academic research methodologies. But, I continued to question, how can such a spiritual way of knowing become one with the intellectual worldview of the Western academy?

In my academic process while encountering these spiritually-enlightened scholars in courses they taught and seeing how they integrated their respective perspectives of spirituality into their teaching and research methodologies, I questioned: What is the nature of spirituality underlying the ontological perspective of their respective spiritual traditions? The nature of their ontologies and the diversity of their spiritual traditions, such as Eastern, African and North American Aboriginal Philosophies, made me wonder: What is the unifying ontology permeating them all? All come from a diverse worldview, yet, at a deep level of wisdom knowledge, is there some spiritual aspect at which all converge? From my own whole life perspective, we are one humanity, one human community, and as such we all are a component part of one interrelated and interdependent whole. All is one!

My questions continued: For the Western academy to be intellectual and spiritual in one unifying whole, what would be a unitive approach? How can the perspective of oneness be integrated and become a component part of education and everyday life? How can the nature of spirituality of Eastern Philosophy with the emphasis on Higher Self Yoga, African Philosophy, and North American Aboriginal Spirituality, bridge and heal the divide that continues to prevail in our system of education? And, foremost, how can we claim our inner life in the academy and come home in spirit?

### **Toward coming home in spirit**

The intent of this thesis is to challenge our current over-identification with intellectual knowledge in the academy and to unlock the potentiality of a balanced and harmonious spiritual whole life education based on an inner life curriculum. The foremost intent is to learn to be open to the wisdom knowledge inherent within each of us and, in so doing, become balanced, harmonious and whole within our own being.

In challenging our current over-identification with intellectual knowledge, I first explore the historical intellectualization of Western education and then explicate the other side of the divide by directing my attention to Eastern Philosophy, with the emphasis on Higher Self Yoga, and applying these together with my own spiritual practice as a central focal point of convergence or divergence to inform this thesis work. Next, I investigate and examine African Philosophy and North American Aboriginal Spirituality to explicate spirituality and wisdom knowledge from the perspectives of diverse spiritual traditions with their respective spiritual ontologies and epistemologies.

In undertaking this thesis research I hope to contribute to the theory and practice of Western intellectual knowledge in education by exploring the integration of revealed wisdom knowledge that incorporates deeper dimensions of knowing and formulates the design of education in terms of the holistic, unitive and wholeness. The significance of my contribution to education is meant to identify spaces for change in the midst of the Eurocentric epistemological structures in our academy. My intent is to contribute to the creation of a shift in our aware consciousness that is conducive to new knowledges being incorporated into the academy, to a broadened vision of education inclusive of spiritual wisdom, and to an expanded way of being in the world. It is my hope that such a

contribution may serve towards the transformation of education the way we know it today, as well as serve towards a new vision of being in the world.

As mentioned earlier, there exists a constructed divide in our consciousness that has become so normalized in our contemporary Western mind and way of being in the world that we have come to think and act in ways that reproduce it in our every thought, world and deed. This research thesis is about bridging work that can heal the divide through the conscious awareness as to who we really are in our adventure as human beings. This research thesis is about perceiving and knowing our oneness with all others and all forms of life and our role and interrelationship with our universe.

This research thesis is about broadening our vision for an expanded consciousness that relates to our divine purpose and interconnection with the cosmos. This research thesis is about an individual and collective transformation towards expanded visions of aware consciousness and the potentiality for change. It is my hope that conclusions drawn from this thesis work may develop toward a spiritual whole life education based on an inner life curriculum. My hope betokens a spiritual educational transformation within a life-world transformation generally. Specifically, this research will address my problem question: How is it that the nature of spirituality of Eastern Philosophy, with the emphasis on Higher Self Yoga, African Philosophy and North American Aboriginal Spirituality, can bridge and heal the divide in our system of education?

### ***The Path of this Thesis***

In the initial chapter I outline the theoretical frameworks and the methodologies I am using in this research. I explore the Indigenous knowledges and the anti-colonial frameworks since spirituality and spiritual practices are embedded within these

frameworks. Further, for my methodologies I research and examine appreciative inquiry, content analysis and textual analysis. Exploring these frameworks and methodologies in the ongoing chapters, I look at how they speak to my research question and how they address the gaps and limitations that I identify within the literature. As well, I deeply examine how these frameworks and methodologies relate to the divide in our contemporary academy.

Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five comprise the literature review section of my research work. In these chapters I analyze and discuss relevant literature and engage in an interpretative overview of two bodies of literature.

In Chapter Two I research and examine the first body of literature. In this chapter I provide an analysis of the historical foundation and the educational origins underlying the development, ascendance and evolution of the Western intellectual mind and its relation to education. I begin by inquiring as to what is meant by the “mind” and then continue by explicating the Greek origin, the Christian and modern worldviews, the scientific and philosophic revolution, and the modern era and its transformation. I end with the postmodern mind in search for a shift in aware consciousness through self-transcendence toward a new reality.

In Chapters Three, Four and Five, I research and investigate the second body of literature. I explore Higher Self Yoga, emanating out of Eastern philosophy, as well as African Philosophy and North American Aboriginal Spirituality. I formulate thoughts and perspectives by weaving throughout the golden thread of truth that historically kept alive the wisdom of the inner life. I look at the convergences and divergences of these bodies of literature and their relation to education, ontology, epistemology, spirituality and



higher consciousness. I highlight gaps and limitations in the existing literature and include aspects of spirituality that, as yet, have not been explored.

In Chapter Three I direct my attention to Higher Self Yoga as a spiritual teaching given to humanity at this time and as a compilation of an expanded view of the human being and the universe. As a sacred spiritual teaching for the future, Higher Self Yoga has its foundation in a most ancient path of wisdom that emanates from the experiences of centuries and, as such, evolves out of various traditions of philosophic thought: in ancient times such philosophic traditions as Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism and more recently Theosophy and Agni Yoga.

I look at Higher Self Yoga as a spiritual evolutionary path of striving to become one with our innermost being. I look at Higher Self Yoga as a psychological foundation in an effort to more deeply understand humanity and its challenges to evolutionary growth. I explore Higher Self Yoga as a path of revealing wisdom knowledge and this through the essence of our inner life. I search out spiritual practices that are most central in developing the inner life. It is this understanding of the inner life wisdom that is essential toward a whole life vision of education. Such an educative vision has the potential and power to open the gates of change.

In Chapter Four I research African philosophy and trace the weave of the golden thread of truth back to the traditions of ancient Egypt. This entails journeying back in time and history to the ancient Egyptian Khamitic Nubian people and their understanding of the nature of the universe, the nature of human relations, their ethical behavior, and the meaning of life. This conveys a spiritual philosophy of sacred wisdom that knowledge was the way of life that led directly to the divine and wisdom was the result of inner

knowledge. This ethical philosophy made no distinction between the sacred and the secular, the spiritual and the material areas of life, and governed a way of life not only for the individual but every aspect of the life of the whole community.

I explore the ancient Khamitic Nubian Cosmology perceived to be balanced in its divine attributes of the Mother/Father Source. This feminine and masculine balance, this “maat riarchal” vision of a spiritual moral code of ethics, permeated every aspect of Khamitic life. The respect accorded this balance and the divine harmony of life within the universe kept the Khamitic people in intimate contact with their inner selves. Any imbalance created by their thoughts, speech or actions motivated the Khamitic people to purify themselves, their relationships, and their environment. For these purification rituals and practices the Khamitic people utilized the four elements of nature for self-healing, a vegetarian diet to purify the body and meditation and chanting to live a pure life connected to the spirit. This created a transformation that maintained their physical wellness and inner peace.

Today African people continue to be profoundly spiritual. Gratitude, harmony and reverence for all life maintains their sacred interrelatedness with the Divine.

I look at various African philosophic perspectives, highlight similarities and convergences with Higher Self Yoga, and indicate how these can become instrumental in creating a more meaningful and balanced system of education and everyday way of life.

Chapter Five I devote to the exploration of North American Aboriginal Spirituality as a deeply sacred wisdom philosophy of life. I look at the meaning of community, place and space and the metaphysical understanding of the nature of the world and the nature of creation.

As the foundation of all life in the universe and the manifestation of divinity, I explore the meaning of spirit, matter and energy. I investigate the notion of earth, mother and woman as an aspiration of humanity toward balance, harmony and unity. North American Aboriginal cosmology involves and embraces symbolism. For this I look at father sun to explicate the life force in the universe as the essential oneness of all. To comprehend North American Aboriginal spirituality, I search out the roles the elders play as spiritual healers, guides and teachers in the Aboriginal community.

I explore the medicine wheel, vision, dreams and prayer as a search for inner knowledge. I investigate these as a subjective introspection of revealed knowledge, as a process of knowing oneself. This process pertains to the practice of inwardness and signifies a pathway to self-discovery, a journey of self-transformation toward experiencing oneself as an infinitely sacred part of a larger process. Understanding this spiritual dimension is perceived as true learning.

As a reflective analysis, in Chapter Six I examine humanity's accelerated evolution of a new level of spiritual planetary consciousness as we experience it today. In this respect, I look at the unconscious, the archetypal, the dialectic and the participatory aspects of human nature. I search out the multidimensionality of our being and our evolutionary process of individuation from the collective unconsciousness of the self toward self-consciousness. I explore the evolution of the human mind and its kinship with cosmos. I examine what a new spiritual planetary consciousness may mean. I look at humanity's spiritual evolution as an inner quest toward unity with nature, toward unity with the larger human community and the universe. All toward synthesis with the divine Source itself.

The Western consciousness today is in search for truth. In exploring the potential toward the revision of the existing intellectual constructs, analyses and research, I examine open conversation as a way to deconstruct and unmask on the one hand and to integrate and synthesize on the other hand, and these in both the academic and the social worlds. I look at open conversation as a way to reorient our potential toward a new vision that would bring forth an authentic and balanced perspective and that would guide the future with new possibilities for a new worldview.

In the Conclusion of this thesis work I explore sound educational processes as useful bridging work in healing the divide in our consciousness and academic education. I look at the authority of the human soul, the sense of divinity, the unfoldment of inner life wisdom, all as integral components of whole life education.

Looking at African Philosophy, North American Aboriginal Spirituality and Eastern Philosophy, with the emphasis on Higher Self Yoga, I am being reminded of our true origin, from where we have come and to where we strive to return, who we really are, and what our intrinsic purpose truly is. It is the innate wisdom of these philosophies that can serve as a catalyst for life-enhancing change. The purpose and significance of this whole life change needs to be the responsibility of education. As well, it needs to be the self-responsibility of anyone of us as human beings. We are the creators of our destiny. It is our responsibility to develop, experience and live our highest potential toward our highest good. We need to awaken and quicken our spiritual evolutionary unfoldment. It is the creative aptitude of this spiritual unfoldment that needs to receive our full attention.

## Chapter One

### *Theoretical Frameworks and Methodologies*

#### **Theoretical Frameworks: Indigenous Knowledges and Anti-colonial Frameworks**

In this chapter I outline a research paradigm that has its foundation in a spiritual ontology, epistemology and methodology. In my thesis research I explore three philosophies: Eastern Philosophy with the emphasis on Higher Self Yoga, African Philosophy and North American Aboriginal Spirituality. Since these three philosophies either originate or occur naturally in a country or region, for instance North America and Africa, or are innate to and inherent in a philosophical context such as Eastern Philosophy, I look at sacred ways of knowing within an Indigenous knowledges framework.

Intrinsically linked to and deeply interwoven with an Indigenous knowledges framework is the anti-colonial framework. I explore the anti-colonial framework due to the fact that our secular mode of knowledge production that pervades our current Western academy is primarily derived from an intellectual European history and reality. This Eurocentric historical reality I examine in Chapter Two. However, the anti-colonial framework I am explicating expands beyond the rational and conceptual ways of knowing the world.

#### **Indigenous Knowledges Framework**

Indigenous knowledges signify sacred ways of knowing that not merely originate or occur naturally within a country or a region, but also are sacred ways of knowing that are innate to and inherent in each individual. This innate knowing is often unconscious and

obscured by the influences of our mundane existence. As Semali (1999) points out, Indigenous knowledges are multiple ways of knowing and multiple schools of thought that are sacred ways of experiencing and living life. Everything that is thought, said and done is experienced in relation to one's whole way of life, and everything that is known is known in the context of the entirety of life. The entirety of life encompasses both the inner and the outer experiences. There is no distinction, or division, between the sacred and the secular, the spiritual and the material areas of life. As an intrinsic sacredness of life, the sacred ways of knowing in Indigenous knowledges portray a way to live life ethically in spiritual balance, harmony and unity for the purpose of fulfilling one's moral, intellectual and spiritual growth.

In relating to Indigenous sacred ways of knowing within the three philosophies; that is Eastern Philosophy with the emphasis on Higher Self Yoga, African Philosophy and North American Aboriginal Spirituality, it is not about blind beliefs. Rather, it is about knowing the revealed wisdom of an inner life and relating this inner life wisdom to our outer life experiences. Indigenous inner life wisdom or sacred ways of knowing may become revealed through such modalities as imagination, intuition, inspiration, creativity, dreams and visions, just to mention a few. In many ways Indigenous inner life wisdom or sacred ways of knowing can also be empirically and experientially derived through one's observations and perceptions within culture and society. This is due to Indigenous sacred ways of knowing being passed on from generation to generation over centuries (Semali 1999 : 40).

Within Indigenous sacred ways of knowing all aspects of the universe are relative, interconnected and interrelated to life in all its forms, be it humans, animals, the elements

and nature. In this context, wisdom knowledge is perceived as relational, holistic and spiritual. Comprehending that all life forms relate to one another alludes to an understanding of the reality of life as an holistically interrelatedness working “together to regenerate life” (Semali 1999 : 43). This interrelatedness of all life’s existence pertains not merely to the physical, the economic, the ecological and the cultural, but also the metaphysical and spiritual realms of life (Dei 2002 : 5, 13; Semali 1999 : 42, 43). Spiritual in nature, Indigenous sacred ways of knowing convey that there exists no boundary nor division as to what is personal, social or spiritual. Rather, it signifies an interweave of one’s whole way of life in the context of everyday interactions within society, nature and the cosmos (Dei 2008 : 7; Wane 2008 : 191).

As Dei (2008) declares, Indigenous sacred ways of knowing can “open the horizon of human thought, practice, action, and possibilities” and in the academy these can “challenge the conventional discursive frameworks and practices that seemingly present unquestionable ‘truths’ about social existence” (6). Social existence entails and requires more than merely taking information from external sources and accepting it. Social existence necessitates the reclaiming of sacred ways of knowing that have the foundation and potential for knowledge transformation. Knowledge transformation within an Indigenous knowledges framework, as well as denoting multiple ways of knowing and multiple ways of knowledge production, also “highlights spirituality and spiritual ontology” (Dei 2008 : 10). Generally excluded from Western education, spiritual ontology and spiritual epistemology are necessary integrative components that have the potential to bring contemporary Western education into balance, harmony and unity.

However, Dei (2002) asserts, the integration of Indigenous knowledges in the academy needs to be more than content, more than a new course to be added to the curriculum, and more than a new set of readings. Rather, the integration of Indigenous knowledges is about recovering and incorporating Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies and making them an integral part of the “ongoing co-creation and re-creation of Western academic knowledge” (4). Knowledge is not static or fixed. Rather, the nature of knowledge is fluid, multifaceted and constantly changing (Wane 2008 : 195). The perception of the fluidity of change within a spiritual unity of life and the cosmos has the transformative potential and power to constitute as one the Indigenous spiritual traditions with the Western intellectual education and our contemporary human life.

Indigenous spiritual traditions are informed and sacred ways of knowing that relate one’s experiences of self with one’s understanding of the personal, social and spiritual worlds. Indigenous spiritual traditions deeply interpret all life’s experiences as a whole life education, and it is this whole way of experiencing and being in the world that requires integration into the academy. Whole life education, perceived as a conscious awareness of moving towards greater authenticity and a more authentic self, emphasizes a sense of sacred knowing as something larger than our personal self. Based on the principles, facts and procedures of Indigenous spiritual traditions, this sense of sacred knowing underpins all that evolves from deep layers of understanding, be it history, community, life experiences, learning processes, values, attitudes, motivations and awareness of one’s true Self.



This sense of sacred knowing relates to an intuitive perception as to who we really are. It renders an intuitive way of knowing that life “must be made here, in the world...the social and spiritual responsibility each of us have been given with life” (Wane & Waterfall 2006 : 16). This intimates a sense of sacred knowing that denotes not only looking at our own inner spiritual transformation, but also being concerned with outer social issues of discrimination, degradation and destruction.

### **Anti-colonial Framework**

As Dei (2002) explains, Indigenous knowledges can be applied in the academy as “an important entry point” to discuss within an anti-colonial framework social issues of discrimination, degradation and destruction. These issues relate to “social practices emerging from colonial relations and their aftermath” (7). Within an anti-colonial framework, Indigenous knowledges can, indeed, address within the academy the diversity of histories, ideas and events, as well as the lived experiences and social interactions that have shaped human development and growth. The anti-colonial framework can be useful as a process within which to challenge, interrogate and disrupt “institutionalized power and privilege and the accompanying rationale for dominance in social relations” (Dei 2001 : 300). As a theoretical perspective, Dei (2002) asserts,

anti-colonialism interrogates the power configurations embedded in ideas, cultures and histories of knowledge production and use. It is an epistemology of the colonized, anchored in the indigenous sense of collective and common colonial consciousness practices. ... An anti-colonial discursive approach would recognize the importance of...knowledges emanating from cultural histories and daily human experiences and social interactions (7).

An anti-colonial approach highlights and recognizes the multiple dimensions of knowledge and knowledge production and affirms an ongoing educational and historical process that has as its ultimate vision a change in the current educational and social order.

Academic knowledge “must connect firmly with Indigenous struggles and aspirations. For example, the history and culture of Indigenous peoples must be understood as a necessary intellectual exercise and as part of our political, material, spiritual and mental decolonization” Dei 2008 (11) proclaims. Challenged must be the conventional frameworks and practices of accepted assumptions of the universality of epistemologies and value system. Challenged must be the unicentric ways of knowing. Multicentric ways of knowing can enhance academic excellence and can transform our Western educational paradigms. Recovering and integrating multiple knowledges, epistemologies, ontologies and cosmologies, deemed irrelevant and denigrated in the Western academy, is a valid means of bringing about academic, social and historic change.

Foremost, what is needed is the search for synthesis of varied, multiple knowledges, Dei (2008) informs us, and reiterates Nakata’s (2007) reminder that in the

debates about knowledge synthesis some have taken the position that Indigenous knowledge systems and Western science are “so disparate as to be ‘incommensurable’ ...or... ‘irreconcilable’ ... on cosmological, epistemological and ontological grounds” (cited in Nakata, 2007 : 8). Sometimes the marker of difference is in what is deemed ‘science’ and ‘not science’ or what is ‘valid’ knowledge and what is ‘not valid’ (11).

In our pursuit to connect multiple knowledges, Semali (1999) informs us, that which “scientific modernism defined as basic to life are found both in what the scientific tradition has labeled ‘living’ and ‘non-living’ ” (42). Within the Indigenous knowledges “all life on the planet ...[is]... multidimensionally entwined ... At what point, it may be asked, do oxygen, water, and food, become part of the human organism and at what point are they separate? (42).

As a discourse of possibilities, knowledge synthesis needs to find space at the center of analyses to fill the gaps created by post-colonial education (Wane 2008 : 191). As Dei (2008) states: “Synthesis of different knowledges has always been an important aspect of Indigenous philosophies and ontologies. Discursive synthesis is at the heart of claims of multicentric knowing ... the learner must always welcome ... multiple meanings, interpretations, and experiences” (12). As such, the anti-colonial framework can and must work with alternative paradigms based on knowledge synthesis of multiple and collaborative dimensions of knowledge. Knowledge synthesis is inclusive of Indigenous concepts, ideas and interpretations. Thus, as an educational practice such knowledge synthesis ultimately will lead to systemic change (Dei 2002 : 9).

Thus, spiritual wisdom is a valid and scientific knowledge system that can form the criterion for determining knowledge synthesis. Knowledge synthesis necessarily points to a preliminary stage in the evolutionary process toward our ultimate goal of a conscious spiritual synthesis. Anti-colonialism can be applied to embrace the entire Western civilization; that is, individually, socially, economically, and politically. Inherent in this embrace can be a spiritual synthesis that is waking up Western education and world toward becoming one human community, at one with all of life, at one with the cosmos.

***Methodologies: Appreciative Inquiry, Content Analysis and Textual Analysis***

The methodologies of interest to me in my research are appreciative inquiry, content analysis and textual analysis. I examine these and indicate how they speak to my research question and how they address the gaps and limitations that I identify within the literature and within the divide that currently exist in our contemporary system of

education. Further, I examine and investigate the rationale for this divide and the philosophic contributions that underlie this study. I also explain and explicate my own ontological and epistemological perceptions.

### ***Appreciative Inquiry***

Appreciative inquiry conveys a search within each of us that intimates recognizing and valuing the intrinsic goodness in ourselves, others, and in the world around us. Appreciative inquiry affirms and honors the strengths and successes of the past, acknowledges and values the present and realizes and appreciates the possibilities and potentialities of the future. Appreciative inquiry conveys a search that signifies, acknowledges and appreciates a paradigm of seeing, thinking, acting and being in the world in a balanced, harmonized and whole way.

As Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) indicate, in appreciative inquiry the attentive focus is on the best of the past, the present and the future. Considering this perspective, we might ask: What sustained us in antiquity, what gives us meaning to our present way of life, what rekindles in all of us our imagination, innovation, intuition and inspiration? And, building upon this, we might ask: How might the future unfold in a spiritually holistic way?

In relating this concept to my work, I would say that appreciative inquiry points to revealing our inner wisdom and strengths; overcoming the limitations and gaps we impose on ourselves and others, and this often unconsciously; and transforming our lower nature into a more authentic way of knowing and being. Further, appreciative inquiry points to exploring new spiritually empowering possibilities and potentialities and

heightening our awareness of who we really are. All these can be aspired to through the impetus and creation of a shift in our aware consciousness.

As an inquiry, spirituality signifies appreciating with gratitude a revealed and expanded vision of aware consciousness. This aware consciousness renders appreciative inquiry as a valuable self-directed tool toward self-discovery and self-development. Directed inward through such modalities as meditation, dialoguing with our still, small voice within, the realization of the joy of beauty, dreams, prayers, and the arts generally, we begin to appreciate, draw out and bring forth all that which is best, good and sacred within us. This appreciation betokens an inquiry that conveys becoming consciously aware of the existence of an inner life. It is this inner life aware consciousness that seeks to highlight life-giving forces such as ideals, values and innovations that aid in the empowerment of not only ourselves but the empowerment for the greater good.

For instance, we need to appreciate our system of education itself and the space and opportunity it provides for us to promote a better co-operative understanding of how to envision a transformative change. We need to appreciate the educational forum the academic institutions provide in which we can question the imbalance of its secular mode of education. We need to imagine new models, new tools and new techniques as to what we aspire to for our future and work toward this vision. Such an appreciative vision needs to impart a theory and practice for inspiring positive change, and this within a whole life spiritual framework of education. As Cooperrider and Hammond (2001) explain:

Appreciative Inquiry deliberately seeks to discover people's exceptionality – their unique gifts, strengths, and qualities. It actively searches and recognizes people for their specialties – their essential contributions and achievements. And it is based on principles of equality of voice – everyone is asked to speak about their vision of the true, the good, and the possible (12).

As educators and scholars we all are the co-creators and co-motivators for new concepts, ideas and practices of spirituality to be integrated into education. As scholars and students who envision spiritual possibilities and potentials for the future of education, we all need to be open to the creation and collaboration necessary toward a positive and innovative educational change.

We need to appreciate individual's spiritual identities. We need to appreciate what spirituality means to them and how spirituality influences their work. We need to appreciate the transformative power of their spiritual vision as to how to center spirituality in the academy. We need to create a community of learning that engages the whole self and appreciates the sharing of sacred visions and practices. In this sharing we need to appreciate that knowledge is not constant but is in constant flux and recreating itself and that, therefore, reality is an unfolding process determined by our own thoughts, words and actions.

Within this ongoing, unfolding process, appreciative inquiry entails having conscious awareness of my own spiritual way of knowing and that of others. It is important for me to be open to generate a positively oriented approach toward knowledge synthesis with spiritual wisdom, a synthesis that energizes the creative best in all of us. It is imperative for me to have a clear vision of this unfolding process as a vital life-giving process for transformative change. For me this process underpins and complements our true purpose of life.

### ***Textual Analysis***

Textual analysis denotes a way of producing an interpretation of meaning by gathering information that relates to how we make sense of who we are and how we

perceive and fit into this world in which we live. Textual analysis points to a way of interpreting texts. These texts may be literature, but they may also be life experiences within the world all around us. Textual analysis is a way of coming to understand our own way of interpreting our being in the world and then beginning to comprehend the limitations and gaps of our own sense-making practices. Most importantly, it is a way of moving beyond our own subjective observations of meaning-making and seeing, of acknowledging and appreciating that there are multiple ways in which it is possible to interpret life, reality and education.

In our Western world our contemporary system of education primarily continues to develop the intellectual faculties of the left hemisphere of our brain. This development evolved into an intellectual over-identification of the mind which produces a way of constructing meaning that entails the implementation of logical reasoning (Fairdough 2003). One of the undercurrent assumptions of this logical reasoning approach is that the empirical, rational, experimental and objective approach to education is the only correct way in which discovering knowledge of making meaning can take place. It is this logical reasoning approach that then exponentially has the power to govern our whole way of living life.

Conversely, in the Literature Review chapters of this thesis, I outline how Eastern Philosophy with the emphasis on Higher Self Yoga, African Philosophy, and North American Aboriginal Spirituality construct a spiritual whole life approach to education. This whole life approach to education and life signifies an analysis that seeks a deeper inner life interpretation of meaning. By examining the processes and practices implicit within these spiritual philosophies and their inner life interpretations, we come to a more

perceptual realization as to who we really are in this essential oneness of all. The reality of this essential oneness of all is that we are spiritual beings having a human experience and, as such, are interconnected, interrelated and interdependent as co-creators to a larger whole. This larger whole speaks to the totality of creation. Essentially, the nature of reality is ultimately a spiritual one and an expanded consciousness relates to this spiritual unitive way of knowing and being.

### *Content Analysis*

Content analysis is an in-depth analysis that is not restricted to the realm of the meaning-making textual analysis as mentioned above (Krippendorff 1984). Content analysis is an analytic study of the content of texts, be they personal, social, educational or spiritual texts. Applying content analysis to this thesis work means moving and reaching beyond my own subjective observations and experiences while examining the trends and patterns of human interactions. In this in-depth analysis of the trends and patterns of human interaction, I come to address the gaps and the limitations I identify within the literature. For me content analysis is an analytic study that is helpful in discovering answers that speak to my research question. These discoveries give support to identifying possibilities and potentialities for transformative change.

Applying content analysis to the interpretation and evaluation of the intent of the intellectual knowledge existent in our contemporary Western system of education contributes to the understanding of its historical, secular, and epistemological vision. This vision I search out and explore in Chapter Two in which I examine the duality and the evolution of the Western mind. I follow this in Chapters Three, Four and Five in which I define and analyze the three philosophies of wisdom knowledge. I explain Higher Self



Yoga as a spiritual teaching given to humanity at this time. I explore African Philosophy and North American Aboriginal Spirituality and indicate their convergences and divergences. As well, I highlight the significance of the ontological and epistemological interpretations of these philosophies.

For this purpose the content analysis I apply is a qualitative research model of multiple interpretations. Multiple interpretations of diverse perspectives for me serve as an analytic paradigm that offers imaginative and intuitive insight into revealing themes. These themes and my interpretations of them, I support by weaving quotes from the analyzed literature into my own perceptive understanding. These quotes serve as a data-collecting tool that clearly and tangibly set out spiritual processes, practices and interpretations of the existing perceptions of understanding reality.

Essentially, the prime importance of this in-depth analytic process is that it provides me with the grounded foundation necessary for this thesis work. This grounded foundation guides me with the inspirational insight to perceive a transformation of not only our own way of life, but also the transformation of education as we experience it in our Western academy today.

### ***Reflective Thoughts***

In implementing the Indigenous knowledges framework and the anti-colonial framework, and the appreciative inquiry, textual analysis and content analysis methodologies, I search out and indicate how these frameworks and methodologies intersect at the spiritual level of wisdom knowledge. Also, by synthesizing my analyses of the wisdom knowledges of spirituality of the three philosophies with the intellectual knowledge of the Western academy, I hope to develop valuable insights, interpretations

and illustrative examples of how the integration of the whole life educative qualities of these philosophic texts can be applied as a bridging work to heal the divide that currently exists in Western academy.

It is my hope that the significance of my contribution of this thesis work to education will be identifying and explicating wisdom knowledge useful towards the unfolding of the spiritual inner life wisdom that essentially needs to become an integral and effective component of our whole life education and our whole life living experiences. It is my hope that this wisdom knowledge will necessarily lead toward a transformative change in our contemporary Western system of education and our everyday life.

## Chapter Two

### *The Western Intellectual Mind*

The history of a civilization is like a kind of great unconscious. Just as individuals must rediscover their roots, the shaping forces of their past, in order to become more fully free and conscious, so too must a civilization.

Renn Butler

In this chapter I delve deeply into the history of the evolution and ascendance of the Western mind. My intent is to rediscover the roots of the Western intellectual mind and make more conscious the shaping forces of its past. It is only with an expanded consciousness that we may be willing to set ourselves more fully free to newly rediscover ourselves within a world of transition. Ours is a world of constant change, a world in which we are in search for new values, new visions, and new horizons, a world in which we attempt to understand the ever-changing conception of true reality. Before delving into the history of the Western mind, it is of prime importance that I explore and explicate what is meant by the mind.

#### *The Mind*

Within our brain, McLuhan and Powers (1989) explain, are two cerebral cortexes that are completely separate from one another: the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere. The left hemisphere of the brain, they note, is associated with the visual, which is the world of linearity, connectiveness, logic, rationality, analysis and classification. This is characteristically concerned with the verbal and speech frames of thought. The left hemisphere thinking is primarily assertive or aggressive, with the

capacity of categorization, discrimination and self-control (121). Wilber (1983a) informs us that the left hemisphere of our brain “specializes in the sequential-digital-logical component of any mode of knowing” (245). It is through the left hemisphere of our brain that we become an “independent entity separate from the eternal flow...a single solid, separate from the whole” (Taylor 2006 : 142). It is the left hemisphere of our brain that represents the masculine, or yang consciousness, of any mode of our knowing.

Conversely, the right hemisphere of the brain, McLuhan and Powers (1989) claim, is concerned with social intelligence, the spatial, the musical, the artistic, and the symbolic, and is representative of the holistic, intuitive and imaginative pattern perceptions. It is associated with metaphoric thinking revealed in images, as well as the interactive mode of human relationships (121). According to Wilber (1983a) the right hemisphere of our brain “specializes in the pattern-analogic-spatial component” (245) of any mode of knowing. Taylor (2006) points out that the right hemisphere of our brain is “sensitive to nonverbal communication, empathic, and accurately decodes emotions” and is “the knower, the wise woman, and the observer” and intuits wisdom and insight whereby we can conceive of ourselves as energy beings at one with one another, “at one with the universe” (140). It is the right hemisphere of our brain that represents the feminine, or yin consciousness, of any mode of our knowing.

For instance, through the right hemisphere of our brain we can see the overall view whereby we can have a vision of the whole expanse of our environment. This may be an educational setting in which the environment may feel peaceful and nourishing, or a view of the beauty and serenity of nature, or a nurturing feeling of being at home in our everyday lives. Through the right hemisphere of our brain we feel at one with all there is

and experience that all is relative and interrelated. Whereas through the left hemisphere of our brain we focus our attention on specifics, such as the type of trees, rock formations or waterways in nature, or the routines and schedules in our everyday lives, or how to discriminate as to the type of education we are experiencing in our Western academy.

Storing knowledge and having a good storage capability for abstract or intellectual reading and remembering the information given out, is part of the activity of the left hemisphere of our brain. Whereas the experiential right hemisphere of our brain has the ability to utilize imagination to help in understanding the abstract aspects of the intellectual information given out by the left hemisphere of our brain.

How do we bring about a shift away from the dominating, rational and cognitive left hemisphere of our brain and balance it more with the right hemisphere of our brain that is in tune with the intuitive and interpretative perception of our whole being? For instance, Taylor (2006) points out, this can be achieved with physical movements such as Tai Chi; walking in nature; singing, creating, playing or listening to music; or deeply observing beautiful and inspiring works of art. As well, we can experience this shift when meditating, or breathing deeply while chanting a mantra, which literally means “place to rest the mind” (169), or striving to get to know who we really are.

Because these two hemispheres of our brain process information differently, they represent different aspects of every mode of our knowing (Wilber 1983a : 245), and, consequently, constitute different aspects of our personalities. As Taylor (2006) points out, through the consciousness of the left hemisphere of our brain we think of ourselves as being separate individuals, separate from one another, separate from nature, and separate from the cosmic energy flow of the universe. Whereas, through the

consciousness of the right hemisphere of our brain we feel deep inner peace and loving compassion and perceive ourselves as energy beings interconnected to life in all its forms and interrelated to one another as one human community at one with the universe (134-136).

The more years I spend in our Western system of education, the more I realize that with only a minimum of exceptions our Western academy is steeped in the left-brain mode of cognition. As well, from my own experiences I believe that our current state of society is primarily compartmentalized towards the left-brain rational mode of knowing and experiencing the world. As Taylor (2006) asserts, “our western society honors and rewards the skills of our “doing” left brain much more than our “being” right brain” (160). The right hemisphere of our brain has the capability to experience the energy flow of our unitive existence, which is beyond the cognitive boundaries of the left hemisphere of our brain. To shift our focus from the left cognitive hemisphere of our brain, Taylor (2006) continues, means to become less attached to its perception of superiority and authority and become more compassionate by showing loving kindness and being more “generous of spirit...with others” (171). This means that our “right hemisphere’s heart consciousness” (175) can consider others’ way of knowing with compassion rather than judgment (171).

Foremost, we need to realize and acknowledge that in our academy our intellectual ideas, concepts and thoughts do not necessarily interact with us as a whole being. Rather than exploring our intuitive feelings and perceptions emanating from the right hemisphere of our brain, we often, through the left hemisphere of our brain, merely take information from external sources and accept it. In fact, as Bai (2000) explains,

“[o]ur ability to experience reality directly as a perceiving and feeling being is compromised by the excessive...engagement with concepts” (87). For example, we may perceive ourselves as this human being, this human body, living in this world, and that is all there is to us. Conceptual understanding, Glazer (1999) points out, is a specific intelligence that is important, but it offers “only a biased, partial picture of the world” or ourselves (80). In education, conceptualization, he maintains, divided and abstracted learning into “separate subjects” such as sociology and philosophy, which, in turn, “themselves became increasingly specialized, often with little interaction even across subdisciplines” (134). Consequently, by failing to balance and synthesize our intellectual concepts, abstractions and theories of the left hemisphere of our brain with the intuitive wisdom and insight of the right hemisphere of our brain, this resulted in an educational practice lacking in balance, harmony and unity.

To activate the consciousness of the right hemisphere of our brain more fully is to know and acknowledge that we are part of the energy flow of an eternal structure from which we cannot be separated. It is a knowing that we are at one with all of life in all its forms in the universe. We need to comprehend that both hemispheres of our brain complement one another and that they collaborate with one another so that every mode of our knowing and experiencing life can more fully involve these two necessary components. What we need, Taylor (2006) emphasizes, is to be “flexible in our thinking, adaptable to our environment, and capable of choosing who and how we want to be in the world” (176). It is imperative that we become more open to expand the consciousness of the right hemisphere of our brain and take the “responsibility of tending” our mind as a “sacred patch of cosmic real estate” and challenge our Western education and society

with the “loving and peaceful right hemisphere” of our brain (Taylor 2006 : 176). What we need to create a unified perception of our mind is the synthesis of our perception of what constitutes both hemispheres of our brain. Through the perception of a unified mind can we live and experience a more balanced and synthesized academic life and feel more harmony and unity in our everyday way of being in the world.

What was the causal impetus towards such separation and fragmentation of our whole way of being? What is it that caused the divide within ourselves, as well as in our Western system of education? How did the Western mind arrive at those hegemonic ideas and principles that so influence our world today? To answer this, I will explore in the next part of this chapter the historical evolution underlying the development and ascendance of the Western intellectual mind and its understanding of education and being in the world. It may be that by recollecting and remembering our roots that we may come to a fuller understanding of our present way of living life, and this seems to be a necessary prerequisite in our transition toward change in education and our everyday life.

### ***The Greek Origin***

#### ***Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes***

The origin of the Western intellectual mind has its roots in Greek thought. As Tarnas (1993) explains, such earliest philosophers as Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes assumed that there existed a fundamental order and unity in the universe, and, therefore, sought to uncover a universal principle, or a common source, to explain the natural phenomena that composed nature as well as governed it (19). Trying to understand the true nature of the world commenced a shift in the early sixth century B.C. away from the existing traditional mythic vision of divine revelation toward a more



scientific mode of understanding nature and the universe. Yet, these philosophers perceived the primary substance underlying all things along with being material also to be alive, dynamic and divine. Thus, at this stage in the Greek world, nature and the divine were yet interwoven.

### *Parmenides and Anaxagoras*

With such philosophers as Parmenides and Anaxagoras a century later rational thinking was introduced. Starting with seeing nature as divine, now the attempt was made to analyze this belief through logical reasoning. As Tarnas (1993) points out, trying to understand the world by the use of logical reasoning required thinking through what is real rather than what is evident, what is rational truth rather than what can be perceived by the senses, and, with such reasoning, it was perceived that only the human mind could make the distinction as to what is apparent and what is real (20-22). Soccio (2007) writes that Parmenides reasoned that “reality cannot be apprehended by the senses” (70) and that therefore appearances are not real and correct thinking is about true reality or being (71). As for Anaxagoras, being meant the infinite reality, the “all-pervading Mind” (73), the universal, transcendent, primordial Nous (Mind), the guiding principle that sets all things in order in the universe (Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 7).

### *Pythagoras*

For Pythagoras, in the fifth century B.C., the dichotomy between the mythic tradition and the reasoning mind spurred on his vision towards a synthesis of the two. Most important for Pythagoras was rationality and mathematics, which he saw as the basis of all things. These, he believed, could define natural events as well as the universe, or cosmos, as an ordered whole (Soccio 2007 : 67). To understand the order of nature and

the universe was to understand that there is an “intelligence behind the universe” (Magee 1998 : 16). This meant that the natural world and the cosmos were interwoven, and to reveal this interconnectedness meant to come to understand that the human soul is part of the world soul and both are part of the divine essence of the universe (Tarnas 1993 : 23). Thus, with the Pythagorean scientific mathematical discoveries, at this time in history a balance was attained between the ancient mythological tradition and secular rationalism, philosophy and science. This balance meant that “certain intelligible principles could be found from which could be deduced as consequences the bewildering details of appearances” (Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 7).

### ***The Sophists***

With the Sophists, the latter half of the fifth century B.C., emerged a shift toward secular humanism. As professional teachers, the Sophists were concerned not only with intellectual instruction but also with the practical utility of living a good and successful everyday life. As Magee (1998) explains, for Sophists “man is the measure of all things” and value could only be determined by what serves the practical needs of life (18). To participate in the economic and political life required education. For Sophists, according to Soccio (2007), education meant the “scientific study of human behavior – which would become the social, psychological, political, and anthropological sciences” (94). In this way, thought was set free to pursue knowledge toward individual freedom and identity, and this approach released the hold on dogma and superstition ( Soccio 2007 : 94). Thus, human beings became perceived as no longer being part of the intrinsic cosmic plan, and there came to be believed that the human intellect was sufficient to provide wisdom and

knowledge to live a good life. However, this perception slowly deteriorated the ethical standards and the traditional values.

### *Socrates*

Onto this scene emerged Socrates who tried to pursue truth through new methods and new ideals. Socrates wanted to better understand what is meant by a good life, and for this Socrates turned not only to logic but also to ethics. For Socrates “everything must be open to question” (Magee 1998 : 23). This meant that a critical and rational self-analysis could free the human mind from false understanding, and, thus, go beyond the mere conventional opinion and morality (Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 7). To live a good and happy life was to take into consideration one’s innermost reality, or soul, which meant that wisdom and true knowledge could only be drawn forth from within. Thus, according to Socrates, the soul is the center of human aware consciousness and only through understanding of one’s self, understanding of one’s own psyche, could true happiness be found (Tarnas 1993 : 33). Thus, for Socrates, living a happy life meant living a life that serves the innermost soul. This meant living a life that would serve not only the rational but also the ethical human self.

To accomplish this, as Magee (1998) points out, Socrates developed a method known as “dialectic”, which is a form of reasoning through dialogue, a form of questioning and analyzing in order to uncover false beliefs and assumptions and to bring forth truth (23, 34). Truth, Socrates believed, was in each of us, and education, therefore, is not putting “knowledge into an empty mind”, education is a “drawing out what is already there” (Soccio 2007 : 109). This meant, through the achievement of personal self-

reflection, receiving wisdom and knowledge through the sources from within and not merely through sources from without.

“Know thyself” Socrates claimed, for “[t]he unexamined life is not worth living” (Soccio 2007 : 115). For Socrates, the examined life, Soccio (2007) writes, will reveal the human psyche, which meant a “combination of what we think of as the mind and soul”, and this combination is the conscious self-reflection of the mind and the waking aware consciousness of the soul (115-116). Thus, for Socrates an examined life is living a consciously reflective life in search for understanding human life itself, and to awaken this knowing is the responsibility of education.

### *Plato*

As part of this responsibility of education, Plato began to develop a theory of knowledge that attempted to identify the difference between mere opinion and real knowledge. This theory of knowledge was an effort to arrive at the “structure of an ideal state based on knowledge and truth” (Soccio 2007 : 139). Thus, Plato divided the universe into two worlds or realms. There is the world of becoming, the world of appearances and opinion, our mundane world of existence. And there is the world of being, the realm of reality, truth and knowledge (Soccio 2007 : 172; Magee 1998 : 28). The world of being Plato called Forms or Ideas, which he perceived as truly real, and as existing beyond space and time of our material world (Magee 1998 : 27, 29; Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 8).

What Plato refers to as Forms or Ideas translates into archetype or essence (Magee 1998 : 27). This is an essence that pertains to such aspects as goodness, wisdom and beauty, and if something is good or beautiful it is because it takes part in an

archetypal essence that consists of goodness, wisdom and beauty at a level beyond space and time (Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 9). According to Plato, these timeless Forms, Ideas, or universals, can be discovered and can become known by the human mind through philosophy (Magee 1998 : 27; Soccio 2007 : 142, 185).

Philosophy literally means wisdom, and wisdom includes human thought grounded in “eternal Ideas - absolute Good, Truth, Beauty” and is a spiritual, timeless reality (Tarnas 1993 : 37, 38; Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 246). Thus, human thought was perceived as a life force in service of the spirit, and the human intellect was seen not merely as an instrument for physical existence, but also as a “divine faculty by which the human soul could discover both its own essence and the world’s meaning” (Tarnas 1993 : 38). Plato perceived this divine faculty as an eternal essence existing in anyone of us, and it only requires to be awakened. With Socrates and Plato the human search for value and meaning again became rooted in nature, and nature and its order were again perceived as being informed by divine intelligence.

Beauty, for Plato, had the potentiality to open one’s aware consciousness, and this aware consciousness of beauty can be directed to bridge one’s perceived separateness from the divine and immerse in it (Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 27). This translates into a divine consciousness that is innate in every one of us. Before birth our immortal soul experiences the divine, but once existing in the physical body we seem to forget and not remember this reality. Therefore, the intent of philosophy is to reawaken that which is in our soul and bring our mind back into the light of the true essence, or source of being. This means that the intellect of the mind must rise beyond the physical existence to re-

attain the forgotten knowledge. It is this recollection that is the ultimate purpose of true knowledge or wisdom.

Thus, for Plato, true knowledge or wisdom can be attained through a process of education that serves both the aware consciousness of the soul and the divine universe. Education Plato perceived as a process in which truth is presented to the mind not from without but is brought forth from within. This means that true knowledge or wisdom that is revealed to the mind pertains not only to the mind but also the nature of the universe. This is the knowledge or wisdom that is hidden and concealed from us but through self-knowledge can become revealed. Thus, philosophy necessitates the reawakening of forgotten true knowledge or wisdom and the remembering of its divine immortal essence (Magee 1998; Socio 2007).

According to Tarnas (1993), Plato's philosophy, based on the universal and the divine, is a rational doctrine of "first principle" as the foundation of the universe, implying that a "divine intelligence" is "governing the cosmos" (45). Within the laws of this divine intelligence of the cosmos all opposites and tensions are balanced and harmonized. To live life and not be awakened to our true essence means to live in disharmony within this divine cosmic intelligence. Therefore, the striving of the spiritual soul is to achieve union with the divine cosmos. In this striving the human soul discovers that its essence and intelligence is the same as the essence and intelligence of nature and the essence and wisdom of the divine principle itself. And the divine principle is one in the human soul and the world of nature. Thus, the significance of the Socratic maxim, "Know thyself" (Soccio 2007 : 115).

### *Aristotle*

In the third century B.C. Aristotle connected philosophy more closely to this world. Through inquiry and logic Aristotle modified and grounded Plato's transcendent idealism of the universe (Magee 1998 : 32). As a "philosophical naturalist", Aristotle believed that true reality pertains to the natural world, the world we live in and experience. This natural visible world Aristotle perceived to be within a rational, intelligible and ordered universe. Within this universe everything follows internally guided laws of nature which can be observed in order to discover its essential purpose (Soccio 2007 : 193; Magee 1998). As an essential part of this world of nature within the ordered universe, human beings function in accord with its internally guided laws and it is they who can observe and discover its essential purpose. Therefore, to comprehend human existence meant to understand the deeper meaning of the underlying structure of the visible world (Magee 1998 : 34,36; Soccio 2007 : 172).

According to Soccio (2007), whereas for Plato the good life was to live life according "to some ideal standards and then trying to perfect this world", for Aristotle the search for the good life meant to "acquire facts without bias and then using that information to make this a better world" (171). This meant that whereas for Plato true knowledge or wisdom was a means to discern transcendent order, for Aristotle true knowledge or wisdom was a means to discover an inherent order in the material world.

Aristotle's perspectives also differed from Plato's philosophy with respect to Form as a basic aspect of transcendent reality. For Aristotle, Soccio (2007) explains, this world and this life is the true reality and every particular thing within it has two aspects: form and substance. Form for Aristotle meant tangible objects, such as trees, animals, or

human beings, and substances he perceived as a shared quality, or the basic essence (173; Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 8-10; Magee 1998).

The basic essence that we all share, Soccio (2007) declares, Aristotle perceived as that which is in

*matter* and makes a thing what it is ... and matter has no distinct characteristics until some form is imparted to it or until the form inherent in a thing becomes actualized. ... Matter provides ‘opportunity’; form provides ‘direction.’ Form does not – cannot - exist without matter; matter does not – cannot - exist without form. The ... universe is a continuum of formed matter from the lowest, most inert things to the most complex, autonomous, and active ones. Understanding anything consists of understanding its relationship to other things on this continuum (174).

Thus, the basic essence of our human nature is a universal that can be comprehended by the intellect, or mind, but it cannot exist independent of form (Soccio 2007 : 173; Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 8-10). Thus, form needs matter to actualize its essence. For instance, our essential essence cannot exist without a material composition, or matter; for example, our physical body. Our physical body/form provides “opportunity” to exist in this material world, and substance/essence provides “direction” as we strive from that which is potential to that which is actual (Soccio 2007 : 174). This means that substance/essence is an innate principle inherent in all organisms that functions to purposely move form to actualize its potential. For instance, the sapling becomes the tree, the seed becomes the plant (Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 101).

In this way of perceiving, Aristotle placed Plato’s philosophic differentiation of the two being/becoming worlds into the context of the visible, tangible world. Aristotle believed that the human intellect would come to recognize the processes inherent within the natural world. This meant to begin with sense perception as the foundation for practical knowledge, and, then, through rational discourse move from potential to actual



knowledge. Essentially, this is a process, Aristotle believed, in which the mind, in analyzing and comprehending the physical world, would innately strive toward fulfilling its own aspirations (Magee 1998).

Thus, whereas for Plato it was intuition that grasped the transcendent ways of knowing and this was the basis of knowledge, for Aristotle empiricism and logic were the foundation of knowledge. Yet, according to Tarnas (1993), despite his perception of the mind activating sensory experience, Aristotle believed that there is an aspect of the mind that has an inherent power beyond experience and logic. This aspect of the mind is indeed divine and immortal and it alone can give an intuitive understanding of universal truths (60). This means that the inherent power beyond the mind is the aspect of the mind's divine spiritual wisdom that shares its essential essence with the immortal and transcendent source. It is this aspect of the mind that enlightens and makes known the process of cognition and intuition to understand the order of the world and to make universal truth knowable.

Making universal truth knowable to the mind, the human thought comes to comprehend and understand the eternal divine consciousness, or absolute Being, in nature (Tarnas 1993 : 63). By virtue of coming to understand that we share in the spiritual intelligence in nature, we, as human beings, intuitively strive to grow and fulfill our purpose toward self-perfectment and becoming one with Being itself. Thus, despite generally perceiving Aristotle as secular in his thinking, his philosophy conveys a move from the natural or material causes to a philosophy of spiritual and divine causes. All this in an effort to come to understand the meaning of the intelligible essence of the universe (Tarnas 1993 : 66; Magee 1998 : 37).

Essentially, the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle were two divergent approaches to make the ordered universe knowable. Plato's philosophic focus was on the transcendent form; that is from the top down. Whereas, for Aristotle it was an intentional focus that made it possible to rationally analyze the natural world and to rationally foster a more explicit scientific explanation; and this from the bottom up. Yet, both converge in its most meaningful essence.

### **The Christian Worldview**

Following the Greek era, Christianity emerged and drastically transformed the worldview of the classical world. By the end of the fourth century A.D., Christianity came to be officially recognized as a legitimate religion of the Roman world (Magee 1998 : 49, 50)

The conception of the Christian worldview came to be perceived as fundamentally historical in nature rather than philosophical. For instance, in the classical world the mystery of death and rebirth was perceived to be an esoteric phenomenon. However, with Christ, such a phenomenon became a concrete historical reality, and, in time, the biblical revelations came to be perceived as absolute truth. Nonetheless, the Christian worldview did not only absorb the metaphysical and mystery philosophies of the classical Greek era, but also the monotheism of the Judaic tradition. As such, Christianity, conceiving of itself as a religion of the world, in actuality owed much to the early Greek philosophy as well as the Jewish religious tradition (Magee 1998 : 50, 51).

Essentially, Christianity has its foundation in Judaeo-Christian thought; however, in its metaphysical structure it remains fundamentally Platonic. For instance, as Tarnas (1993) explains, the Judaic-Platonic synthesis of the term "Logos", soon converged with

Christian theology of “Christ as the incarnate Logos” (102). This means that Christianity came to validate some Platonic principles, and, in fact, these principles took on new significance in the

existence of a transcendent reality of eternal perfection, the sovereignty of divine wisdom in the cosmos, the primacy of the spiritual over the material, ...the soul’s immortality, ...the belief in death as a transition, ... the existence of a prior condition of divine knowledge (Tarnas 1993 : 101, 102).

With this perspective the divine knowledge of the Platonic philosophy became synthesized with the Christian outlook of the intelligible divine rationality of the world. The Christian view absorbed the aspect of the Platonic doctrine that true knowledge is of a timeless and non-sensory realm, and that there is part of us that also belongs to that realm. Whereas our other physical part dwells in a sensory world that consists of “fleeting illusions” and non-lasting knowledge (Magee 1998 : 51, 52).

It is through the perspective of Christ as the human Logos, and in the search for personal knowledge in relation to the meaning of life, as well as in the search for and conscious awareness of the universe as an ordered cosmic realm, that the personal and spiritual, the historical and the philosophical, the human and the divine became united into one.

However, during the transition from the Greek philosophy to Christianity, Plato’s transcendent Ideas or Logos, as constituting the foundation of human knowledge, became differently perceived and then amended. That is, Christianity came to be perceived as the self-revelation of the one eternal being (Magee 1998 : 51). And, Plato’s metaphysical philosophy of sense experience in a sensory world, as well as the perception of knowledge innate within each of us that has been forgotten and requires recollection,

became modified to include the human knowledge of religious revelation. In time the biblical revelation and the one monotheistic Being became to be perceived as the sole authentic source and the sole salvation. This perspective ushered in a new order in the Western world with the emphasis on Christian monotheism within a universal community, and only this new order constituted true knowledge of the universe, and only this new order knew the true way of being in the world (Magee 1998 : 51, 52).

Within this Christian worldview, reason was not considered a capable means of comprehending cosmic truth. Rather, it was perceived that faith would make authentic understanding possible. It was perceived that only through faith could a deeper meaning of reality be made comprehensible. It is only faith, not intellectual learning such as science, mathematics and astronomy, that would be able to liberate humanity and reunite the material world with the timeless transcendent reality.

Although the Christian faith emanated into a world religion toward a collective Christian identity, according to Tarnas (1993), it simultaneously encouraged personal autonomy toward the growth of the individual conscience by believing in the immortality of the “individual soul” (117). This developed into distinctive qualities and traits that eventually came to form the European personality. Yet, despite distinctive attributes of personal value, the Christian identity as a whole imposed religious conformity as seen in the second and third centuries with the suppression and annihilations of the Gnostics (Ludwig 2006 : 405). Eventually this religious movement developed into a one truth, one path monolithic ideology.

Within this movement, Tarnas (1993) claims, Christianity brought the Greek, Judaic, Gnostic, Roman and Near Eastern into one synthesis that would dominate the

European mind until the Renaissance. Human individuality, so important in Greek times, now became submissive to the authority of the Christian Church. As well, individual Christians came to be perceived as unable to independently judge for themselves morally, intellectually and spiritually. Thus, it became perceived that at this stage in the human evolution cosmic truths were not accessible to individual believers. However, it was believed, that as humanity evolved spiritually, such cosmic truths would become knowable (167). This perspective stipulated a cosmic plan of human spiritual evolution, and the Christian Church believed that it was its responsibility to carry out that plan.

As humanity evolved, those who converted to Christianity began to place new values on self-responsibility and the sanctity of life. This involved having compassion, humility and forgiveness. It involved having a fuller awareness of the inner life. As well, with the conception of each individual being significant in the cosmic plan, a stable and emotionally nourishing way of life was made possible. It was believed that on this mundane plane of existence human life is on probationary trial, but under the divine plan of human spiritual evolution those who are faithful would be reunited in the spiritual realm with the Divine. As we can see, for the medieval Christians faith was not merely a blind belief. Rather, in the Christian worldview, reality was a perceptible and self-evident way of being (Soccio 2007; Magee 1998).

Thus, the historical Christ, Tarnas (1993) explains, had a significantly unifying effect on the Christian universe. The calendar of human history began with the birth of Christ. The Western culture became deeply permeated with Christian faith and dogma. As with the Greek philosophy, the West analyzed, critiqued and transformed the

Christian worldview, yet some aspects of that vision remain deeply embedded in the Western mind (Soccio 2007; Magee 1998).

### **The Medieval Era**

By the twelfth century a change in the intellectual climate occurred with the Church sponsoring scholarship and education. Secular learning began to be more focused on the reality of the natural world, and it was believed that the human mind would be able to comprehend that world. With such perception, attention was given to grammar, arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy, and together with the West's rediscovery of Aristotle's writings, which were preserved by the Moslems and Byzantines during the West's dark ages, a radical shift was created in the philosophical Christian worldview (Magee 1998 : 55). Aristotle's knowledge of science and the power of the human intellect found ready receptivity in the medieval thought.

Universities in European cities were now evolving into autonomous centers of learning. Devoted to the pursuit of knowledge, Christian beliefs now began to be analyzed; this meant that, in order to understand Christian beliefs, a critical self-reflection and a general analytical rationality needed to be applied (Soccio 2007 : 235). Thus, in this perspective learning now became more inclined toward both naturalism and rationalism and the centers of learning became increasingly permeated by a rational vision that in time transformed European thought.

The intent of medieval philosophy was to synthesize faith with reason so that the revealed truths of Christianity could rationally be analyzed (Soccio 2007 : 230; Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 104). A distinction was made between the knowledge drawn from theology and the knowledge obtained by reasoning from science. But independent secular

learning and the need for empirical observation in the physical world became increasingly important in the university. Concerned with the rational knowledge of this world, Aquinas, a scholastic philosopher who left the monastery to teach in the world, directed his attention to the divergent tendencies that existed between the Greek philosophy and the Christian vision, between faith and reason, between wisdom and nature (Magee 1998 : 59; Soccio 2007 : 236; Stawell and Marvin 1923). This resulted in a humanistic knowledge of the natural world in its relation to divine revelation, a quest that opened the path toward a new direction culminating in the scientific revolution (Magee 1998 : 61).

Aquinas emphasized that divine wisdom could be found in nature itself; that is natural intelligence or natural reason of this world could be disclosed by nature itself through “concrete experience and empirical evidence, rather than with revelations or dogma (Soccio 2007 : 240). For Aquinas this meant that nature’s order could be empirically observed and experimented with through a rational scientific knowledge of this world “acquired through sensory experience, on which our minds then reflect” (Magee 1998 : 59). This reflection then would in time lead the human mind to the Divine itself. For, as Aquinas perceived, the natural world is the testing ground upon which human beings work out their spiritual destiny. Thus, the natural world, Aquinas perceived, as the stage upon which the history of the spirit is innately linked with the history of nature.

With the scholastic philosophy of Aquinas a new perception of individual autonomy and human reason in relation to the particularities of human experience, as well as a new perception to nature came to be emphasized. It was believed that nature

could provide a “deeper appreciation of divine wisdom, and that a rational exploration of the physical world could disclose its inherent religious value” (Tarnas : 1993 : 180).

Thus, this time in history it came to be realized that the knowledge of Christianity, the knowledge of the natural world, and human reason, serve to corroborate and support each other. It came to be realized that faith and reason are ultimately drawn from the same Source.

Influenced by Plato’s perception of the one reality that permeates all, and Aristotle’s understanding of nature being one with the ideal Form, Aquinas declared that it was the human being who could participate as a unifying element toward synthesis of these two perspectives, and, therefore, with the Divine itself (Soccio 2007). In this effort toward such synthesis, it came to be perceived that the nature and spirit of the ever-developing human being are but aspects of the one divine Source. As Tarnas (1993) indicates, for Aquinas this divine Source could be made understood through the “observation of the visible and particular ... experiencing the particular through the senses, the human mind could then move toward the universal, which made intelligible the particular” (182). Thus, it came to be perceived that the sense experience of this world, as well as human cognition, were necessary components to awaken the universal, the knowledge of the one divine Source.

In time it came to be understood that all and everything commonly participate in the creation and existence of being. All and everything emanates from and returns to the one Source. As Tarnas (1993) points out, at this time in history “participation made full metaphysical sense only when it was deepened to reach the principle of existence itself” (183-184). It came to be understood that this participation in the creation and existence of



all represents the human being's movement from what is potential and what is actual. This movement represented a striving from within to seek self-perfection. All represented an innate inner effort to return to the Source. Thus, only a deep philosophical comprehension of the wisdom of the significance of our existence would fully synthesize our being with the Source itself.

This time in history, the quest of the human intellect started by the Greeks converged with the spiritual quest of Christianity. In this quest Plato's transcendent reality and Aristotle's this-worldly active intellect came to be synthesized with the Christian worldview, and this synthesis created a shift in consciousness that opened the perspective toward new human knowledge, toward a new and expanded worldview (Magee 1998 : 61; Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 104).

### ***Secular Humanism***

With this shift toward an expanded worldview and in the hope to instill literary and moral excellence, new appreciation was again given the literary classics of ancient times, such as essays, biographies, poetry, and histories, as well as philosophy, such as the Platonic dialogues and the works of Aristotle (Magee 1998; Soccio 2007). This was a time for rediscovering the literary wealth of the ancient Greek and Roman era, which was perceived not merely as a source for "scientific knowledge and rules for logical discourse, but for the deepening and enrichment of the human spirit" (Tarnas 1993 : 209). Thus, the enrichment and expansion of the European/Western mind not merely in Christian theology but also in the classical Latin of the Christian Church and the literature of the Greek era came to be perceived as a means to spiritual insight and ethical development.

This literary wealth of antiquity provided the foundation for a new humanism that emphasized human welfare and dignity “based on the belief that human intelligence and effort are capable of improving present conditions” (Soccio 2007: 37). To improve the human condition, it was Petrarch, humanist and poet, who felt the need to turn to introspection and observation of one’s own thoughts and feelings in order to gain new understanding of the human way of life (Tarnas 1993 : 210). What was needed, he believed, was a new vision of learning motivated by imagination, creativity, human dignity and faith.

Thus, learning came to be perceived as an enhancement of faith and synthesizing faith with learning came to be understood as a deeper and more expanded educative spiritual vision. The focus came to be not so much on scientific knowledge of the natural world as with the philosophy of Aquinas. Rather, through introspective awareness of one’s own conscience, the attentive focus of the humanities also came to be on psychology and the aesthetic. It is with this new self-reflective awareness that it came to be realized what it means to be human. With this new self-reflective understanding the “literary discipline became a spiritual discipline”, in which the striving of the artistic paralleled the striving of the soul (Tarnas 1993 : 210, 211; Soccio 2007 : 37, 38, 229, 230; Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 115).

Inspired by Petrarch, European scholars began to recover from the Byzantine world original ancient Greek works, including Plato’s Dialogues and the works of Aristotle, and these works of classical antiquity the humanists then began to translate and pass on to their contemporaries (Magee 1998 : 55). With these translations the humanists found that Plato’s and Aristotle’s works were congruent with their own intellectual

understanding. This comprehension had a profound and transformative effect on the European intellectual development. In time an autonomous secular education came to be recognized and accepted in Europe and this opened the European mind to a new way of seeing the world (Magee 1998).

The world the humanists discovered with Platonism and Neoplatonism, Tarnas (1993) writes, was a spiritual way of knowing that was similar to the spiritual tradition of the intellectual, imaginative and spiritual insight expressed not only in Greek, but also in Hebrew, Babylonian and Egyptian texts. These texts spoke of a world, and all and everything within it, as emanating from the transcendent reality. These texts spoke of a world within which all was permeated by divinity and possessing numinous properties. These texts spoke of transcendent nature that is permeated by a mystical intelligence. For instance, the light of the sun, as the source of life, was perceived as the light of the transcendent reality. These texts also spoke of human beings being imbued with the divine spark, and the human being could discover from within that this divine spark was the same as the spark of infinite divinity itself (213, 214; Soccio 2007; Stawell and Marvin 1923). These notions found ready acceptance in the humanist thought.

Thus, the essence of humanist thought came to be that the individual had the freedom and the power for self-transformation and self-transcendence toward oneness with ultimate Being. For acquiring knowledge of the universe, imagination (Ludwig (2006), explains, became imperative upon which to base one's epistemological vision. It came to be perceived that imagination could impart metaphysical truth, and that imagination could bring to one's consciousness those transcendent universal ideas or forms that ordered the universe and that could be discovered or remembered as the

“ultimate principles of reality” (Ludwig 2006 : 333; Magee 1998 : 29). Thus, imagination came to be perceived as having the inspirational vision and power to synthesize the human mind with the ultimate reality, with cosmos itself.

With the rediscovery of ancient texts, mythology, astrology and esotericism came to be integrated into the humanist thought. For instance, Venus, the goddess of beauty of classical mythology, came to be restored as the symbol of spiritual beauty. This archetypal symbol, perceived to be the reconciling agent in service of the soul’s reawakening to divine love, came to be recognized as an alternative to the Virgin Mary (Tarnas 1993 : 216).

Platonist philosophy itself came to be understood as a sacred scripture, and the Platonic tradition of imaginative intelligence came to be invoked in an effort to restore humanity’s relationship with the divine (Soccio 2007 : 309). This integration into human thought and education came to enhance the dignity and divinity of the individual, it came to embed in nature a deeper spiritual meaning, and it came to give Christianity new perspectives (Soccio 20007 : 309). With this integration the individual, nature and the classical heritage were comprehended as divine and this enriched the human vision and expanded the existing human horizon.

With the rediscovery of the ancient texts and their inherent non-Christian spiritual tradition, the Church’s spiritual authority became weakened. The inner life and imagination of individuals came in direct conflict with the traditional institutional rituals and prayers of the Church. For instance, as Tarnas (1993) informs us, the belief that the human personality could be transformed and that it could transcend to a higher state of being, and that human beings do have the capacity and responsibility to determine their

own destiny in the cosmos, including oneness with the transcendent reality without the mediation of the Church, were found deeply disturbing to the Church (217). Yet, generally, the Church accepted many of the philosophical concepts within the classical revived texts. As well, the Church supported a vast array of the imaginative artistic achievements of the time.

Thus, humanism revitalized the philosophical spiritual life of the European/Western culture and strengthened the movement toward intellectual independence. Through such modalities as the imaginative artistic achievements, the synthesis of philosophical thought and the vision that the human being is a distinctive creative being, came a cultural and individual revival that reached and expanded deep into the formation of the modern era. As Tarnas (1993) postulates, in the Western culture, as with Plato and Aristotle, a balance began to emerge, a synthesis between: “reason and imagination . . . nature and spirit”, between the external world and the inner reality (219). This balance or synthesis provided the necessary impetus and movement toward the evolution of the modern worldview.

### ***The Modern Worldview***

With the modern worldview came to be expressed the growth of self-determining individualism and the expansion of secularism; that is, new value was placed on the individual and this created a shift that assisted to evolve a movement toward independent thought. For instance, new interest in knowledge, beauty and nature, new appreciation of individual thoughts and creative innovations, and the readiness to go beyond traditional restrictions, helped to develop a unique Western individual identity that extended across Europe (Tarnas 1993 : 228).

As well, this continued to be a time of transition, a time of balance and synthesis of the Church with the classical and the secular. A good example of this synthesis is revealed in Leonardo's art, which, despite its spiritual expressiveness, was also accompanied by technical accuracy, that is, it was accurately represented mathematically and empirically (Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 203).

This was a time within which a new world was discovered and this expanded the collective horizon. The printing press was developed allowing for the proliferation of the printed word. This discovery allowed for the expansion of literacy, as well as the rapid dissemination of new ideas among scientists as well as reformists. Foremost, this was a time of the emergence of a new and expansive consciousness. Individuals became more energetic and self-confident in their creativeness. They believed that life was to be lived in the here and now (Tarnas 1993 : 231). Essentially, this was a time that affected every aspect of European culture and every perspective of the individual within it.

Luther rebelled against the Roman Catholic Church shattering and fragmenting the unity of Western Christendom (Magee 1998 : 52, 65). The Protestant Reformation saw in its wake an intellectual and cultural life that threw off and disregarded the dominance of the Christian Church. This gave the impulse toward intellectual and spiritual independence (Magee 1998 : 70; Soccio 2007 : 258). The Roman Catholic Church came to be perceived as no longer the undisputed spiritual authority. Nor did it come to be perceived as being mandatory for the religious well-being of humanity. As a consequence, a schism emerged in the European culture that existed since the merging of the Christian religion with the ancient Roman era (Magee 1998; Soccio 2007). Thus, it

came to be that the Western world was no longer exclusively Catholic or monolithic. Indeed, the Western world experienced much instability in a diversified culture.

The Reformation created a paradox, Tarnas (1993) explains, the conservative Judaic Christianity on the one hand, and the secularizing Protestantism on the other. This culminated into a revolution that created a divide in Europe: the Catholic south with its orthodox Christianity, and the Protestant north with its naturalism and secularism. In actuality, this was a revolution of the individual conscience. Religious authority came to be placed in each individual, and only the individual's inner response came to be considered a valid experience. This marked the beginning of a personal religious freedom (237, 238, 239). Essentially, the Reformation proved to be a very important step toward the transformation of the Western mind, as well as toward developing the Western individual personality.

The secularizing of the Western culture, Soccio (2007) declares, had the effect that individuals came to support their own beliefs, and the faculties of the Western mind came to be increasingly perceptive and openly critical. In the modern mind there no longer existed the notion that nature was divinely permeated. Rather, the natural world came to be perceived as purely mundane. This notion opened the Western mind to a this-worldly understanding of reality, rather than understanding a transcendent knowledge of reality. Furthermore, modern science opened the way for a more secular view of the cosmos. This view omitted any consideration of reality as being supernatural. All this proved to be an evolution into a non-spiritual understanding of the world.

Protestantism opened the way for the modern mind to discover an impartial and objective truth. This pertained to a search for truth unprejudiced and undistorted by

tradition. As Tarnas (1993) puts forth, two truths had to be confronted, the religious and the scientific, and this constituted the schism between faith and reason. The Christian faith that had become deeply ingrained in the culture over the centuries could not readily be supplanted. Yet, the scientific discoveries could no longer be ignored nor negated. Thus, truth became truth as experienced by the autonomous individual, and the individual's search for objective truth led to a scientific mentality firmly based within a secular society. This secular society increasingly embraced change by establishing a division between the church and the state that culminated into a religious and liberal tolerant era (244). It was during this process of religious and metaphysical turmoil that the Scientific Revolution emerged and held its control over the Western mind.

### ***The Scientific Revolution***

The secular epistemological vision of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries became most visible with the contributions to the modern worldview of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Descartes, and Newton.

The Copernican vision that nature could ultimately be made understandable through simple and harmonious mathematics was first put forth by the Pythagorean and Platonist philosophies in terms of an eternal transcendent ideal (Stawell and Marvin 1993 : 197). Copernicus' hypothesis that the sun is the center of the solar system with earth revolving around the sun replaced the traditional earth-centered order and reduced the significance of earth and the human being (Soccio 2007 : 259, 260).

This hypothesis came to be intensely attacked, as explained by Tarnas (1993), first by the Protestant reformers who condemned Copernicus for contradicting the scripture concerning the earth as fixed. Then, following the publication of the Copernican



theory, the Catholic Church also condemned it as threatening the entire Christian worldview (252). It was feared that the entire dichotomy between the celestial and the terrestrial realms, between the spiritual heavens and the physical earth would result in confusion and utter chaos. Foremost, no longer could there be an anthropocentric vision of the central importance of the human being within a cosmos as stipulated by the church. This further increased the tension that existed at that time between religion and science, between faith and reason (253).

It was Kepler who offered a mathematical explanation of a moving earth in the cosmos. As Magee (1998) reports, Kepler discovered the mathematical laws that proved that the earth and the other planets move in elliptical orbits and that “their motions are faster in some parts of their orbits than in others” (66). The speed of this motion depended on the distance of the planets from the sun; that is, the planets near the sun move faster and the planets away from the sun move slower (Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 228). Thus, solving the ancient problem of the planets, Kepler authenticated Plato’s prediction of a mathematically ordered universe, and confirmed the Copernican hypothesis of a sun-centered universe (Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 199).

Thus, it came to be perceived that empirical data and abstract mathematical reasoning could come to predict astronomical reality. As well, this prediction could also come to validate the exalted and elated perspective of the cosmos.

Galileo proved the authenticity of the heliocentric theory. By virtue of the telescope, Magee (1998) reports, Galileo could observe the surface of the moon, the spots on the sun, the moons moving around Jupiter, and the colossal profusion of individual stars of the Milky Way. It was because of the telescope that Galileo could establish that

“certainty was available in our knowledge of the world” (88). The telescope validated the existence of concrete substances, and not just points of light, in the heavens, and these could now be put to empirical investigation and compared with mathematical hypotheses. As well, Galileo’s law of physical motion, that is that falling bodies carry on moving in a straight line unless interfered with by some other force, opened the door to the science of dynamics (66, 67).

In the understanding of the world, Galileo’s work thus showed how accurate observations can develop mathematics that can be formed into structures of thought (Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 229). Thus, Galileo’s science of motion opened up the Western mind to a newly perceived celestial world. Simultaneously, a new terrestrial world was opened up to the Western mind with the exploration of the Americas.

With the Church’s firm assumption of a stationary earth, Tarnas (1993) writes, Galileo’s cosmological theory was repressed. However, finding its way to northern Europe, the teachers in higher education as well as the learned elite in the society played a crucial role in opening up to human understanding and aspiration a more comprehensive knowledge of the universe. Thus, with Protestantism intellectual independence had come to the West, and with Galileo science came to open up new horizons and this pointed to the emergence of a new cosmology (263).

At this time in the evolution of the Western mind the physical world could now be understood in geometric and mathematical terms, but, Tarnas (1993) points out, there still remained some pivotal questions: How and why do the planets and the earth itself move? Why do the earth and the other planets move toward the sun? And why do physical objects fall to the earth (268)?

It was Descartes who provided an explanation for this. Tarnas (1993) explains that for Descartes nature was ordered by mathematical laws and the physical world was composed of particles that “obeyed certain laws imposed ... by a providential God at their creation” (267). To discover these laws, Descartes employed atomism, as matter in motion, and hypothesized that since all motion necessarily is mechanistic, there must be basic principles that govern this motion in the universe (267). These principles, Descartes believed, were a universal force that attracted the planetary motions toward the sun and the falling bodies toward the earth (269).

With Newton the Copernican revolution was verified and proven. Newton established that gravity was the universal force, a force that caused physical objects to fall to the earth, a force that caused both the earth and the planets to move around the sun. As well, Newton established that the “workings of the physical universe were indeed subject to laws that ... were discernible by human beings, and ... expressible in equations” (Magee 1998 : 69; Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 230).

Thus, it is Newton who synthesized Kepler’s laws of planets in motion around the sun, Galileo’s laws of physical motion, and Descartes’ mechanistic laws of the physical universe. It was Newton who brought all together into one comprehensive theory. Within this theory the physical/celestial dichotomy came to be resolved and a new cosmology came to be introduced.

It is important to note here that in the seventeenth century with the Newtonian philosophy of the attractive force of gravity in the understanding of nature, the Pythagorean “insight that the whole material universe was susceptible of explanation in terms of mathematics” has at last been proven (Magee 1998 : 68). However, essential to

this understanding is that it was human intelligence that came to penetrate and comprehend the “universe’s essential order” (Tarnas 1993 : 271). In time the modern intellectual mind came to accept the Newtonian hypothesis as the true nature of reality as well as the foundation of a new worldview. It is also important to note here that, just as these natural philosophers who saw further by standing on the shoulders of those who had gone before them, so, too, those saw further who evolved during the philosophic revolution.

### ***The Philosophic Revolution***

In the seventeenth century philosophy transferred its attention from religion to science. As Magee (1998) points out, with Bacon came the discovery of a new experimental science: a new method of acquiring knowledge that was fundamentally empirical. According to Bacon, the human mind could evoke and come to understand the laws of nature and thus bring nature under its control. First, Bacon said, there needs to be a well-based hypothesis formed and tested by experiment. When the experiment confirms the hypothesis, then the law of nature shall have been discovered from which accurate predictions can be deduced. This means either moving from the particular to the general while in the process of discovering the scientific law, which is a process that came to be known as induction. Or, moving from the general to the particular while applying the law that has been discovered, which is a process that came to be known as deduction (76). This is the scientific method that proved to have immense influence to the present time.

For Bacon, Tarnas (1993) postulates, the realm of theology and the realm of nature were separate, with each having its own laws and its own appropriate method of investigation, learning and knowing (274). Theology, the realm of faith, Bacon perceived

as separate from the science of nature in that nature was perceived as devoid of religious imagination. Only through experiments, Bacon proclaimed, could truths hidden in nature be revealed and inventions discovered in order to promote human well-being. Thus, Bacon advocated experience as the logical source of true knowledge, and to pursue the advancement of true knowledge the European mind now came to be directed toward empirical science (275). Yet, Bacon's quest to understand the natural world came to promote human well-being within the realm of faith.

Descartes, according to Magee (1998), perceived that with mathematical rationalism and human reason the metaphysical truth of the order of the universe could be made comprehensible. Descartes came to realize that it was because of reason that in mathematics a certainty could be deduced, and that, therefore, reason could also be applied to other areas of knowledge of the world (86). Thus, for Descartes the most fundamental method was to start from reliable facts, and then, after deriving logical consequences from these facts, to continue to pursue by deductive reasoning (88).

Descartes, Magee (1998) notes, perceived human beings as minds, and that perspective led him to observe and comprehend the world as consisting of minds and matter. As minds, Descartes believed, human beings could come to experience and observe the world as matter. To the experience of direct and immediate observation, Descartes would ask the question: "What can I know?" (89). Using doubt as a method of "stripping away layer after layer of our accustomed ideas and suppositions", and using the "first-person singular form of the question", Descartes believed, sharpens our observations and perceptions (89). Thus, applying this question to the thinking self in order to come up with self-evident reasoning or understanding, created a method whereby

human knowledge of self-awareness was brought to the individual as a thinking being. It is this perspective that put epistemology, as a theory of knowing, at the center of philosophy, and, philosophy itself thus came to be thought of as “being” (89).

With the perspective of Descartes, human beings came to know their own awareness as subjective experience, human beings came to know themselves as conscious beings, and this was perceived as a rational self-awareness that can be intuited from within. However, it is the physical, objective, or external world that Descartes said could be measured mathematically (Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 233).

Further, for Descartes, Soccio (2007) indicates, only a practical philosophy of universal mathematics, that would completely analyze and manipulate the physical world, could serve the health and well-being of humanity. Descartes believed that human reason could first experientially establish that the human being exists, and, then, with the necessity of logical thinking, rationally verify “the existence of God”, and thus have a “foundation for truth” (277). In this way, the human being as a rational subject on the one hand and the material objective world on the other hand, empirical science arose and came to define itself in relation to the universe, and philosophy came to define itself in relation to science (287).

Thus, the foundation of the modern empirical and rational mind came to be established and to this day continues to exert its authority over the Western worldview. The modern worldview became increasingly secular as science replaced religion in importance. Increasingly knowledge and order of the modern universe came to be comprehensible through the resources of the human rational mind, and knowledge of the

modern cosmology came to be a secular phenomenon without numinous attributes and significance.

And yet, it is noteworthy that I point out here, as found in Tarnas (1993), that the original scientific revolutionaries and the natural philosophers throughout history perceived their work as sacredly illumined and their scientific discoveries as an awakening of the spirit (300).

Here I will let Tarnas (1993) speak: For instance, Newton exclaimed, “O God, I think thy thoughts after thee!” (300), and for Copernicus astronomy was a “science more divine than human” (300). For Kepler his writings were “divinely illuminated as the inner mysteries of the cosmos unfolded before his eyes” (300), and for Galileo his telescopic discoveries were “made possible by God’s grace enlightening his mind” (300). Bacon believed that humanity’s scientific progress was a “material improvement of mankind corresponding to its spiritual approach” (300), and for Descartes the new universal science came through a dream in which “science was symbolically presented to him, as a divine mandate for his life’s work” (300). These scientific revolutionaries and natural philosophers believed that they saw further as to the sacred, divine knowledge of the cosmos and humanity’s experiences within it. They felt inspired and believed it their mission to convey to others their knowledge of the world and the universe.

What followed in the Western world is that confidence and trust in science, human reason and the moral self-responsibility of the individual, all came to be perceived as necessary elements that would improve human well-being and ultimately come to unite humanity. It came to be perceived in the Western world that its historical progress was toward the fulfillment of individual happiness, toward human freedom, and toward a

peaceful future. It came to be perceived that individuals could perfect themselves through their own effort. All this began as a perspective toward a better and more liberal world for the human being within which to live.

***Toward the Western world of today***

The premodern world had been perceived as being deeply spiritual and humanly meaningful. However, the world revealed by modern science has come to be a world devoid of spiritual purpose and without intrinsic meaning. The freedom from theological dogma attained through science now came to present a new sense of human alienation and fragmentation. The modern world increasingly came to denigrate human values. As well, with its previous perception of the immortality of the human soul and the infinity of the universe, humanity no longer felt it belonged to the modern cosmos.

In this modern era in the late eighteenth century it was Kant who was instrumental in the development of the modern mind in trying to resolve the modern epistemology's fundamental dichotomy between empiricism and rationalism; that is between experience and mind. To accomplish this Kant expanded the mathematical mode of reasoning to the metaphysics, and, in this way, drew attention to the fact that all human knowledge is interpretive (Soccio 2007; Tarnas 1993).

According to Kant, as Tarnas (1993) points out, if the human mind was essentially distinct and different from the external world of phenomena, and if the human mind's own experience was the only reality to which it had direct access, then the human mind's understanding and comprehension of the world was fundamentally its own interpretation of the world. This meant that the human mind could only perceive knowledge that is dependent on the human being. This meant that the human mind could



experience only the world of phenomena, the physical world of appearances. It further meant that the human mind could not precisely mirror the knowledge of the physical, objective world. Nor could the human mind experience an independent reality. It came to be perceived that the empirical world of phenomena the mind experiences has already been composed by the individual's own thinking mind (345). For, it came to be perceived that all experiences had already been constructed by the mind, and the world the mind perceives has already been organized by the mind's own way of thinking (343). This suggested that the only world known to the mind is the empirical world of phenomena or appearances. This world, then, exists only to the extent that we, as humanity, participate in its creation (345).

For Kant, Tarnas (1993) points out, the order of the world has its foundation in the human mind, and the human mind can attain certain knowledge of the world because the world the mind perceives and understands has already been imbued and suffused with the mind's own mental order (345). In this way, the human mind imposes its own way of perceiving the world on the information of its experiences (347). This suggests that neither pure empiricism without scientific proof, nor that pure rationalism without sensory evidence, could constitute a valid and viable epistemology. Thus, for Kant, it is reason that could determine the cognitive perceptions that are innate to all human experiences.

As seen with Kant, the ordering of reality is innate to the human mind. Sense experience might tie us to our individual self, but the power of thought might lead us to the "sum-total of Reality ... whatever that Reality might turn out to be" (Stawell and Marwin 1923 : 273). Therefore, for Kant the perceived order of the world originated with

the observer, and to make knowledge possible the mind necessarily had to impose its own cognitive perception on the information received through experience.

However, to experience the noumenal world, the world beyond our mind, beyond our perceptions, we need “transcendental ideas” that can bridge the “gap between the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds” (Soccio 2007 : 333). Empiricism validates sense experience, but “transcendental ideas are ‘triggered’ by experience when we rely on them to impose unity on the totality of our experiences” (Soccio 2007 : 333). For instance, as Kant suggests,

The beauty in things...indicated a harmony between every least particular of sensation and our own mind, a harmony which we cannot in the least explain by the ordinary concepts of our understanding, and which points to the conclusion that Nature, even in her transitory phenomena, shows a spirit profoundly akin to our own, and promises a satisfaction deeper than any we can at present comprehend. Beauty and its problems “compel us, whether we like it or not, to look beyond the horizon of the sensible” (Stawell and Marvin 1923 : 273).

Thus, as Kant perceived, meaning is rendered by the human mind and not in the world beyond the mind. However, the noumenal world, the world beyond the mind, could be communed with after the mind has come to recognize its own true nature. This means that, according to Kant, transcendent ideas regulate human understanding and make human experiences possible. For, what one knows and experiences is in essence a projection, and this projection necessarily is toward a higher intelligence, this projection is toward a unity with the essence of Reality itself.

To look beyond the horizon of sense experience and knowing projection meant to unite empirical observation with intuitive imagination. It was perceived that only in this way would it be possible to begin to discern and understand that which is concealed in nature and discover that which is its essential communal spirit. In Goethe’s view, as

Tarnas (1993) points out, the essence of nature permeates all including the human mind and thus the mind's own intuitive imagination. Therefore, the essence of nature, so akin to our own, can be "revealed in the very act of human cognition" (378). Further, Goethe believed that the human mind does not simply impress its desires, wishes and commands on nature, as thought by Kant. Rather, nature impresses its essential order on the human mind and in this way nature reveals itself.

Hegel continued this intrinsic perception of reality in an attempt to unify the human being and nature, spirit and matter, time and eternity. In Hegel's philosophy, Soccio (2007) puts forth, reality is referred to as

Absolute Thought, Mind, Spirit, or Idea. Hegel believed that it is the unique task of philosophy to discover the relationships of particular aspects of Reality to the Whole, which is a single, evolving substance known as Absolute Spirit or Absolute Mind. History is the all-encompassing Absolute Spirit self-actualizing into perfection (381).

Fundamental to Hegel's philosophy, Soccio (2007) continues, is that the "only way Mind can be recognized is as 'continuously developing consciousness.' The pattern that all consciousness follows constitutes a 'dialectic process' (381). For Hegel this dialectic process refers to

a three-step pattern in which an original idea ... is opposed by a contrary idea ... The interaction or struggle between the [two] produces a new idea ... that combines elements from the others, known as the synthesis . Once established, the synthesis becomes ... a new cycle until everything is realized in the infinite synthesis of Absolute Spirit. Each resulting level of consciousness includes its predecessors. ... the ongoing dialectic represents the actual structure of reality: the unfolding thought of the cosmic ... Mind or Spirit (381).

In the Hegelian perception, according to Soccio (2007), in this ongoing dialectical process the world is seen as being in the process of completing itself. For Hegel this meant that human reason, essentially an expression of the universal or Absolute Thought,

was thus ultimately grounded in the divine reason itself, that is Absolute Mind or Spirit. Hegel believed that it is possible to construct a “complete picture of reality, a grand system that would incorporate all of philosophy, science, theology, art, history, and such” (382). For Hegel, in order to understand anything it had to relate to the Whole. Thus, for Hegel “everything is always developing according to the dialectical process”. This dialectical process can only be understood when “experienced in relationship to the Ultimate Synthesis toward which all history is unfolding. History does not just happen. It is the rational development of progressively inclusive stages toward realization in Absolute Spirit” (382).

This dialectical process explained Hegel’s metaphysical comprehension. For Hegel the universal or Absolute Mind unfolds itself by realizing itself in the human spirit, and in that process the infinite expresses itself in the finite mundane world of space and time (Soccio 2007 : 381). This indicates a movement of knowledge from consciousness of the object being separate from the subject to consciousness of absolute unitive knowledge in which the human mind recognizes such unitive knowledge and knows its oneness with Absolute Mind.

In the nineteenth century Hegel’s world conception was the most satisfying philosophical development since the time of the Greeks. As Magee (1998) conveys, it was Socrates who first established the dialectic method at the center of philosophy, a teaching method of “seeking truth by a process of question and answer. ... It was a way of getting people to re-examine what they think they already know” (23). However, in the twentieth century, Tarnas (1993) informs us, Hegel’s metaphysical perspective in relation to the accessibility of the order of the universe to human aware understanding declined in

the intellectualization of the modern mind. In fact, such academic studies as the social sciences began to engage ever more to analyze “measurable factors” that were directed to people’s economic and social lives (383).

Yet, as science began to be questioned as to its epistemological and pragmatic effectiveness, there were many individuals who began to turn inward to reflect upon the unconscious. To examine the unconscious they believed would reveal meaning and the identity of the individual self. In this exploration new attention was being given to the inner workings of the psyche, the inner center of all human experience and cognition. In this inner search it was Freud and Jung who were among the most prominent innovative individuals who began to discover the unconscious structures of the human mind (Jung 1959 : 37, 143; Myers 1998 : 420).

Thus, the significance of interpretation so important in the nineteenth century now turned into depth psychology in the twentieth century (Gay 1995; Myers 1998). With Freud’s psychoanalysis the unconscious part of the psyche was discovered and came to influence human perception, cognition and behavior. However, in his endeavor to discover the root principles of mental organization, Jung found evidence of a

collective unconscious common to all human beings and structured according to powerful archetypal principles... universal patterns or modes of experience ... taking on the costume of the moment in each individual life and each cultural era, permeating each experience, each cognition, and each world view (Tarnas 1993 : 385; Jung 1959 : 107).

According to Jung, as Tarnas (1993) conveys, the archetypes were the primordial foundation of the psyche itself and depth psychology centered its psychological analysis within the deeply meaningful internal human experiences. These experiences came to be portrayed as the midpoint between the human being and science. However, there seemed

to be no possibility for synthesis between the psyche and the world beyond the mind, between mind and spirit. Archetypes were perceived as inherited structures that organize human experience without giving the human mind any direct knowledge of reality beyond the mind (387).

As with Kant, archetypes were perceived as deep patterns of human projection. Yet, in his later work, Jung's conception of archetypes became autonomous patterns of meaning that organize and appear to be intrinsic in both psyche and matter (Tarnas 1993 : 387). This meant that with depth psychology the modern subject-object dichotomy came to an end and a new path to heal the inner being emerged. This new path was hoped to be a rebirth toward imagination, insight, intuition and the spiritual.

Thus, in time the postmodern mind came to be more open, more receptive and appreciative of the inevitable constant change of knowledge and knowing reality. It came to be emphasized that no thought or thought system alone should govern any view of the world and its investigation. It came to be emphasized that human knowledge is necessarily determined by multiple means. Thus, the quest for knowledge came to reveal a reality of a rhythmically unfolding process that is continually affected and formed by every individual's own thoughts, words and deeds. This meant an evolving evolutionary process of reality whereby each individual becomes transformed within a reality that by this very act becomes transformed itself.

Generally, and from my own experience, I can say that within the postmodern mind has begun to emerge a shift toward intellectual diversity, toward deconstruction, the appreciation that knowledge is not constant, and that reality is an unfolding process determined by our own thoughts, words and actions. Sociology, history, philosophy,

psychology and education are beginning to advance the relativity of knowledge by bringing awareness to the Eurocentric ontology and epistemology, and this by highlighting the assumptions and the limitations of such concepts as class, race and gender bias. The postmodern mind is beginning to realize that our way of knowing the world is only the mind's interpretation, and that the inner and outer realities are multidimensional, changeable and unlimited. It is through such scholars as Capra, Glazer, Dillard, Dei, Miller, Restoule, Wane, Wilber, and many others, and their social reconstruction of knowledge, that more open and meaningful texts continue to be published.

The postmodern thought is beginning to be more critical about the West's history of expansionism and exploitation, colonialism and imperialism, its subjugation of women, people of color, the poor, the disabled, and the Indigenous societies. Contemporary academia is now more critical of the traditional assumptions of the superiority of the Western mind, of old established knowledges and beliefs, and old assumed worldviews. Contemporary academia is beginning to decenter the Western mind. Into this critical consciousness now emerges the awareness that only change is absolute, that nothing is static, that all and everything is in constant flux and changes at all times, and so can our perception about the superiority and authority of the perceived Western intellectual mind. However, this can only be created through "open conversations", as Tarnas (1993) writes, between diverse understandings and multiple paradigms (402). Such paradigms I discuss in the three philosophies in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

With this postmodern way of perceiving, evolved through Copernicus's heliocentric theory, that is by displacing the human being from the center of the world, such philosophers as Kant and Hegel and their interpretive and dialectic process, Freud's psychoanalysis pertaining to the unconscious aspect of the human psyche, and Jung's depth psychology, meaning is emerging with increased awareness of the individual's self-responsibility and innovative creativity toward a deeper meaning of life and toward knowing our own authentic being. From my own experiences I can say that the postmodern mind is beginning to become more conscious of its limitations and assumptions of ontology and epistemology, the nature of reality and the nature of knowing. Indeed, the postmodern mind is beginning to become more conscious that perception and comprehension are being fundamentally informed by human experience, intuitive imagination, and inspirational insight (Soccio 2007).

Further, from my own experiences in higher education I can say that in looking at the many destructive anti-human consequences that resulted from deeply masculine assumptions, such as gender and race bias, the exploitation of nature and society, the contemporary academic world is beginning to re-examine knowledge, nature, society, reality and the divine. As well, I can say that the importance to balance and synthesize the feminine with the masculine in our own being is beginning to be realized in our contemporary mind. In our effort to dismantle the existing masculine dualities between male and female, body and spirit, self and world, the conscious and the unconscious, for some of us, including myself, our spirit, in search for inner freedom developed through our own inner life spiritual experiences, is beginning to attempt to unite with the essence of our whole being.



Today, with the crisis we are experiencing in our social, cultural, ecological, moral and philosophical world, we have come to be increasingly aware that we need to engage the full resources of our being, that is not merely the intellectual mind, but also the aesthetic, imaginative, intuitive and inspirational. In the face of our existential crisis, as Tarnas (1993), Wilber (1983), Capra (1991) and others explain, we need to increase our awareness of being one human community living in unity with nature and the planet. Out of the Western intellectual history needs to evolve a new vision toward a more authentic education and way of life; indeed, a perspective toward a new worldview and a more participatory consciousness toward the whole universe.

A multitude of spiritual perspectives, such as Eastern teachings and African and North American Aboriginal spiritual traditions, are beginning to emerge onto the Western intellectual scene awaiting synthesis. My work is an attempt towards such synthesis of the Western intellectual mind with the wisdom of the spiritual heart inherent in such spiritual teachings and traditions. My work is an attempt for balance, harmony and unity in the existing intellectual discourse toward a whole life education and a more harmonious every day life.

### ***Reflective Thoughts***

As I have illustrated in this chapter in an overarching perspective, the Western perception of history is predominantly the history of the evolution and ascendance of the Western intellectual mind. It is a history communicated through masculine perspectives and these continue to affect our system of education and our whole way of life. What is important to realize is that this masculine Western perspective has been, and continues to be, pervasive in both men and women. As well, as I have pointed out in this chapter, it

has been pervasive in the organized religious thought of the West, the rationalist philosophy from the ancient Greeks onward, and the objective science of the modern West (Magee 1998; Soccio 2007). Throughout its perceived history the Western intellectual mind has repressed and subjugated the feminine aspect of itself. These are the feminine aspects of the Western mind of intuition, imagination and inspiration, of its connection with community, with body and with spirit, its aware consciousness as co-creator with nature, and its aware consciousness of the divine universe as one whole (Tolle 2006).

However, the existential pendulum of the intellectual mind, having swung to its one-sided extreme, requires, out of utmost inevitability and intrinsic consciousness, a reunification and synthesis with the feminine side of its being. To achieve such a synthesis, the masculine intellectual mind foremost needs to become aware of and comprehend its one-sidedness, and then strive to attain balance and harmony between these two polarities.

Being part of the duality of nature, as well as being part of everyone of us, both, the Masculine Principle, the masculine aspect of our being, and the Feminine Principle, the feminine aspect of our being, need to work together as one synthesis for us to experience balance and harmony in our system of education and everyday life. Thus, the masculine and the feminine aspects within each of us require each other for balance and harmony within ourselves, and this toward a shift in our own aware consciousness to complete ourselves, to strive toward self-perfectment, and thus come to embrace our whole being.

Imagine a triangle with one apex at the top, the left bottom apex representing the masculine principle, the intellect of the mind, and the right bottom apex representing the feminine principle, the wisdom of imagination, intuition and inspiration of our mind acquired through the spiritual heart center. When both the masculine and the feminine principles are synthesized and integrated with one another and spirally move upward to unite with the top apex representing our higher being, our higher aware consciousness, we bring wisdom into reality and function at a more balanced and harmonious higher state of consciousness.

This triangle is representative of the dialectic process mentioned earlier in this chapter and refers to the three-step pattern of a continuously developing aware consciousness. In the instance of this thesis, the three-step pattern that our aware consciousness follows refers to the masculine aspect of our being, being opposed by the feminine aspect of our being. The interaction, or the struggle between these two aspects, produces a new level of aware consciousness by combining elements of each to form a synthesis. Once this synthesis is established, it forms a new cycle at a higher level of aware consciousness until everything is realized in an infinite synthesis of Absolute Being. Essentially, the ongoing dialectic process represents the actual structure of reality, the unfolding perspective of our being.

How can we begin to construct such a reality? How can we complete the picture of reality that would synthesize our whole being toward the next cycle of higher aware consciousness? How can we establish such a synthesis to become a new cycle at a higher level of aware consciousness in our Western system of education and everyday life? What needs to happen for us to come to understand the Whole? What needs to happen for

us to understand our experiences in relationship to the Whole? What needs to happen for us to understand our experiences in the unfolding of history? What are the next developmental stages toward the realization of unity and synthesis of oneness with Being?

These are the questions in relation to our being that I intend to reveal in my exploration of the three philosophies. The three philosophies I investigate in the next three chapters are Higher Self Yoga, a spiritual teaching given to humanity at this time, African Philosophy and North American Aboriginal Spirituality. I intend to reveal their innate essence as necessary prerequisites toward a shift in our aware consciousness. In this respect I look at the wisdom of these three philosophies to fill the gaps and expand beyond the limitations of the intellectualization of the Western mind in our academy. I look at the wisdom of these three philosophies to produce new ideas toward a whole life education and a more balanced, meaningful and fulfilling everyday life.

I begin by defining each philosophy and then continue by illustrating how each as a wisdom teaching can communicate synthesis in the academy by conveying that all is one in its essential essence and fundamental truth. I look at the metaphysical comprehensions of these philosophies and indicate how their essence is an expression of the infinite in our human spirit itself. I look at this aspect toward a shift in our aware consciousness and as a prerequisite for synthesis of the ancient truths within education and within ourselves in our everyday lives. This shift of human aware consciousness denotes a dialectic quest to recover our understanding of our true self and our innate connection with all that exists within the cosmos. In exploring the wisdom knowledge inherent in the three philosophies, I hope to create a dialectic shift in the aware

consciousness of the Western intellectual mind through self-awareness and self-transcendence toward a new and expanded reality.

## Chapter Three

### *Eastern Philosophy: with the emphasis on Higher Self Yoga*

Any path is only a path, and there is no affront, to oneself or to others, in dropping it if that is what your heart tells you ... Look at every path closely and deliberately. Try it as many times as you think necessary. Then ask yourself, and yourself alone, one question ... Does this path have a heart? If it does, the path is good.

C. Castaneda (in Capra 1991 : 21)

### *Higher Self Yoga: a spiritual teaching given to humanity at this time*

Higher Self Yoga is a spiritual path of the heart. It is a most ancient path yet is proclaimed as a new way (R.H.H., Guru 1982). At auspicious times in history a sacred spiritual teaching is given to humanity that is applicable to the step of evolution of humanity at that time and is succeeded by a culmination. This sacred teaching concludes what has been given previously and moves and evolves the world forward along the path of humanness (Barborka 1998; Blavatsky 1988). For instance, Higher Self Yoga includes Agni Yoga as with the *Letters of Helena Roerich, Infinity, Aum and Fiery World*, and Theosophy as with *The Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled*. Similarly, Christianity was the culmination of the collective wisdom of the classical world, and the Commandments of Moses were the culmination of the wisdom of ancient Egypt and Babylon (Blavatsky 1988a, 1988b).

As a sacred spiritual teaching for the future, Higher Self Yoga emanates from the experiences of centuries and as such evolves out of various traditions of philosophical

thought. As mentioned above, it evolved more recently out of Agni Yoga and Theosophy and emanates from the experiences of ancient times such as Taoism, Buddhism and Hinduism. As a sacred teaching Higher Self Yoga is in harmony with these mystically oriented philosophies in their essential spiritual disciplines and practices toward self-realization, as well as their spiritual knowledge of fundamental truths. Similar in their basic worldview, it is important to think of how best to apply the principles of these teachings to the present process of evolution and how best to respond to the challenges of the evolution of our future without rejecting our past spiritual achievements. These are challenges that may well open our hearts with joy to the purpose of our life. These are challenges that may reveal to us the truth of who we really are.

A most important aspect of Higher Self Yoga, in fact the essence of the Eastern worldview, is the conscious awareness of the dynamic nature of the basic unity and mutual interrelation of all that exists in the universe (Capra 1991 : 141; Barborka 1998). All is one in its essential nature and intrinsic essence. All is dynamic, alive, rhythmically flowing and ever moving and changing in its cosmic order that is life. All life, including each and everyone of us, is interconnected, interdependent and inseparable from the cosmic whole. Every thing and event we observe is merely a different aspect of the same ultimate Reality. Every thing and event, Capra (1991) states, is an essence of the universe that is “underlying and unifying the multitude” of all that exists (210). The dynamic universe is a cosmic web of a ceaseless motion of energy , a “continual dance of creation and destruction involving the whole cosmos” (272).

Shiva, the Cosmic Dancer, is perhaps the most perfect personification of the dynamic universe. Through his dance, Shiva sustains the manifold phenomena in the world, unifying all things by immersing them in his rhythm and making them participate in the dance – a magnificent image

of the dynamic unity of the universe (211).

Fundamental to these Eastern philosophies is the perception to experience that all manifestations in the world are emanating from the one cosmic Source, and to view the world we live in as part of a universal system of an inseparable, interdependent and interactive, an all-embracing oneness, a unifying life force. All truly is one!

Yet, in our everyday life, Capra (1991) explains, we are not aware of this unity of the life force of all that exists. We divide the world into separate objects and events. This division may be necessary for us to cope with our everyday way of being in the world; however, it is an abstraction forged by our own intellectual mind and not a dynamic conception of reality (142). To conquer this divide and experience the all-embracing unity of the life force of the universe requires the readjustment of our mind into a state of mental equilibrium and the centering of our being into our spiritual heart. To embrace the unity of the life force means to experience a state of spiritual equilibrium. This thesis is about becoming consciously aware of this illusory divide. It is about the conscious awareness of the oneness of the universe and the attainment of a state of enlightenment as to who we really are in this cosmic web of life.

Our highest striving is to become consciously aware of our participatory interrelation with all things and events within this dynamic unity of the life force. Our highest striving is to become consciously aware of our true essence as part of this Reality itself. Our task is to transcend our perception of an isolated individual self and to recognize our oneness with this ultimate Reality, this one Source or Absolute (Barborka 1998; Nakagawa 2000). The process of becoming consciously aware is not merely an intellectual act but involves our whole being inclusive of our spiritual heart. Known as



enlightenment, this experience signifies being at one with our true or higher Self, at one with the supreme Reality itself (Barborka 1998; Blavatsky 1988).

### *Spiritual Evolution*

Higher Self Yoga continues to honor such Eastern philosophies as Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism by incorporating some of their primary aspects for meaning, depth and wisdom. This synthesis pertains to the orientation toward the sacred, as well as the recognition of fundamental universal concepts such as karma, reincarnation and a community of saviors. In the following I give a brief account of each of these mystical teachings and indicate how some of their philosophical concepts and principles relate to one another and to Higher Self Yoga.

### *Hinduism*

In Hinduism, Capra (1991) points out, that which is spiritual and metaphysical has its foundation in a collection of ancient scriptures, and these scriptures are the Vedas. The oldest parts of the Vedas are sacred hymns and prayers. Known as sacred knowledge, these are written in ancient Sanskrit by Vedic sages, or ‘seers’ (98). The mystic issue of the Vedas, the Upanishads, communicates the philosophical and spiritual message that all and everything around us, including ourselves, is a manifestation of the ultimate Reality. This Reality, or Supreme Spirit, Nakagawa (2000) explains, is known as Brahman. Brahman, this One or Absolute, the inner essence of all that exists, is the all-encompassing, all-inclusive, all-pervading eternal Divine. Everything that is, is Brahman (Easwaran 1995).

Brahman manifest in the individual human soul is known as Atman. As Capra (1991) indicates, “Atman and Brahman, the individual and the ultimate reality, are one”

and this is the fundamental essence of the Upanishads (100). Essentially, this fundamental essence, our innate inner being or true Self, is Atman, and being one with Atman is being one with Brahman, or true Reality (Barborka 1998; Easwaran 1995; Rose 2001; Yogananda 2002).

One of the most revered and sacred texts of Hindu scripture is a collection of epics. One of these is the Mahabharata which contains the Bhagavad Gita. The Gita is an internal dialogue symbolizing the combat between the lower and the higher aspects of human nature. This is the struggle to overcome ignorance, or illusion, and achieve wisdom, which is our quest in search for enlightenment (Yogananda 2002).

An important theme in Hinduism is the concept of maya, or illusion. Maya is our illusionary mental perception that concepts, things and events are separate entities. What we need to realize is that these are “concepts of our measuring and categorizing minds” (Capra 1991 : 100). This lack of awareness of the unity of the life force, or true Reality, keeps us enmeshed in maya. Another important concept is karma, which means action. If we perceive ourselves as interwoven with everything that exists, we need to perceive ourselves as actively participating in its creation and acknowledge that we are co-creators of this dynamic universe. However, as long as we perceive ourselves as separate from all that exists and act without consideration and cooperation with others, we remain tied to the wheel of karma. To liberate ourselves entails getting off the karmic wheel and this requires that we realize the harmonious unity of all existence “including ourselves, and to act accordingly” (Capra 1991 : 101).

In Hindu philosophy, practicing meditation and spiritual exercises to experience oneness with Brahman is known as moksha, or liberation. For instance, this oneness can

be experienced in revering Shiva, the personification of Brahman, and Vishnu, the preserver of the universe, as well as the Divine Mother, the archetypal goddess representing the female energy of the universe. All are perceived as identical divinities that are but “manifestations of the same divine reality, reflecting different aspects of the infinite, omnipresent...Brahman” (Capra 1991 : 102 - 104).

Another method of liberation is known as yoga. Yoga in Sanskrit implies union, which refers to the at-one-ment of the individual spirit/Atman with the divine essence/ Brahman (de Purucker 1972; Smith 1991). In Hinduism two major paths of yoga are Jnana yoga and Bhakti yoga.

Jnana yoga is the path of knowledge - the mind. It is the path of oneness with Atman/Brahman through knowledge that requires a combination of rationality and spirituality. It represents an intuitive discernment that transforms the knower into that which one knows (de Purucker 1972; Smith 1991 : 29). The key is discrimination between the ego or lower self and the true or higher Self. Inner listening and intuitive reflection eventually will disclose a change from knowing the abstract concept of self to the realization of the higher Self, a realization that our essential being is our true Self/Atman. This shift from our lower self personality to our true or higher Self/Atman, in time creates a knowing of at-one-ness with ultimate Reality/Brahman. And this knowing is perceived not merely during periods of meditation but also in the course of performing one's daily tasks while living one's every day life.

Bhakti yoga is the path of love and devotion - the spiritual heart. The aim of Bhakti yoga is to direct toward Atman/Brahman the love that lies at the foundation of every spiritual heart. Bhakti yoga denotes a wholehearted devotional striving with every

element of one's being toward a union of deep, abiding love with Atman/Brahman. Succeeding in this one comes to know deep joy. For, no experience can compare with the joy of authentic love (Smith 1991 : 376; de Purucker 1972).

By whatever path chosen, realizing Atman means to be one with Brahman. Through this union liberation is realized which in Hinduism is perceived as the supreme aim of life (de Purucker 1972 : 108).

### ***Buddhism***

Unlike the mythological and ritualistic intrinsic quality of Hinduism founded by anonymous sages, Buddhism is decidedly psychological based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama. Known as Buddha, the Enlightened One, Gautama was “one who is spiritually awakened, no longer living the living death of ordinary men, but awakened to the spiritual influence from within...He has become one with the Self...the Supreme Self” (de Purucker 1972 : 23).

Buddha's doctrine of clear thinking and compassionate heart concerns itself primarily with the human situation, the physical and psychological suffering of the human being. For this, Capra (1991) states, Buddha looked at “the origin of human frustrations and the way to overcome them, taking up for this purpose the traditional Indian concepts of maya, karma and nirvana” (105). Out of two schools of thought, Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism became the more dominant one. After centuries, Mahayana Buddhism was readily absorbed by different Eastern cultures that interpreted Buddha's doctrine in ways to meet their own needs. Buddhism was also assimilated into Hinduism, and Buddha himself was adopted as the incarnation of Vishnu, for example the god Krishna of the Bhagavad Gita (106).

Buddhism calls for direct mystical experience, or the awakening, which implies going beyond the perceived intellectual division of the mundane world and arriving at the undivided and undifferentiated world of true Reality (Capra 1991 : 106). Buddha reached this awakened state of Enlightenment following a lengthy deep meditation. To this day the meditative image of Buddha is revered as meaningfully as is the image of the crucified Christ. Once awakened, Buddha proclaimed what he received in his doctrine of the Four Noble Truths (Capra 1991; Smith 1991; Miller 2000).

The First Noble Truth - *duhkha*: Everyone, Capra (1991) states, experiences suffering or frustration which arise “whenever we resist the flow of life and try to cling to fixed forms which are all *maya*, whether they are things, events, people or ideas” (107). Buddha’s doctrine of the impermanence of everything around us also emphasizes that there is no separate individual self. This perception of one’s separateness is merely an illusionary intellectual concept with no basis in true Reality (107).

The Second Noble Truth – *trishna*: All suffering has a cause. In attaching significance to the mundane world, we “confine the fluid forms of reality in fixed categories created by the mind” (Capra 1991: 107). Rooted in ignorance and feeling attached to things and events rather than perceiving the world as ever-changing and transient, we close down the free-flowing energy of life and become entrapped in the cycle of birth and death. Known as reincarnation, or *samsara*, this cycle is induced and moved by *karma*, the law of cause and effect (Smith 1991; Capra 1991; Miller 2000).

The Third Noble Truth – *nirvana*: It is possible to end suffering, to free oneself from *karma*, and to transcend the cycle of reincarnation, and thus reach the state of liberation or *nirvana*. In this nirvanic state there is no perception of a separate self, but an

aware consciousness of absolute oneness with Being. This Buddhist state of nirvana, or buddhahood, is comparable to Hinduism's state of moksha, or liberation, the awakened state of pure consciousness (Capra 1991 : 108; Barborika 1998; Smith 1991).

The Fourth Noble Truth – Eightfold Path of self-development: The first two deal with right seeing and right knowing the human situation, and that with the elimination of both positive and negative karma we can end the cycle of reincarnation (Smith 1991 : 99; Miller 2000). The next four deal with right action. Known as the Middle Way, it is the doctrine of the golden mean that indicates living a moral way of life (Smith 1991 : 85; Soccio 2007). This pertains to seeking moderation in everyday living and avoiding opposite extremes; for instance, excess on the one hand and self-denial on the other. The last two are about right awareness and deal with meditation as a way to experience the true Reality (Yogananda 2002). This is the supreme goal.

Essentially, the foundation of Buddhism is not merely spiritual but also empirical as only through arduous individual effort direct intuitive insight into one's own mystical experience of enlightenment can be achieved (Yogananda 2002). This enlightenment, suchness, void, or emptiness, known as Dharmakaya or Tathata, pure consciousness or enlightened wisdom and joy, is equivalent to knowing Brahman in Hinduism (Capra 1991 : 107, 142). According to the Upanishads,

Brahman is life. Brahman is joy. Brahman is the Void ...  
 Joy, verily, that is the same as the Void.  
 The Void, verily, that is the same as joy (Capra 1991 : 234).

Buddhism also touches on faith in that it is believed that the “original nature of all human beings is that of a Buddha” which intimates that in order to enter nirvana one has to have “faith in one's original Buddha nature” (Capra 1991 : 111). In Mahayana

Buddhism, as well as in Higher Self Yoga, there is the ideal of the Bodhisattva, which emphasizes that “love and compassion are an essential part of wisdom” (Capra 1991 : 110). A Bodhisattva is a highly evolved human being who, feeling compassion for humanity’s suffering, just prior to entering nirvana chooses to remain in the mundane world to show other human beings the path to liberation, and in this way assist them to achieve Buddhahood (de Purucker 1972 : 19; Sri Ramakrishna 1996 : 214).

### ***Taoism***

Similar to the philosophies of Hinduism and Buddhism, the philosophy of Taoism can be defined as a mystically oriented path that is more interested in intuitive wisdom than in rational knowledge. Taoism, Smith (1991) declares, testifies to “humanity’s at-home-ness in the universe” and is a way of living in the “rhythm and driving power in all nature” (197, 198). The way of the Tao, often described as the all-pervading energy that gives life and flows through all life, is a life force that connects all things in the universe. This life force is the “integrating principle of the whole – the Spirit” of the universe (199). The best way to flow with this force of life is to live in harmony and balance with the Tao and experience its transcendent unitary energy.

Taoism discloses that living life wisely empowers life. This means that, for instance, through deep meditation absorbing the pure consciousness of the Tao and drawing it into one’s spiritual heart center advances one’s consciousness. However, to arrive at this innate wisdom, it is necessary to cultivate purity of thought. All desires and emotions that impede one’s deeper way of knowing must subside, and only when thought is cleansed and clear will the mind return to its original purity and Spirit will reveal Itself.

For, only a pure mind can experience the harmonious connectedness that exists between it and its cosmic Source.

Taoism is a way of life with achievable liberation from conventional standards and prescripts of this world and can be compared to the path of the Vedas of Hinduism or the Eightfold Path of Buddhism. Liberation denotes to live a happy and fulfilling life which necessitates aligning one's daily life to the Tao, that is to "perfect a life of 'wu wei' " (Murphy 1992 : 455; Smith 1991 : 208). This means living a life of self-development and entails to live life in calmness and quietude in Tao's harmonious flow and surrender to its deep nature. For this to happen, Smith (1991) notes, the conscious mind must stop its excessive thought stream, relax all tension, let go, and move into its own light. By such a disciplined mind and by letting one's behavior surrender to the rhythm of deep nature, life can be lived authentically and successfully and one's whole way of being can flow in balance, harmony and unity with the Tao.

In its cosmic interpretation, Capra (1991) conveys, the Tao is the ultimate Reality "which underlies and unifies the multiple things and events we observe" and is comparable to Brahman in Hinduism and to Dharmakaya in Buddhism (116). This ultimate Reality, or Tao, the "way, or process, of the universe, the order of nature" that inheres in all and everything that exists, is perceived as "a constant flow of transformation and change" in dynamic, cyclic patterns (116). These patterns in nature need to be observed and its laws then accepted and revered. Such observation would guide toward the profound intuitive insight that transformation and change are essential features of nature. In time, one would come to the realization that being in harmony with nature is being at one with the flow and essence of the Tao.



In the world of nature, Capra (1991) states, these patterns are perceived as the changes of the seasons, and in the human world as the extremes in situations that have the tendency to swing to the opposite. For instance, in the modern industrialized world the stress created by raising our living standard has had the consequence of lowering our quality of life. However, in Taoism, avoiding extremes led to the doctrine of the “golden mean” which relates to Buddhism’s doctrine of the Middle Way (Capra 1991; Smith 1991; Yogananda 2002).

According to Taoist cosmology, Ng (2000) proclaims, the original state of the universe was an undifferentiated whole out of which the yin and yang polar unity emerged to create the phenomenal world of infinite forms (180). All manifestations of nature are generated by the dynamic interplay between these two forces, the yin and yang polar opposites: light/dark, summer/winter, intellect/heart, male/female. These yin and yang polarities continuously merge one into the other and thus “create each other” and “transform into each other” in a universal process of movement and change (180). This refers to the dialectic process of movement and change; that is, one polarity reaches its climax and through necessity moves to the opposite and creates a continuous flow of change.

This yin and yang polarity, the two archetypal cosmic poles in nature and in human life, represents the Taoist principle of unity of opposites (Ng 2000 : 180). For instance, earth, the feminine element, and heaven, the male element “co-exist and are in continual cooperation” (Capra 1991 : 238). As in Higher Self Yoga, the female/male polar opposites within each of us are a complementary relationship of archetypal opposites that need to merge to form a new dynamic unity. That is, the yin intuitive,

imaginative, metaphysical and transcendental quality of the feminine consciousness and the yang practical, pragmatic, rational and active quality of the masculine consciousness in each of us are but aspects of the same principle of unity. To align one's daily life to the Tao is to comprehend such a yin and yang paradoxical concept and strive for balance, harmony and unity in all qualities of human nature. In essence, Tao, nature and ultimate Reality are one.

### ***Reflective Thoughts***

It is important to note here that, although in Taoism, Mahayana Buddhism, or Hinduism there may be various diverse ways of perceiving aspects of reality, the essential, foundational, inner teachings of their view of life and the world are the same, and this perception is in accord with Higher Self Yoga. As Capra (1991) states:

The most important characteristic of the Eastern world view... is the awareness of the unity and mutual interrelation of all things and events, the experience of all phenomena in the world as manifestations of a basic oneness. All things are seen as interdependent and inseparable parts of this cosmic whole; as different manifestations of the same ultimate reality (141).

Higher Self Yoga honors and reveres the deep wisdom that inheres in these spiritual teachings. All are spiritual paths of the heart. All emanated from previous spiritual traditions and evolved into one that the human community was able to comprehend and integrate at any given time. All are spiritual paths of returning to become one with the true Reality, which in Eastern tradition and Higher Self Yoga is the purpose of our evolution (Barborka 1998). All are spiritual paths based on inner life teachings and as such are deeply focused on an education of the inner life.

### ***Spiritual Teaching***

Higher Self Yoga is one of the most recent spiritual teachings given to humanity. It is a spiritual teaching of the future even though it is based on ancient teachings given to humanity thousands of years past. Fundamentally, it is a synthesis as it assimilates the spiritual essence found in varying degrees at the foundation of Eastern innate, mystical, spiritual traditions. The path of the Higher Self Yoga is a path of striving to become one with the Higher Self through practice, discipline and conscious self-awareness and in this effort to develop the capability to become one with the Source, or ultimate Reality. More recently Higher Self Yoga emanated out of Theosophy and Agni Yoga. The following is a brief account of both:

### ***Theosophy***

According to Blavatsky (1992), Theosophy is the

reintroduction into world thought of an ageless wisdom whose golden thread could be traced through successive cultures, civilizations and epochs... [and] is the key to the treasures of the illumined spirit, the treasures of love and compassion that, shared, form the Supreme Treasure, Brotherhood Universal (xi, xiv).

However, Blavatsky (1992) continues, humanity needs to turn the key to “unlock the secrets of knowledge, to open the doors of perception...that lead toward wisdom, to put knowledge to work in the service of humanity” (xiv). Theosophy comes from the combined Greek word *theos*, “divine”, and *sophia*, “wisdom”, and thus literally means divine wisdom (American Heritage Dictionary). Theosophy - divine wisdom - is a spiritual teaching that formulates the “nature, structure, origin, destiny and operation of kosmical universe...[and] is purely divine ethics” (de Purucker 1972 : 172). Theosophy, Blavatsky (1992) informs us, in its abstract meaning is the “aggregate of the knowledge

and wisdom that underlie the Universe – the homogeneity of eternal GOOD”, and, she continues, in its concrete sense “it is the sum total of the same as allotted to [any individual] by nature, on this earth” (31).

Theosophy is a philosophical system that is based on the belief in a universal, eternal principle, which is foundational in all life and has its identity with the Universal Life. Theosophy, as a system of philosophical thought, perceives that the truest knowledge does not come through reason nor the senses, but through direct communication of one’s innate being with the Divine Reality, the Absolute. Based on intuitive insight into the divine nature of our inner being, Theosophy declares that all human beings are immortal but are unconscious of their unity with the Divine (Blavatsky 1992).

Theosophy, Blavatsky (1992) notes, conveys that all is one, and this oneness of all life is part of the universal law that is inherent in nature, the human being, and the Universe. This law, the essential unity of all that is, pertains to the knowledge of the human being’s innate nature, “the highest life of the soul”, and is based upon the law of the divinity of nature (12). Part of this law is the karmic law that states, “every physical action has its moral and everlasting effect”, by doing wrong toward one individual we “wrong not only ourselves but the whole humanity” (28). This law and the law of reincarnation, the doctrine of rebirth, work together within human experience and existence (Steiner 1994 : xx).

Theosophy, as an inner spiritual teaching, Blavatsky (1992) informs us, dates back to the writings of Plato and the neo-Platonists of the Greek time. Portions of this ancient wisdom teaching has periodically been given out and made known to humanity in

various parts of the world to guide and inspire as how to live a spiritually ethical life. However, its origin can be attributed further back to an Egyptian priest, Pot-Amun, whose name “signifies one consecrated to Amun, the God of Wisdom” (1). This wisdom of the archaic ages was ever one and reached the modern world as “taught and practiced by a few elect ever since man became a thinking being” (de Purucker 1972 : 173). This wisdom will continue to be preserved by seekers after truth and in this way will continue to survive.

Theosophy is a method of studying the Ancient Wisdom. It is a way of pursuing the ultimate Truth. Through the spiritual paths of Hinduism and Buddhism, archaic wisdom truth was being made comprehensible. Hindu thoughts and doctrines and principles of the inner teachings of Mahayana Buddhism have passed into Theosophy. These inner teachings are based on mystical insight, especially the doctrine of karma and the belief in reincarnation, as well as on spiritual evolution, “the continuous evolutionary process of all that exists...the process of perfectment” (Blavatsky 1988a, Volume 1 : 668; Agni Yoga Society 1996 : 67). For instance, in *The Voice of the Silence*, Blavatsky composed mystical treatises taken from the *Book of Golden Precepts* of Mahayana Buddhism (Blavatsky 1992 : xi).

Most of Theosophy’s practices and beliefs were written down by Helena Blavatsky, and according to her book, *The Key to Theosophy, An Abridgement* (1992), the most important aim of Theosophy pertains to the “relief of human suffering under any or every form, moral as well as physical” (16). Alleviating moral suffering is perceived as more important as through living an ethical life physical suffering will be relieved (16). In her book, *The Secret Doctrine* (1988a, 1988b), Blavatsky points out the fundamental

principles of Theosophy. One is that there is an omnipresent, omnipotent infinite energy, or power, which humanity can only apprehend with their awakened being. In knowing this energy, or power, truth becomes comprehensible. This truth we seek through many incarnations and periods of development of consciousness. There is the principle that is concerned with eternity and infinity and the limitlessness of this energy, or power. As human beings we are part of this limitless energy, or power, and thus are also perceived as limitless. Then there is the principle of wholeness. Everyone and everything is part of this whole, and, as human beings all our thoughts, words and deeds not only are part of who we are, but also part of this immortal, infinite whole.

All this truly converges with Higher Self Yoga. In *The key to Theosophy: An abridgement* (1992), Blavatsky continues to explain that by our final self we cannot become aware of the infinite self. The divine essence can only be communicated to the higher spiritual Self, as this higher Self is identical in its essence with the Universal Spirit. This awareness of the higher Self can be attained through the “liberation of the mind from its finite consciousness, becoming one and identified with the infinite...by an incessant endeavor to purify and elevate the mind” (6). Attaining knowledge of our own divine nature and wisdom of our higher life can only be attained by personal, arduous effort and merit. Meditation is a primary modality of such attainment, and this by turning inward toward infinite life - toward the Divine Itself (Blavatsky 1992 : 12; Blavatsky 1988a, Volume 1 : xix).

According to Theosophy, no matter what religion, philosophy, or nationality, all is based on the one and the same truth. This means that part of the theosophical principles is compassion toward all, a universal oneness that is without distinction of race, creed,

sex, caste or color. Thus, Blavatsky (1992) points out, Theosophical doctrines are not confined to any society or time, but are the "birthright to every human soul...Its creed is Loyalty to Truth" (12). If the root of humanity is one, then there must also be one truth (97). In other words, Blavatsky (1988) declares, "There is no religion (or law) higher than truth" (Volume 1 : xli).

### ***Agni Yoga***

Agni Yoga signifies the spiritual teaching of the divine yoga of universal life. Agni Yoga is loosely based on Theosophy, as well as all the other previously mentioned philosophical teachings. In Sanskrit, *Agni* means spiritual fire, the creative, transformative fire of the spirit. In Agni Yoga Society (1996) it is stated that, "the spirit is indeed a manifestation of Agni" (2). Agni is often referred to as the primordial light and life at the root of the universe, or the cosmic energy. And *Yoga* refers to a method of training designed to attain union, or at-one-ness, of the divine spiritual essence within each of us with the cosmic energy; that is, the fiery connective energy of space (Agni Yoga Society 1997; Agni Yoga Society 1982).

As the connective transformative energy of the spirit, Agni Yoga is concerned with the highest fiery transmutations of one's being that can bridge and unite the human spirit with Brahman/God-Consciousness. This is a union that comprises a combination of Bhakti Yoga, the yoga of impersonal life, the true love that Lord Jesus came to teach; Karma Yoga, the yoga of service, the path of good action, and not simply the path of fate; and Njana Yoga, the path of discrimination, or yoga of the higher mind (R.H.H. 1982). All these spiritual paths of yoga constitute a guiding step in evolution that evolves rhythmically and spirally toward union with cosmos.

Emanating and evolving from the aforementioned Eastern philosophies, Agni Yoga continues to honor these traditions with deep and abiding gratitude by refining and incorporating their best. Agni Yoga is one of several spiritual teachings that developed within the Theosophical movement at the end of the nineteenth century. Theosophy, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Agni Yoga, constitute spiritual traditions that comprehend the ancient philosophies as expressions of the same eternal truth. Truth is one. In its perception of the sacred, as well as in its acceptance of karma, reincarnation, evolution, and a community of saviors, such as Christ, Buddha, Lao-Tze, and others, Agni Yoga adheres to the same principles and is in harmony with those of Eastern thought. Agni Yoga is talked about in the Upanishads and the Vedas in the ancient Hindu scriptures of thousands years past (Easwaran 1995). Yet, Agni Yoga continues to be as modern as today (R.H.H. 1982).

As a spiritual teaching of the living ethics of life, Agni Yoga embraces every domain of human life and engages in such fundamental ethics of life as the attainment of the wisdom knowledge of the spiritual heart, particularly those manifesting in love, thought, creativity and service (Agni Yoga Society 1982; R.H.H. 1982). As a spiritual teaching, it balances the creative relationship of one's spiritual heart and thought with the energy of which the universe is made. This involves one's conscious participation in the setting alight of one's spiritual heart energies, that is, the subtle energies of the spirit. As well, this involves one's conscious participation in arousing one's essence of life by purifying and refining one's feelings, perceptions, sensations and thoughts. All this involves one's effort to expand and uplift one's consciousness to higher states of being. As a personal philosophy of the living ethics of life, it encompasses moral ideals and



behavior as the central aspect of a meaningful life, as well as a life that signifies right action for the greater good (Agni Yoga Society 1996; Agni Yoga Society 1978; R.H.H. 1982).

One unique characteristic of Agni Yoga, as well as Higher Self Yoga, is that one must transform oneself while living and experiencing everyday life. This necessitates, as stated in Agni Yoga Society (1996), that while living and experiencing life, simultaneously infusing one's actions and achievements with fiery striving in an effort to transform oneself. This transformation must take place within the context of one's secular, contemporary, everyday way of living life and intimates an educative experience for spiritual development and growth. While seeking truth to actualize one's highest human potential, Agni Yoga serves as a guide and inspiration in the attainment of one's higher states of being. As well, Agni Yoga serves in the expansion of consciousness in the service for the greater good. As such, Agni Yoga serves as a practical system that teaches and guides the fiery striving on one's spiritual quest; that is, how to construct life toward the liberation of one's heart and thoughts from negativity and impurity, and how to broaden one's consciousness toward the deification of the human spirit (Agni Yoga Society 1996 : 3, 222).

As a synthesis of the aforementioned forms of yoga and spiritual traditions, Agni Yoga, as found in Agni Yoga Society (1997), represents a true teaching of the spiritual heart, a true teaching of the inner life. This innate essence has been given in endless succession for thousands of years to fiery spirits who have been aligned with the universal fiery essence. While affirming the unity and universality of all that exists, the teaching of the living ethics of life responds to each individual. It teaches how to find

solutions to one's daily problems. It also affirms one's achievements as experiences of positive, loving feelings in one's spiritual heart center. However, each one of us must align our own spirit with the universal fiery essence. Each one of us must find the key to such alignment in our own spiritual heart center and aspire to its higher understanding. Aspiring to and coming to know the core of this higher understanding, as stated in Agni Yoga Society (1996), "can unfold the creativeness of the spirit" (222; Agni Yoga Society 1982).

Converging with Higher Self Yoga, Agni Yoga constitutes the opening, purifying and expanding of one's consciousness. Aspiring toward spiritual growth, both Yogas inspire one's conscious striving within one's spiritual heart center toward the unfoldment of one's inner life. Both Yogas convey a gradual process of fostering and cultivating conscious awareness of knowing the ancient wisdom of unity, universality and truth. As a dialectic process, both Yogas convey an understanding of the subtle aspects of the evolution of life. This evolution is an enhancement of consciousness to ever more refined ways of life. This indicates a transformation of life not only of oneself but a transformation of life for the benefit of all. Both Yogas signify a path of spiritual unfoldment, a path of undivided union with our true essence, our true or higher Self at one with the ultimate Reality.

### **Higher Self Yoga: What is It?**

Higher Self Yoga is a spiritual teaching that conveys that all that exists in the universe is energies, and these energies are formed from the Unknown, the cosmic Unconscious, the undifferentiated Whole, the Source, or ultimate Reality. These energies or divine ground, this "One Reality" from which all emerges, "remains forever an

undivided unity. From this unity emanate rays creating the immortal, indestructible *Atman*” or higher Self (Leadbeater 1996 : xxiii). This One Reality “contains the wisdom of humanity. Within It is the source of the higher knowledge that relates to the cosmic realms” (Hucknall 1992 : xi). It is this cosmic realm, or Source, that one can tune into and gain access to any and all information available in the universe. However, how can that be achieved?

Each individual is endowed with a higher Self. The higher Self is not our physical body, not our feelings, nor our mind (Leadbeater 1996 : 39). The higher Self is beyond and unaffected by the thinking processes of our mind; it is beyond our psychological perceptions, and beyond our bodily conditions. Our personal conscious self is merely a reflection, or a projection of our higher Self. The higher Self is the true and authentic essence within each of us (Izutsu in Nakagawa 2000 : 29). The higher Self, the pure consciousness within everyone of us, the spiritual conscious essence of who we really are, is at one with the transcendent unity, the ultimate Reality, the true Source.

Higher Self Yoga is the spiritual path of attaining union with our own spiritual essence, our own eternal Divine within - our own higher Self. As a path to higher aware consciousness, it is a spiritual path of transcending our ordinary way of perceiving who we think we are, and consciously becoming aware of who we know we are and becoming one with it. This translates into a spiritual path of striving, through practice, discipline and self-awareness, to become consciously aware of being one with our higher Self and thus becoming consciously aware of being one with the Source Itself. Our deepest yearning is to attain consciousness of this one transcendent unity and oneness with the Source.

Becoming consciously aware of the oneness with one's higher Self and Its oneness with the Source is the intentional purpose of Higher Self Yoga. And this can be aspired to by transforming oneself through self-development, self-knowledge, self-fulfillment and ultimate Self-realization. As a spiritual path of awakening and expanding one's divine-centered higher consciousness, it is a conscious path of transmuting one's limited lower nature and merging one's transmuted being with one's higher nature, the unlimited eternal higher Self. To accomplish this requires one to harmonize and integrate the transmuted components of the lower ego consciousness into feeling and experiencing oneness with the true or higher Self. These moments of conscious oneness with one's higher Self may be experienced as moments of pure joy. Such joy one may feel or experience "is there all the time"; however, one may not be consciously aware of it (Leadbeater 1996 : 117).

The wisdom of experiencing moments of oneness with the higher Self and getting to know Its oneness with the ultimate Reality or Source, inspires one to take control of one's own spiritual evolution. As Leadbeater (1996) explains, "the aim of evolution is the enhancement of consciousness ... the ability to express one's higher potential ... the evolutionary thrust is not physical but psychological" (xxiv). This suggests that experiencing oneness is part of one's evolutionary path. However, it is psychologically that one comes to realize the importance of becoming, for instance, unselfish, and having the "desire to be useful, for it gives ... an incentive to study and perfect" oneself (40). To perfect oneself alludes to eliminating one's undesirable qualities, such as the habits of irritability, anger, or selfishness, and seeking one's "good qualities and cultivate them", such as helpfulness and compassion (40).

To change the accumulated energy of undesirable qualities to beneficial good qualities requires the use of one's will, and remembering evolution as a "force for good" (40) adequately motivates one for the arduous work of "character-building" (41). Thus, character building is an evolutionary process that leads toward experiencing oneness with the higher Self, and it is such a process through which one can attain the ability to access truth and wisdom that is one with the Source.

Converging with Agni Yoga, one primary characteristic of Higher Self Yoga is that all personal achievements toward the enhancement of aware consciousness must be attained by personal effort during one's everyday life. As such, one must transform oneself while living life within the context of one's everyday way of experiencing life (Glazer 1999; Miller 2000; Blavatsky 1988a, 1988b). This means that, while seeking truth to actualize one's true potential, Higher Self Yoga serves as a guide and inspiration to the attainment of ever more refined spiritual levels of consciousness. Higher Self Yoga is a practical system that teaches how to purify one's thoughts, words, and deeds, and how to work not only with one's intellectual and intuitive mind, but also how to work with one's spiritual heart to achieve harmony, balance and unity first within oneself and then extend it outward into the larger human community.

As a spiritual evolutionary path of striving, Higher Self Yoga teaches the development of such spiritual practices as meditation and dialoguing with one's higher Self. Both I explain starting on page 114 in this chapter. For now let me point out that these are spiritual practices requiring consciously connecting with our spiritual heart center, and utilizing it as our pathway to the source of our true spiritual being, our true or higher Self. In time the true or higher Self may reveal Itself as an innate knowing that

may manifest as a feeling, or an unerring intuition, which is a reflection of pure consciousness radiating through the spiritual heart center. Opening the pathway to our spiritual heart center and connecting our inner journey of spiritual striving with our external creative way of being in the world, opens the creative space of our limitless potential for learning and growth. As a personal journey, Higher Self Yoga encompasses the central aspect of a meaningful life of moral ideals and behavior, as well as a life that entails right action for the greater good.

Further, the higher Self is directly linked to the Feminine Principle, and the Feminine Principle is part of the duality of nature in which the Feminine and Masculine Principles always work together. We are part of nature, and when we are connected to our spiritual heart center, we can consciously function at one with the higher Self and access higher wisdom that stems from the Feminine Principle.

Klein (1997) indicates that by “tapping into the energetic potential at the heart center” and “opening our heart from which all light flows” (146), we begin to experience “ourselves as part of an open energy system” (144). The more we work with the spiritual heart center and become consciously aware of it being part of an open energy system, the more we work and merge with the higher Self and bring It more fully into our aware consciousness. The spiritual heart center is the key to this open energy system, the wisdom of the higher knowledge that relates to the Source. As human beings, no matter what background, gender or race, we all contain the wisdom of the higher knowledge of the Source within us. As human beings we are one with all others and one with the ultimate Reality, or Source.

Our true or higher Self, the highest essence within each of us, is Wisdom Itself, and this wisdom is pure consciousness (de Purucker 1972 : 11). Divine in its essence, the higher Self is purely spiritual and is the same in everyone of us. The higher Self, expressed as “that I am”, as Patanjali (1981) indicates, is always present within, is always part of each individual. Only ignorance of not being aware of and recognizing our true Self, ignorance which is false knowledge of wrongly identifying with our lower nature and believing that only the ego self is real, prevents us from identifying with our higher Self.

Although within each and everyone of us, the higher Self is not in the aware consciousness of everyone of us. The task for each individual is to become aware of the essence of the higher Self, awaken It, and bring It forth into one’s own aware consciousness. For, the higher Self, being part of everyone of us, is also part of the Source, and returning to this Source is the path of return for all of us. Returning to the Source is the spiritual path of Higher Self Yoga. Designed for spiritual growth, this path explores the concepts of karma, reincarnation, evolution and service. This path signifies an evolutionary spiritual path designed to become one with the higher Self. Becoming one with the higher Self is a spiritual path that positively affects oneself and others, as well as education, the community, the nation and the planet.

### ***Whole Life Education***

Education is meant to be far more than secular teaching and learning. Education is meant to include the sacred. This denotes an educational engagement that entails not merely acquiring intellectual knowledge so prevalent in our Western system of education, but also in revealing wisdom knowledge through the pathway of our inner life. To live

and be guided exclusively by cognitive rationality and the power of the intellect means to be disconnected from our spiritual heart, our inner being, our true Self.

As Glazer (1999) points out, education is not merely the accumulation of statistical facts, computational numbers and technical abilities or mechanical skills. Education is also about an inward directed journey of liberation and empowerment, a whole life education of revealing and reclaiming knowledge and wisdom inherent in one's higher potential. Whole life education conveys the importance of knowing that it is up to each individual to reveal and work with these higher potentials and make them realities. Whole life education knows the importance of including this inward directed journey of revealing and reclaiming knowledge and wisdom innate within. Whole life education includes such spiritual practices as meditation, contemplation, and dialoguing with our higher Self. The wisdom emanating from such whole life practices needs to become part of both our academic life and our life world.

True balanced whole life education conveys that one's masculine rational knowledge does not dominate over one's feminine intuitive wisdom. By way of conscious awareness of our true nature, we begin to learn that knowledge and wisdom, the masculine and the feminine aspects within each of us, work together and complement one another.

Becoming consciously aware of the importance of such complementarity and synthesis, we come to know that knowledge and wisdom do not arise by one aspect of education dominating over another. Rather, we come to know that being open to both our outer and inner perspectives entails the realization that both are essential to our individual evolution as well as education. This requires being open to acknowledge that both the



masculine and the feminine are a dynamic force within each of us, within education and within the universe. This requires being open to a leap in our aware consciousness and acknowledging our oneness on a larger scale, and in knowing this oneness harmoniously participate in the creative unfolding of change.

However, if one experiences non-acceptance of such complementarity and unfolding toward creative change by teachers or students, it is imperative to live, learn and participate by one's own intrinsic example, and, in this way, bring one's whole being into education. In time the energy of so being and doing has the effect of reflecting into the energy field of the entire scholarly setting and positively affecting the educational environment generally.

A balanced whole life education, inclusive of the wisdom of our inner life, expands our aware consciousness and fosters an approach to education that encourages creativity, inclusiveness, and wholeness. Educators themselves need to be centered in their spiritual heart and balanced in both hemispheres of their mind. Educators themselves need to cultivate creative, inclusive wholeness so that students can learn to be open and receptive to all knowledge, inclusive of innate wisdom. This implies that, to live and grow as spiritual beings, we need to appreciate all cultures, all histories, all nationalities, and be open and receptive to break down all differences and barriers. Part of the learning process in our system of education needs to be acquainting all teachers and learners with the process of revealing wisdom knowledge of the inner life, the missing link in our Western system of education.

From my own academic experiences and many years of studying and practicing Higher Self Yoga, I have come to realize that something is absent in our system of

education, absent in our way of learning, absent in the social aspects of our lives, and absent within ourselves. I have come to acknowledge the wisdom of Higher Self Yoga and have learned, and continue to learn, to integrate Its true essence into my vision of education and my whole way of life. I have come to realize that education is not just about producing citizens who can compete in our global economy (Miller 2000 : 75). Rather, I have come to realize that what is missing in our system of education is the whole life learning process grounded not merely in acquiring knowledge but also in revealing wisdom. Whole life education intimates inclusiveness of an inner life curriculum, a whole life learning process that seeks to harmonize, balance, and unify our inner and outer being, which, in turn, will reflect harmony, balance, and unity in the life of education and our everyday life.

### ***Spiritual Practice***

What is meant by whole life education? What is meant by an inner life curriculum? What is meant by a learning process that requires not merely acquiring knowledge but also of revealing wisdom? How can we, individually and collectively, penetrate the fortress of our masculine intellectual mind and open ourselves to knowing our inner wisdom? How can we synthesize our inner life wisdom with our Western system of education to bring about whole life educational change? What is the process of achieving harmony, balance and unity in whole life education and everyday life? To answer this, I now look at three integral ways: meditation, dialoguing with the higher Self, and joy of beauty.

### ***Meditation***

Meditation is a most central spiritual practice for the quickening of one's spiritual unfoldment and entails the development of the inner life and the revealing of its wisdom. Meditation is a spiritual practice that can easily be adopted into and synthesized with whole life education, and this is most essential to become part of our academic system. There are numerous meditative practices. For instance, in primary school meditation may be moments of quiet time. However, for higher education one meditative practice may be mindfulness or breath meditation:

For me meditation entails sitting in an upright chair, back straight, eyes closed, hands clasped in my lap, and feet flat on the floor. Focusing my attention on my breath helps me to calm my mind and relax my body. Breath meditation has the effect of slowing down my thought stream by calmly focusing on the natural rhythm of the inhalations and exhalations of my breath. When my mind wanders, the thoughts that do arise I allow to flow through my mind without clinging or identifying with them. In this way my attention is being brought back to the breath. Thus, turning my awareness gently inward toward my rhythmic breathing helps me to become grounded, calm and centered. As a whole, breath meditation helps me to experience a deep sense of inner peace.

Thich Nhat Hanh (1976) states that, "Breath is the bridge which connects life to consciousness, which unites your body to your thoughts" (15). Mindfulness, or breath meditation, is a way of freeing the mind of thoughts, and, thus, resting the mind in stillness. In this stillness the spirit is set free. In this stillness one creates gaps in one's own conscious awareness, and this leads to feeling one's own connection to some vaster whole, some higher state of consciousness. Thus setting the spirit free in meditation is a

process that creates a balanced sense of the finite and the infinite, the physical and the spiritual space we inhabit (Klein 1997 : 144).

Meditation in the classroom could be a process of allowing teachers and learners to calm and collect themselves. Practiced as a centering activity, meditation could be integrated as a daily practice at the start of each class. As well, meditation could be practiced just prior to such stressful activities as working through academic problems and writing examinations. Similarly, meditation could be practiced prior to creative activities, such as creative writing or theorizing. Essentially, practicing meditation helps one to come to perceive at deeper psychological and more expansive philosophical comprehensions. Practicing meditation helps one to more readily find whole life solutions.

Furthermore, engaging in meditative practice in the classroom would not only enhance students' intellectual learning, it would also awaken deeper spiritual dimensions that serve to guide toward transformative whole life learning. Whole life learning would open the gates to students' imagination, intuition, inspiration and creativity. Meditation in the classroom would allow for insight into deeper dimensions of the nature of the mind and the nature of who we really are. It would advance an affirmation of connectedness, belongingness and wholeness. In our Western classroom meditation would serve as an important part of transformative whole life learning.

From an early age students in our schools are exposed to the experiences of increased mental stress associated with competition in a reward system of grades. According to Miller (2000), it is in Singer's (1976) research report on connecting the inner life development with behavior, that students with an underdeveloped imagination

seem to be “more vulnerable to external stimuli” and, therefore, can be more “impulsive and excessively dependent” (49). In contrast imaginative students were found to be more relaxed, more independent and less aggressive (49). The principal source of stress is the mind, and calming and slowing down excessive thinking during meditation is a natural antidote to relieve stress. Meditation also results in a slowed metabolic rate and this decreases anxiety (52). Miller (2000) continues to point out that meditation is helpful in improved attentiveness, concentration, alertness and creativeness. As students become more in tune with their own reflective observation and creative imagination, they perform better in the classroom and in their lives (52).

Meditation brings about a gradual fundamental change in consciousness. As Sri Aurobindo (1970) explains, by way of a peaceful mind pervading our expanded consciousness, we come to know the “light of the soul” through which the unseen becomes visible in a flash of instantaneous illumination (291). We come to know our still small voice within as the light energy of our spirit. We come to rest our inner being in this light that is part of the Source. We need to remember that we have the source of light within our spirit and that it is always within us. When we meditate we can feel this light energy in our spiritual heart center and become one with this light energy. It is up to each of us to activate this source by the use of our own will. This source inspires us to manifest that which we have created. This source illumines our true or higher Self.

### ***Dialoguing with the higher Self***

Dialoguing with the higher Self is taking meditation a step further for the purpose of developing a clear and precise contact with our own wisdom, intuition and inspiration. It is a means of tuning inward to receive subtle messages from our own higher source.

Tuning inward means letting go of our over-identification with our intellectual, rational and analytical left-brain hemisphere consciousness and becoming the observer. Being the observer by dis-identifying from what is being perceived liberates our creative potential that is usually blocked. This creative potential is associated with our artistic, intuitive, imaginative and compassionate right-brain hemisphere consciousness. Dis-identifying is a liberating process whereby the letting go of preconceived ideas opens the gates to one's positive human potential. This opening deepens, harmonizes and balances one's perception and participation in the academic world and one's every-day way of living and experiencing life.

From my own experience, when practicing the technique of dialoguing with the higher Self, I involve the intellect of the mind at the beginning and throughout various stages of the process. For instance, I start out with thinking through the essence of the problem. Whether meditating or just quietly sitting with eyes closed while tuning inward into my spiritual heart center and dialoguing with the still, small voice within, I ask for answers to particular questions.

The message I do receive I then place into my spiritual heart center in the middle of my chest for further authenticity and verification. I then analyze this message through phases of discrimination and interpretation. Discrimination entails making sure that I understand the message received and that it truly makes sense to me. Any authentic message I do receive is usually profound yet easily understood and accompanied with a feeling of instant knowing in the spiritual heart center that it is true. What follows is a process of interpretation, which means that I again use the intellect of the mind synthesized with the feeling of knowing in my spiritual heart center to interpret the

message received. It is then that I find possible ways to implement the wisdom received from the higher Self.

The process of dialoguing with the higher Self, although most often comprised of general life questions, may start by asking for solutions to personal problems. For instance, one may ask: Do I have negative character traits in my personality? This one may follow by asking: What do I need to do to become aware of and identify the negative character traits in my personality? After receiving answers to each question, one may ask: What do I need to do in order to change these negative character traits in my personality? This process, if pursued, may eventually lead to seeking the underlying causes and core beliefs related to the problem. These may be causes and core beliefs of negativity that may relate to feelings of unworthiness or self-doubt. One may then start to work through these psychological obstacles in order to arrive at one's ever more consciously aware whole being.

In time one may be asking for awareness and understanding of qualities to which one may aspire and try to emulate, such as enthusiasm, compassion, serenity, and love. These are "qualities that the wisdom of mankind has identified as being close to the centre of our highest humanness...qualities [in which] the real solutions to our life problems will ultimately be found" (Miller 1975 : 137). These are qualities associated with both one's right-brain and left-brain hemispheres of one's consciousness. These are qualities associated with the wisdom of one's intuitive spiritual heart center. These are qualities that need to be far more implemented in our academic world as well as in our everyday life world.

Dialoguing with the higher Self is a process of building a pathway through which superconscious energies can flow, energies which one may experience as feelings of joy, courage and strength of will. Developing this pathway intimates developing conscious awareness of oneness with the higher Self. For, the spiritual heart center is in service of the higher Self, and dialoguing with the higher Self betokens a process of direct experience of enlightenment that identifies one's being with truth and with life. Dialoguing with the higher Self opens the gates of illumination to knowledge and wisdom from the divine Source Itself. This experience unlocks one's intuitive imagination to ever new possibilities and expands one's aware consciousness that imparts serenity, freedom, and joy and the willingness to take action towards ever more whole life change.

### ***Joy of Beauty***

“Beauty is an uplifting concept, and each offering to beauty is an offering to the equilibrium of Cosmos” (Agni Yoga Society 1994 : 42). “Beauty arises in the stillness of your presence” (Tolle 2004 : 96). Experiencing the joy of beauty in moments of total presence, moments without the interference of thought, is a way of awakening the spiritual element in our consciousness that is essential to the unfolding of our inner life. Whether creatively expressing music, dance, drama, poetry, painting or sculpture, or consciously observing and being touched by the majesty of nature, makes us feel good about ourselves and links us to our higher Self and to Cosmos Itself (Miller 2000 : 76). Experiencing beauty has the effect of taking us into a sphere of greater vitality and deeper harmony and unity and assisting us to overcome our feelings of separateness and



disconnectedness. Experiencing the harmony in the rhythm of the essence of beauty denotes honoring our interconnectedness to our inner life force, honoring wholeness.

Experiencing the joy of beauty intimates experiencing at a deeper level of consciousness the Divine within. Experiencing the joy of beauty is experiencing beauty beyond the beauty of the external form. For instance, art is the result of a creative process that is an act and expression of the Divine, and whether we create art, or observe works of art, it has the intrinsic quality of letting us feel our inner holy essence, our inner beauty. With the acknowledgement of our own inner beauty, we open the gates to the appreciation of the outer beauty. Beauty in all its expressions is basically spiritual, and it is the striving toward the beautiful that will lead us to the understanding of our true nature, our oneness with the Divine essence Itself.

Beauty is the revelation of the Divine imprint. For instance, in his creation the artist draws out and reveals the hidden beauty that may otherwise be left unnoticed. We could say that it is the soul of the artist that experiences the divine beauty and expresses it in a new way, and it is the soul of the observer that experiences the expressiveness of beauty and absorbs it in a new way. We could say that indwelling in the creation is the holy essence of beauty. We could also say that it is our inner life that expresses itself in moments of spiritual imagination and intuition, moments of true freedom, moments of genius. Hofstadter & Kuhns (1964) refer to this as “communicating in the thought that flows from the Divine” (143).

The prevailing Western trend in search for beauty is in relation to the external, material world. However, the search for the innate beauty, the all-important spark of the inner life, at present is only a spark. It is this spark, Hofstadter & Kuhns (1964) note, that

is the spirit of the creative genius. The task of the Western world is to awaken and develop the inner vision of the joy of beauty inherent in all of us. This inner vision is the “treasure of profound wisdom...out of [it] the wisdom of the nature of things itself speaks” (453).

Beauty has a regenerative and healing influence. When touched by beauty, aspects within ourselves that may have been fragmented or wounded by the events of everyday life, begin to be restored and revitalized. These are flashes of insight, moments of no thoughts but complete presence, moments of “pure psychological health” (Ferrucci 1982 : 188). These are moments of forgetting ourselves, forgetting our personality traits and habits with which we identify ourselves, forgetting our “personal baggage of problems, of past and future” (Tolle 2004 : 96). These constitute moments of oneness.

Consciously or unconsciously every one of us seeks beauty. For instance, contemplating on the infinity of space when gazing up into the expanse of a starry sky, or deeply listening to the rhythm and harmony of music, or intensely seeing inspiring works of art, discloses beauty beyond thought, and expands our conscious awareness. With such awareness we learn to let go of our attachments to ever more sense experiences, or our attachments to more and more material acquisitions. Such conscious awareness has the aptitude to awaken our healthy sense of self.

The joy of beauty frees us to a state of pure knowing. “This freeing of knowledge lifts us” (Hofstadter and Kuhns 1964 : 458). This spiritual upliftment is felt, for instance, not only when participating in all the “harmonious arts”, such as “in singing, in poetry, in painting, in sculpture, in architecture, in speech” (Agni Yoga Society 1994 : 42), but also when we show tolerance for all life and do acts of complete selflessness. Sensitivity to

beauty “brings inspiration to humanity” (Agni Yoga Society 1994 :42) and is vitally compelling to our growth as human beings.

At the time I was writing my Master’s thesis, a friend told me that there are four steps to the realization of beauty in our daily life. First, she said, we observe and become aware of all the varied forms of beauty in all that exists around us. We become aware of and observe the vibrations of sound and color, and how everything is in a state of change and motion. Then we surround ourselves and assimilate beauty by consciously bringing into our home and life individuals with creative thoughts and positive vibrations. As well, we use color, light and music, and one by one we purchase paintings and special objects that speak to us intuitively. Then we let the beauty and harmony we have created penetrate our entire being. Thirdly, we awaken and begin to express our own inner beauty and creativity through words, both written and verbal, through art, music, the theatre and dance. Or, we express our inner beauty in simple acts of kindness, generosity and love. Finally, we take the step toward Self-realization and Self-transformation (van Kessel 2005 : 85).

Beauty needs to be allowed to inspire all aspects of life. Beauty needs to be allowed to inspire all aspects of education starting in the primary grades and then continuing throughout all the years in higher education. Every opportunity needs to be taken to invoke the joy of beauty, the fiery spark of our inner life, our source of creativity and wisdom. This source of creativity and wisdom is innate in all of us and educators need to take special care to safeguard this precious gift.

Miller (2000) explains that in Western schools the arts have been marginalized to make room for the ‘basics’ (75). Yet, Plato (in Ferrucci 1982) reiterates, “the aim of all

education is to teach us to love beauty” (188). Dillard et al (2000) explain, that all school curricula need to encourage the love of the arts, whether this love is the beautiful expressions by the use of the pen or the brush. Or, whether this love is the expression of seeing the fundamental spirit in nature. All provide the opportunity to develop students’ self-expression and creativity. In assignments students’ reflections can bring in that which is aesthetically pleasing. And space needs to be created within which such aesthetic sensitivity can be revealed; for, whole life education attends to the aesthetic.

Waldorf schools, Miller (2000) points out, integrate the arts not just as a subject but also as an integral part to “almost everything in the curriculum” (75). According to Rudolf Steiner, the founder of the Waldorf schools, Miller (2000) continues “art is essential to the unfolding of the inner person” (75). Stephen Sagarin, a teacher in the Waldorf school, Miller (2000) writes, states that the arts are seen as relating to “the development of children’s capacity to observe and distinguish vital forces in nature and in themselves. The active experience of a creative idea is more essential than the art ‘product’ itself” (76,77). Thus, the Waldorf experiences of the arts, such as watercolor painting, self-portraiture, line drawing, carving, calligraphy, working with glass and sculpting, become part of the students’ self development (77).

Miller (2000) continues to state that subjects can be integrated through the arts, and reports Meryl Goldberg, a teacher at the Waldorf, saying that, “different subjects can be learned *with* and *through* the arts” (89). For example, Goldberg indicates how scenes and life cycles in nature, actively observed and expressed in landscape painting, can then become part of such subjects as science, social studies, language, music and dance (89). Integrating the arts, such as drama, creative writing, poetry, dance and music, into the

classroom, facilitates students' own experience to witness their "own transformation (81). Waldorf education is an excellent example of "how the arts can be integrated into the life of the classroom" to stimulate learning that "engages the whole student" (81, 90, 91). Waldorf education is a unique and profound example from which "public school educators can learn" (91).

Taking Waldorf education as an example, educators themselves need to be sensitive to beauty, and then encourage and enlighten students to become more aware and sensitive to beauty. Educators themselves need to experience beauty in their spiritual heart center, and then assist in developing and cultivating the sensitivity to beauty in students. Educators themselves need to realize the spiritual element of the joy of beauty and invite its essence to permeate the classroom. Educators themselves need to be leaders, agents of joy, and conduits of transcendence.

There is no evolution without the assimilation of beauty. Beauty connects us to our spirit, our true Self, to Cosmos Itself. Beauty is a state of wholeness, a state of connectedness. It is this beauty that brings joy. The nature of beauty is the expansion of consciousness and is an essential component of the foundation for the unity of knowledge and wisdom. Meditation, dialoguing with the higher Self, and the joy of beauty in all its forms, are an integral part in the creation of harmony, balance and unity in education and everyday life. The task is to create and develop a pedagogy and way of life that honors and integrates these integral aspects of our inner life toward experiencing and living a life of wholeness.

### ***Reflective Thoughts***

In this chapter I explore Higher Self Yoga as a spiritual teaching given to humanity at this time, and as a compilation of an expanded view of the human being and the universe. I have also shown that this expanded view has been with humanity since ancient times – a golden thread of truth weaving throughout history that kept alive the wisdom of the inner life. As Leadbeater (1996) puts it:

History shows a kernel of truth appearing through the ages, sometimes taught openly and dominating a culture, as in ancient Greece, at other times taught in secret to the few who sought. The principles have been styled quite differently and various aspects have been emphasized at different times, but the fundamentals have remained unchanged throughout the centuries (xx).

The central, innermost fundamentals of the ancient wisdom are philosophical principles that relate to the laws and processes of the universe. These laws and processes comprise a philosophy of the one divine Source from which our physical world and all that exists emerges. For example, Einstein’s theory of relativity indicates that “[m]atter and space are...inseparable and interdependent parts of a single whole (Capra 1991 : 231). As well, Capra (1991) points out, the non-material or quantum field, or fields, “can take the form of quanta or particles. ... The quantum field is seen as the fundamental physical entity; a continuous medium which is present everywhere in space” (233). Thus the physical, material world and the non-material, the ultimate Reality or the divine, are one. This oneness, this undivided unity, consists of an energy field consistent with the essence, energy field, or consciousness, of the human being.

According to this philosophy, all of nature, including the human being, is part of a dynamic design, and this design is based on an inner life force that is instrumental in guiding evolution. As Leadbeater (1996) explains: “Goal-directedness and purposiveness

are obvious throughout the world of life” (xxiii). According to Arthur Koestler: “Any directive process ... implies a reference to the future ... the pull of the future is as real and sometimes more important than the pressure of the past” (in Leadbeater 1996 : xxiv). As well, E. Lester Smith declares that “some kind of non-material matrix or force field ... is guiding growth and development and evolution” (in Leadbeater 1996 : xxiv). And Teilhard de Chardin states that “the aim of evolution is the enhancement of consciousness by its expression in ever more refined forms” (in Leadbeater 1996 : xxiv).

Evolution, as an enhancement of consciousness, expresses itself as a continuous process of perfectment, a process of unfolding or bringing forth of what is within, a progression toward achieving one’s higher potentials. For instance, in the West part of this unfolding is the development of the rational mind, which can be seen in the enormous development of technology and science. What needs to follow, as Leadbeater (1996) puts forth, is to develop and “bring out the intuition and unitive insight ... an expansion of consciousness in depth in which latent powers are actualized and brought under conscious control by the individual” (xxv). What needs to follow is the understanding and acceptance of the Eastern philosophic concepts of reincarnation and the law of karma to produce balance and harmony in life. This balance and harmony, Leadbeater (1996) declares, results in “order and lawfulness which extends to the moral realm and human activity” (xxv).

Thus, evolution is indicative of every individual essentially being the creator of his or her own destiny, some of which is the result of past behavior and some of present actions. However, the outcomes are not “so much rewards and punishments as educative experiences for his [or her] growth” (Leadbeater 1996 : xxvi). Thus becoming more

conscious of one's attitudes and ways of perceiving and conducting one's actions in life can influence and change one's being in the world. This change can start with conscious awareness through self-knowledge. Self-knowledge refers to aspects of the inner life and involves looking within to understand, learn and grow. Looking within enhances spiritual unfoldment, and such spiritual practices as meditation, dialoguing with the higher Self, and joy of beauty are designed for spiritual awakening and growth. This intimates an awakened unfoldment of conscious life. It is imperative that our system of education design and facilitate such conscious spiritual unfoldment. As human beings it is necessary that we seek to develop ourselves and become conscious of who we are. As human beings we have the power to affect change.

For Western education to succeed and become a whole life reality, educators and learners need to explore and find out who they really are. Beginning in the earliest school years, education needs to allow flexibility, openness and stimulation of the whole mind, the left and the right hemispheres of the brain, by providing an accessible, expansive foundation for creative feeling, thinking and acting. Students should be encouraged to be "dynamic in their exploration, for nothing can compare to personal encounters with different ways of thinking" (Agni Yoga Society 2004 : 774). Students should be encouraged to be open to discussions of various levels of reality and to include ancient wisdom knowledge of the great Thinkers of the past. Reason and intellect, as well as creative, intuitive inspiration, may reveal all possibilities of our own innate potential.

It is time and imperative that we set aside the misconception about the division of knowledge: the applied and the theoretical, the intellectual and the philosophical, the external and the internal. All disciplines need to be attuned to one unifying principle – all



is one. To lay the foundation for the unity of knowledge, studies may begin simultaneously with both the rational and the philosophical. Studies may begin to synthesize both in all areas of education by teaching spiritual dimensions that make possible the unity of all knowledge. Every educational study can open new horizons. Every educational study can find its true meaning. All knowledge is vital.

For Western education to succeed and become a whole life reality, it needs to incorporate spiritual dimensions in order to transform educators, learners and the quality of teaching and learning. As Bailey (1972) points out, “Education is a deeply spiritual enterprise”. It concerns our whole being and includes our divine spirit (34). This signifies recognizing the power in the joy of beauty and the practice of meditation, and the power of sensing and revealing our higher Self. Our hope for the future is that we accept our “innate, inherent characteristic,” our ‘mystical perception’ that denotes an eternal “sense of divinity”, and that we involve the possibility to envision the “nature of the universe”, to “appreciate the world of meaning”, and “to touch Reality” (Bailey 1972 : 35). For Western education to fully succeed, it needs to develop an inner life curriculum as part of a whole life education that acknowledges, honors and integrates our whole being. Only then can we hope to open the gates of change.

## Chapter Four

### *African Philosophy*

Each one of us possessed a center ... The center is both within and without. It is everywhere ... But we must realize it exists ... for without it ... we cannot tell who we are, where we come from, and where we are going.

M. Some (in Shahjahan –  
Journal of Transformative Education 2004 : 297).

What is meant by this center? What is the golden thread of truth that weaves through and from this center? Historically, how far back is it possible to trace that weave? In this chapter, I look at African philosophical perspectives, highlight similarities and convergences with Higher Self Yoga, and indicate primary spiritual aspects emanating from this ancient African - Egyptian Khamitic Nubian - philosophy.

African philosophy, Mbiti (2008) explains, represents a succession of beliefs, rituals, ceremonies and practices held as far back as ancient Egypt and all the way through to the arrival of Christianity and Islam in the Greco-Roman and Arab eras to today. The African traditional concepts and practices held in African societies before the colonial period in Africa still form the essential foundation of African people's worldview today. African philosophy speaks to the “understanding, attitude of mind, logic and perception behind the manner in which African people think, act and speak in different situations of life” (2). Thus, this philosophy that permeates African society

makes no distinction between “the sacred and the secular ... the spiritual and the material areas of life” (2).

This philosophy, Mbiti (2008) points out, the African carries to the fields, to the social functions, to funeral rites, the governing legislative council, or the institute of learning, and it is part of the individual prior to birth and after physical death. This philosophy of the ancient African traditions is not just meant for the individual. Indeed, it governs every aspect of the life of the whole community:

To be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community. A person cannot detach himself from his group, for to do so is to be severed from his roots, his foundation, his context of security, his kinship and the entire group of those who make him aware of his own existence (2).

As well, this ancient African philosophy conveys that the physical and spiritual way of life is perceived as but two dimensions of one and the same world. Reflecting on her spirituality and the spirituality of African women, Wane (2002) purports that “there is no distance between us, the Earth, the people around us, and the universe” (135). This view of the world, Mbiti (2008) notes, pertains to traditional concepts, beliefs, attitudes and rituals, “lived, practiced, discussed and celebrated”, and still forms the essential background of African society today (xiii). The myths, rituals, and ceremonies may differ from place to place within African societies, but these are manifested in all their activities and are accepted as a whole way of living life. This African whole way of living life constitutes a way of being and is part of who Africans are as a people (Mbiti 2008 : 3; Wane 2002 : 136). What people do and experience is motivated and influenced by what they believe and know. Their life and beliefs are one.

### *African historical philosophy*

To look at African philosophy and to understand the different issues of life of African peoples, their traditions, their ethics and morals, and their spiritual and ethical legacy handed down from forbearers, entails journeying back in time and history to ancient Egypt. These forbearers were the Nubian Khamitic Egyptian ancestors, and it is their ethical legacy of spiritual wisdom passed down through the ages that remains written in Africans' hearts, minds, rituals and everyday life. Since Africans remain closely and intrinsically connected with this ancient spiritual wisdom, their history delineates the history of their philosophy. This philosophy remains "a reality which colours the whole life of African peoples" today (Mbiti 2008 : 12).

The history of African philosophy contributes to our understanding of human history, and this history, Wells (2003) informs us through his genetic work, is that "Africans are the oldest group on the planet – meaning that our species had originated there ... modern humans originated in Africa" (30,31). Diop (1974), citing Moret & Davy, op. cit., p. 122, states:

Nowhere else had natural conditions favored the development of a human society to the same extent as in Egypt. ... By ... 4000 B.C. ... the Egyptians had their feet on the threshold of their history proper. It is, then, reasonable to attribute this precocious development of Egypt's first inhabitants to their own genius and to the exceptional conditions in the Nile Valley. Nothing proves that it was due to the incursion of more civilized strangers (100).

Diop (1974) continues, and alludes to

the date 4241 B.C. ... when the calendar was definitely in use in Egypt ... Thus, it is in Egypt that we encounter, with mathematical certainty, humanity's most ancient historical date (100).

Thus, it is fair to state that African philosophy originates with the ancient Egyptian peoples of African Nubian heritage, and their understanding of the nature of the universe, the nature of human relations, their ethical behavior and the meaning of life, beauty and harmony predates the philosophy and education of the Greek era (Asante 2000 : viii).

Pythagoras, Plato and Thales, Tarnas (1993) indicates, spent many years of study in Egypt to learn from the Egyptian priests. The philosophical school of Neoplatonism was founded by the Egyptian philosopher Plotinus (Tarnas 1993 : 34; Asante 2000 : xvi, 8, 79). A “tradition of learning, of intellectual, spiritual, and imaginative insight” was found in Egyptian texts (Tarnas 1993 : 213). As well, “religious impetus and ... divine comprehension ... visible in Pythagoras, Plato, and even Aristotle” were found in the Egyptian mystery religion (Tarnas 1993 : 78). This mystery religion is a philosophy that was developed by the Egyptian priests in their Mystery Schools. The Mystery Schools were centers of learning and knowledge that attracted Greek philosophers and those who accepted the mystery system as a source of wisdom and knowledge (Asante 2000 : 79). Inspired and influenced by the Egyptians, these philosophers returned home with knowledge of science, theory, mathematics, medicine and philosophy, which they then continued to further develop in their own intellectual knowledge and mystical philosophy.

The ancient Africans of the Nile Valley believed that knowledge was the way to life and the way to life led directly to the divine. Inner knowledge came from the search for the divine and wisdom was the result of inner knowledge (Asante 2000 : viii).

In an effort to assist in the revitalization of Western education and our modern way of living life, I now endeavor to uncover and understand the inner knowledge, the

spiritual wisdom of humanity's most ancient civilization. In this attempt I seek to weave the golden thread of truth back to the traditions of the African-Nubian people of ancient Khamit.

### ***Ancient Khamitic Nubian Cosmology***

An essential part of the ancient Khamitic life was to make sense of the world in which the people lived and to understand the nature of the universe. According to Asante (2000):

To them, ... the universe was once a tiny ball so dense that it could not be penetrated by any light and it could never release the light that it contained. Physicists tell us that it was the Big Bang that started the universes. The ancient Kemetic people understood all of this in symbolic form. Thus, ... it was Ra alone from whom everything flowed. Every living thing, all forms ... and all humans descended from Ra. ... Ra was to the ancient Kemites the dense ball ... Ra was the supreme originator ... light itself was the creation of Ra (4). Ra was the Supreme Deity (100).

Khamitic Nubian cosmology, Afua (2001) notes, indicates that the Nubian ancestors of the spiritual traditions of ancient Khamit, were star-born in origin. These ancestors, the kings and queens of the Nile Valley who created the early Egyptian civilization, called themselves Sa-Ra, Son of the Sun, and Sat-Ra, Daughter of the Sun. The place of origin for the first earth mother Isis, or Ast, is believed to be the Star Sirius, and for the first earth father Asar, or Osiris, it is the constellation of Orion. Both came to the planet earth along the celestial path of the Sun, or Ra, to be here from the very beginning (15).

These Nubian Khamitic ancestors, Afua (2001) states, are perceived as the "Elders of the earth ... the spiritual heads, teachers, motivators, and guides of our planet ordained by NTR ... the undifferentiated One/All-Divine from which all life emanates" (5, 11). NTR, or NTU, as explained by Mbiti (2008), is the "cosmic universal force ... a

force endowed with intelligence ... Being itself ... that force in which Being and beings coalesce” (11).

From the very beginning, Afua (2001) continues, Khamitic cosmology was perceived as balanced; that is, the divine attributes of NTR, the Mother/Father Source, were both feminine and masculine. This vision of cosmology permeated every aspect of Khamitic life and was called “maat riarchal (maat) meaning balance and harmony “ (Wane 2002 : 137). Women were accorded equality, respect and freedom in the family and the society, and this way of living life served as a model of divine balance and harmony indwelling in all human beings and the society as a whole. Nature, and all living beings within it, was perceived as the manifestation of the expression of the feminine-masculine aspects of the All-Divine Source (Wane 2002: 137; Budge 2008; Dei 2002; Mbiti 2008; Asante 1998).

Divine emanations of the One/All-Divine, Afua (2001) explains, were: Isis, Ast or Maat, the Great Mother Spirit, healer and culture creator, the agent of “truth, balance, harmony, law and cosmic order” (5), “inspirer of personal responsibility and accountability to one’s own indwelling Divinity” (13); Het-Hru, or Hathor, the “aspect of Divine love, beauty, and nurturing” (5); Nefer Atum, the “aspect of highest ascension and unlimited potential” (5); and Hru, “the sacred warrior of light, the aspect of will and the aspect of expansion” (Wane 2002 : 137).

The respect accorded the ‘maat riarchal’ feminine/masculine balance and the divine harmony of life within the universe, kept the Khamitic people in intimate contact with their inner selves. Any imbalance created by their thoughts, speech or actions motivated the Khamitic people to purify themselves, their relationships, and their

environment. Purification inspired the Khamitic people to look at their knowledge of themselves in relation to life and the universe and to utilize the four elements of nature, that is earth, water, air and fire, for self-healing. For self-healing, Afua (2001) explains, the element of water was used in purification rites such as baptism and fasting. Earth, in the form of healing foods, herbology and aromatherapy, served to purify and rejuvenate the body. Air, or breath, was an important component in various sacred physical movements and poses, now known as Hatha Yoga. The element of fire, based on the powerful rays of Atn-Ra, the sun, served in purification rituals to recharge people's energy. Most notably, it was the element of spirit that the Khamitic people activated and evoked through meditation and chanting (11, 12, 13).

The earliest Khamitic people were primarily vegetarians. Their basic diet consisted of "beans, lentils, peas, barley, millet, nuts, fruits (such as dates, melons, and pomegranates), vegetables (such as onions, cabbage, and peppers), and healing herbs such as ... nettle, aloe, garlic, and parsley" (Afua 2001 : 13). This indicates that the ancient Khamitic people understood the necessity of purity in body to accompany living a pure life connected to the spirit.

Thus, in daily activating the energies that governed the elements in nature, as well as consuming foods that were energizing and healing, the ancient Khamitic people "protected and strengthened their body, mind and spirit"(Wane 2002 : 138). These everyday practices and rituals connected the Khamitic people ever more deeply to their own divine within, and in so doing created a transformation that maintained their physical wellness and inner peace.



All elements the Khamitic people perceived as permeated with spirit, for NTR - the All-Divine - and Nature are One. Nature inspired them toward self-healing, and it is from this inspiration that the philosophy of ‘heal thyself’ is derived (Afua 2001 : 12; Mbiti 2008; Wane 2002). Purification rituals, meditation practices, and contemplation on the Divine, brought healing to their bodies and balance and harmony to their whole way of living life. As experienced by the Khamitic people, it was a way of living life that could teach us how to live life in wellness and peace, and this not only for ourselves but for the “greater service in uplifting humanity” (Afua 2001 : 13).

As Arewa (in Wane 2002) explains:

Mother Africa blessed people with an everlasting love of the Eternal spirit. Mother Africa taught her children to respect the earth and all that dwell on her. She taught them the laws of nature and helped them understand the cosmic rhythms. Her people, who created rituals to communicate with these forces which they then deified and praised, knew the celestial realms and elements (139).

As perceived by the Khamitic Nubian cosmology, the sun, Ra or Consciousness, is symbolic of the Eternal spirit in the form of light. As part of the celestial realms and elements, the significance of the sun is similarly expounded in Higher Self Yoga in which the sun is perceived as the giver of life energy. When we look at and connect with the sun through our spiritual heart center, we see and perceive not only the brightness of its rays, but also experience the energy of its light. This energy of the sun’s light we assimilate into our body and in this way energize our whole being. Thus, being composed of all the elements of nature, that is earth, water, air and fire, we are part of the component elements that constitute the energy that is from light.

Every molecule and every cell in our body is composed of light energy and this light energy comes directly from the sun. Like a battery, when the sun shines, it

reenergizes every molecule and cell in our body and makes it have more energy. These elements, composed of light energy, make prana or life energy, and this life energy or prana, energizes our whole being with life. Thus, being part of the component elements that constitute the sun's energy, and knowing ourselves as light in body and spirit, is knowing that the sun's light energy enhances our vitality and expands our consciousness. This knowing may well support our own striving for inner growth.

Creating purification rites and spiritual rituals that respect all expressions of nature, understanding and honoring the cosmic rhythm of the Eternal spirit, and communicating with the divine forces within and without ourselves through meditation and contemplation as practiced and lived by the ancient Egyptian Khamitic people, if adopted, applied and experienced today would transform not only our own way of living life, it also would affect the collective good of humanity as a whole.

### ***Divinity of Life***

As a society based on the Divine Spirit, the ancient Nubian Egyptians lived life in a "state of continual purification, meditation, wellness, and harmony of the soul, body and mind" (Afua 2001 : 13; Wane 2002). They considered themselves and everything they did divinely motivated and sacred. Their work, their relationships, indeed their whole way of life, was governed by the laws of Maat. The laws of Maat constituted the principle of eternal balance and equilibrium, and this principle underpinned all their communication and interaction with one another, as well as their interrelationship with the universe. This Maatian principle constituted the ancient Nubian Egyptian philosophy of life and served as the foundation of their spiritual moral code of ethics (Amen 2003; Asante 2000).

This Maatian spiritual moral code of ethics as the belief and reliance in the sacredness of life, together with the acceptance of the equality of Khamitic women in society as a whole, impacted every aspect in the life of Khamitic people and gave them the foundation to live life in spiritual balance and harmony as a culture and as a civilization. The ancient Egyptian culture and civilization, Afua (2001) proclaims, was governed by “Maatocracy”, a righteous government that honored equality and democracy in all areas of life (18). It is this culture and civilization of the ancient Khamitic people whose legacy of cosmology created the government of ‘Maatocracy’, that truly exemplifies a whole life model, which, if implemented, could serve to heal our global community today (Afua 2001 : 13; Amen 2003).

The Laws of Maat, Afua (2001) explains, inspired “personal responsibility and accountability to one’s own indwelling Divinity” (13). All members of society knew themselves to be responsible and accountable for their every thought, word and deed (Wane 2002). This postulates the self-responsibility of karma, what goes around comes around, which pertains to the law of cause and effect in Higher Self Yoga. “Everything we do in this life is reflected in the next”, Asante (2000) states, and our every thought and word will “have implications for eternity” (78). As well, sacred words in meditation, such as “I am that I am”, Afua (2001) writes, evoke the resurrection of ka, or soul (13). This converges with Higher Self Yoga in which the recitation of a mantra connects those who meditate with their divine essence, their own Divine within.

Further, according to Afua (2001), Atum, or supreme Self, could be attained by individuals whose aware consciousness had evolved into a state of pure light (13; Amen 2003). Atum converges with the concept of Atman in Higher Self Yoga or Hinduism, and

pertains to the pure light within, the true or higher Self. To access Atum, or Supreme Self, Afua (2001) continues, the Khamitic people were required to traverse the path of purification, which meant diligently cleansing ‘shai’, or karma. This necessitated during the morning and evening rituals to recite at sunrise “I will not ...”, and at sunset “I have not ...”, which, in effect, meant stating and then reviewing one’s own moral conduct of the entire day (14). Thus, cleansing shai, or karma, required becoming aware of and working through the consequences of one’s own thoughts, words and actions. It was a way of purifying and transforming not merely one’s inner being, but one’s whole way of life.

Intrinsically connected to Divinity, Khamitic life constituted a primordial spiritual life of knowing oneself. It constituted the principle of the ancient life of knowing and achieving on every level one’s identity of Self with cosmos. This Khamitic life of Self-identity with cosmos constituted a culture of education and wisdom that centered around the temple.

The temple, Lawlor (in Critchlow and Lawlor 1980) states, for the Khamitic people was a “center of the learning and dissemination of a psychophysical and spiritual science whose purpose was to reveal and develop symbolic, intellectual and physical techniques, which might effect perceptual, behavioral and physiological changes” (49). The temple, thus, played a primary role in gradually leading the Khamitic people toward the highest “evolutionary potential” (49). This pertains to the highest evolutionary potential of perfecting oneself that was maintained in Egyptian culture, and the temple as the “nucleus of the society” was an “indicator that the population was collectively and actively engaged in a self-creative phase of evolutionary unfolding” (49).

The temple, thus, played a primary role in the spiritual manifestation of the innermost Self. This spiritual innermost Self, Lawlor (in Critchlow and Lawlor 1980) states, is who we are in “essential origin and evolutionary potential” (49). Consequently, Afua (2001) reiterates, “reverence for the Divine permeated all aspects of life. ... The culture was spiritual. ... Khamitic consciousness perceived itself as surrounded, enveloped, saturated, nurtured and immersed in divinity. ... Spirituality immersion was the mode of existence” (17, 18). Thus, inspired by the sense of wonder of the universe and the immortality of life, empowered the ancient Khamitic people to live life governed by the knowledge of the philosophical and spiritual wisdom, to live life immersed in spirit. The everyday and the spiritual were truly one life.

As Asante (2000) emphasizes, when we are “confronted with Maat we are confronted with the possibilities of establishing truth, harmony, righteousness, justice, order, balance and reciprocity, for these are the elements that construct our response to the universe” (78). Confronting Maat denotes bringing balance, harmony and stability into our lives and achieving “mastery over mind and will over self” (76). For, everyone of us confronting Maat, could signify facing boldly the expansion of our aware consciousness, and opening with awareness our conscious understanding of the Khamitic legacy of cosmology of knowledge and wisdom, and, in so doing, discovering our true identity.

### ***African Philosophy of Life Today***

Today, in their understanding of their traditional life of morals, beliefs, actions, and social relationships, African people continue to be profoundly spiritual. This spiritual understanding shapes their philosophy of the universe and their participation within it.

For the African people, the nature of the universe is multidimensional. Within this multidimensionality the energy of the cosmic origin permeates all there is. This includes human beings, animals, the plant and mineral worlds, as well as all objects and events, and these African people perceive as taking place on many different levels at the same time (Mazama 2002; Abdi, Puplampu and Dei 2006).

Thus, this all-pervading cosmic energy is an essence that is shared by all. This essence permeating all forms of life represents a dynamic active principle of connectedness and harmony that enlivens life itself and bestows a fundamental unity of all life with the Divine. This divine unity human beings recreate by participating in divine acts of performing rituals in honor of the Divine (Richards 1990 : 211; Mazama 2002). Through such shared participation with the divinely created universe the human beings and life itself become sacred and divine.

As such, for African people the nature of cosmos is perceived as a reciprocal, interrelated and interdependent relationship with the Divine that affects all beings. Within that interrelationship, life and death are perceived as but different forms of being. Life is perceived as infinite and is born out of death, and death is perceived as the world inhabited by the ancestors, or other spirits. These other spirits may be those “spiritual messengers” of divine origin “rendered accessible to men and women” (Mazama 2002 : 222).

The dead are perceived to maintain their connection with the living in an interrelationship whereby the spiritual power of the dead strengthens the life force of the living. In this interrelationship the dead watch over the living and provide them with knowledge, guidance and protection. In return, as gestures of respect and gratitude, the

living strengthen the ancestors, or other spirits, by offering rituals of libation and food. By such rituals, the living acknowledge their conscious interdependence with their ancestors and spirits, and pay tribute to them as guardians and protectors of family life, traditions and ethics (Mazama 2002; Asante 1998; Wane 2007). Richards (1990) sums it up in pointing out that “just as spirit needs matter to give form, ... matter needs spirit to give it force, being, and reality” (212).

Richards (1990) further explains that “life, events, and phenomena derive meaning, value and significance through relationship to an organic whole” (212). Both Richards (1990) and Mazama (2002) note that family and community, and their relationship to each other and to the universe, are considered to be such an organic whole. The dead, the living, and the yet unborn, become a metaphysical reality within a wholeness of multidimensionality of ancestor communion, and this gives purpose, meaning and value to life. Spirit does not die. Life is one.

Through rituals in remembrance of their ancestors, the African people keep in touch with their sacred origins. Richards (1990) informs us, that African people perform the ritual of ancestor communion, the ritual of spiritual union whereby the physically deceased members of the family continue to be part of the living family. That is, spirits of the ancestors reincarnate to take physical form in the babies born to the community, and the elders of the community “upon physical death are reborn into the spiritual realm as ancestors” (212, 213). Death and rebirth, symbolized in the relationship of African people to their ancestors, contributes to their philosophy of the eternal cycle of life (Asante 1998 : 111,112). This eternal cycle of life constitutes a constant circular renewal of life whereby “life merges from divinity through birth and merges back into divinity through

death, and through this cyclical transformation achieve immortality” (Mazama 2002 : 222).

### ***Cosmic Rhythm and Order***

The philosophical notion of ancestor communion Africans perceive to happen in sacred time. This means that spiritual communications with their ancestors happen in a state of timelessness, a state not limited by ordinary, mundane time or space. In this state of timelessness “through its association with spirit, matter becomes ontologically related to the eternal” (Richards 1990 : 212). In this state of timelessness, sacred time is perceived as cyclical, eliminating the linearity of past, present and future of our mundane secular world. In the African universe “the present is filled with the past and carrying the future” and these are joined together in spatial unity (Mazama 2002 : 220). Through sacred time in the state of timelessness the living become the ancestors and transcend the limits of the ordinary, mundane time and space. Through sacred time life is being cyclically recreated and revived and space becomes expanded. In this way the eternal moment of the cycle of life between two spheres of the universe is being maintained (Asante 1998; Richards 1990 : 212).

The rituals of African life serve as the medium between human beings and the universe. Rituals represent the “modality within which the unity of the human and the divine is expressed ... the unity of spirit and matter is perceived ... the eternal moment is achieved” (Richards 1990 : 213; Mazama 2002). In the performance of rituals, the living family members transcend the boundaries of ordinary space and time and communicate between the two spheres of the universe, that is, between heaven and earth. Through rituals, Richards (1990) assert, African members of the community are strengthened by



the creation of a sense of stability and direction that enables them to deal with their difficulties in a more constructive way. Through rituals Africans are provided with solutions to problems of unrest, conflict or chaos, and clarification as how to better function in the collective life of the community. In this way, rituals reenergize and revitalize the family and the community life, “values and beliefs are redefined, reaffirmed, and reinterpreted, at once giving them added viability and sacralizing their new form”, and immortality of life is reaffirmed (Richards 1990 : 213, 218; Some 1994; Asante 1998 : 113).

Within the multidimensional sacred order of the African universe, all of life is a reflection of the cosmic rhythm and order that interpenetrates “with nature, the cosmos, the universe and the spiritual ... force Amen-Ra, the ‘giver of life’ ” (Nantambu in Mazama 2002 : 224). This sacred, spiritual rhythmic order, or creative dynamic energy, also interpenetrates all beings and all things. Gratitude, harmony and reverence for all life are perceived to be attributes that create and maintain balance, harmony and oneness of life within the universe. Oneness of life, an essential feature of African cosmology, portrays a sacred conscious relationship that is deeply embedded in the African way of living life. Oneness of life portrays a spiritual life of interrelatedness and interconnectedness with the Divine Origin, the ultimate Source of Being (Mazama 2002; Mbiti 2008; Tiesdell & Tolliver 2003; Wane 2002; Wane & Chandler 2002).

### ***Education***

African philosophy can become instrumental in creating a more meaningful and significant Western system of education and a more balanced and harmonious way of living life. Afua (2001) states it succinctly, where there is living life within the “enduring

values of Maat ... there is unity, there is healing taking place” (17). Such a healing unity can take place if we allow the integration into our academic process of education and whole way of living life the ancient Nubian Khamitic Maatian paradigm of: heal thyself, know thyself, love thyself, be thyself (17). For, education and everyday spiritual life is truly one.

Our first realization must be that our most important relationship is our relationship with our own self. First, we need to heal our own self by focusing our attention onto our inner being. In getting to know our own self, we then learn to have a deeper understanding of how to heal our relationships with others. In healing one another we come to improve the world around us (Afua 2001; Abdi, Puplampu and Dei 2006 : 58). This process entails first having understanding, compassion and love for our own being, and only then trying to explore our relationships with others. At this stage in the process we come to comprehend and integrate what we have learned from each relationship.

This learning pertains to a process of working through deep emotional challenges and psychological blocks, such as anger, distrust, fear and hatred, and in so doing releasing old conscious or unconscious habits and behavioral patterns. It means a process of utilizing such modalities as journal writing, therapy work, prayer, as well as positive affirmations and forgiveness for our own self. It means first nurturing our own self to reflect wellness and wholeness, which then can serve to “establish a sacred relationship with all others” (Afua 2001 : 317).

Establishing sacred relationships with others and developing the innate, spiritual nature within ourselves is of primary importance in the pursuit toward whole life

education. This pursuit requires the conscious awareness of our inner life. This inner life can come to be revealed through such modalities as meditation; art, music, dance and the joy of sacred beauty; as well as the feminine principle and woman.

### ***Meditation***

Converging with Higher Self Yoga, meditation in African philosophy is a primary practice to facilitate healing and getting to know our sacred Self. Meditation is a practice of restoring and deepening our inner balance and peace by strengthening our connection with our spirit. Meditation is of utmost importance to integrate into education. According to Afua (2001), meditation is a practice of releasing and letting go of everything that weighs our spirit down. Meditation is a way of restoring inner balance and peace. Here is one way to meditate, Afua (2001) informs us: sit in a quiet, sacred place and

close your eyes, focus on your breath, and allow yourself to slip deeper and deeper into a meditative state. Breathe in and out slowly. ... Relax and let go of the stress and pressures of the world. Release all anxiety. ... Allow your body to drift easily into a serene state of oneness with the Divine Spirit. ... Feel peace and calm flow into you as your inner balance is restored and renewed (61).

We need to emerge from this meditation, Afua (2001) continues, and live in “active meditation we call life ... knowing that you are filled with light and clarity” (61). The practice of meditation, integrated into education and everyday life, in time would move us into the same quiet and calm space of balance and harmony that we could achieve during meditation.

The Khamitic way of life maintained a high spiritual state of Maat consciousness that centered around the sacred heart, and this sacred heart the Egyptian ancestors believed is the gateway to the higher Self. Afua (2001) explains:

To keep the heart center clear and clean and filled with beauty, light, and vitality, neither an individual nor a community may continue to harbor past painful experiences. You must accept that every lesson is a blessing, and that every experience you receive has given you deeper insight (316).

One way to keep the heart center in a balanced and peaceful state that is reflected into one's body, mind and spirit is to practice heart meditation. For this

sit quietly for a few moments and connect to your heart center (in the middle of your chest). Breathe into your heart and out again, very slowly and quietly. Do this seven times, for seven is the number for the Spirit. Every time you inhale, see the image of your heart as light... With each exhalation, release from the heart center, in degrees or all at once, emotions of anger, depression, disappointment. With each inhalation, breathe into the heart peace, joy, compassion, balance and serenity (Afua 2001 : 316).

The Khamitic people believed that if the heart is burdened through the lessons of life, it is out of balance thereby opening the way to disharmony and illness (Afua 2001 : 316). When the heart center is in balance, we are in harmony with life and experience compassion, peace, wisdom, inner joy, and the freedom to manifest our true purpose of life. When our heart center is open, we can experience our higher consciousness, our true or higher Self.

***Art, music, dance, and the joy of sacred beauty***

Art, music, dance, and the joy of sacred beauty, stimulate and open the creativity of the right hemisphere of our brain and aid in balancing and harmonizing creative wisdom with intellectual knowledge. This pertains to balancing and harmonizing the feminine and the masculine aspects within each of us. As the aesthetic expressions of the Divine, art, music, and dance, elevate our spirit and are natural healing modalities that mend our soul and heal our body.

Afua (2001) expresses her own experiences:

Dance has always been intertwined with my healing work because ... there is no separation between me and my dance. ... [I]n Afrakan culture, our spiritual lifestyle, our rituals and ceremonies, have always been expressed through dance from the beginning of time. ... I found that as long as you keep dancing and keep your body flowing and moving, diseases of the body, mind, and spirit cannot set in, and mental and emotional disturbances have no place to fester (191).

Such aesthetic expressions as art, music, or dance, uncover and bring forth our indwelling healer. It is such aesthetic expressions that have the potential to cleanse out any of our negativity and to resolve any of our difficulties. When we are immersed in art, music or dance, we experience no separation between us as the one who creates and that which we are creating. When keeping the unity of these expressions of creativeness flowing, mental and emotional disturbances and anxieties cannot find entrance into our being. Yet, simultaneously physical energy blocks preventing healing can be released and let go. It is when immersed in painting, playing or listening to music, or moving in dance, that we can begin to open to our true essence, to connect to our true Self (Afua 2001 : 189 – 191; Asante 1998 : 176).

The joy of sacred beauty experienced through such modalities as art, music or dance, or observing the beauty of nature, embraces our divine essence of spiritual harmony within ourselves. We can experience the joy of sacred beauty in our heart center and this joy uplifts our soul and our whole being. Afua (2001) promises:

Sacred beauty rules the heart center. Sacred Beauty brings harmony to every aspect of one's life through Khamitic etiquette, an ancient form of grace and beauty expressed through the Khamitic Nubian spiritual path. ... Sacred Beauty opens the eye of divine aesthetic harmony and rids us of a mundane vision of the world... (and) attunes us to the unlimited possibilities of divine beauty as a healing balm (216).

Beauty is an expression of the Divine and this expression is indwelling in each individual. Our heart center is the gateway to bring this expression of joy into our consciousness. Joy is our destiny. Developing and experiencing the joy of sacred beauty helps us to create a divinely beautiful life and this then opens our pathway to experience the eternal All/Divine. The joy of sacred beauty aids in transforming our environment and the planet for the greater good and beauty of humanity (Afua 2001 : 216; Dillard, Abdur-Rashid & Tyson 2000; Mbiti 2008; Asante 1998).

***The feminine principle and woman***

Of paramount importance to realize is the significance of woman in ancient Egypt. In the Khamitic legacy, and here again I turn to Afua (2001) who states it most profoundly, woman was “revered, cherished, respected, and held high within society ... [woman] shared power and leadership in the government and in the spiritual arena” (367). It is woman who, as priestess, healer and the embodiment of sacredness, passed on the spiritual wisdom. To disregard woman, as historically experienced in our society, is a spiritual blaspheme against “the feminine aspect of the Most High dwelling within all men and women. ... In ancient times we saw the Creator represented in both male and female aspects to serve as a model for divine balance throughout society” (362). Again, it is Afua (2001) who admonishes:

Woman, let it be known that you are a Healer. ... Nothing stops violence like purity and inner peace. ... Inner peace draws external peace to you ... as inner love of self draws external love. Inner happiness manifests as bliss externally. ... Peace is a precious gift from the Most High to those who are obedient to the Natural Laws (289).

The balance and harmony of the feminine and masculine principles is absent in our Western way of life and absent in our Western academy of education. To bridge and

heal the separation and fragmentation of the feminine and masculine principles within ourselves and create a balanced and harmonious everyday and academic life, we need to be open and draw new and expanded levels of awareness and understanding into our consciousness as to who we really are.

However, what is meant by the feminine and masculine principles? And how do these principles affect each of us? When we look at nature we need to realize that all of nature, that is the plant kingdom to the kingdom of humanity, is composed of the feminine and masculine principles; that is, the feminine being matter and the masculine being spirit. For instance, a tree is composed of matter that forms it, but within that matter are elements that cause the feminine principle of the tree to sprout leaves in the spring and the masculine principle of the tree to seek the sun and turn its leaves toward the sunlight.

In Eastern philosophic tradition the feminine principle is known as prakriti, the primordial or original state or form of anything; that is, the primary, original substance (de Purucker 1972 : 129). The masculine principle is known as purusha and signifies the individual everlasting Divine-Spiritual Self (de Purucker 1972 : 120). Both principles signify matter and spirit, and both together compose the two primeval aspects of the One. African philosophy embraces the complementary aspects of the male/female relationship and honors the nature of the feminine and masculine principles in all form of life (Dei 2002 : 52).

These two principles are governed by the laws of cosmos and are part of every human being. When an individual gets inspired to create something, that inspiration represents the feminine principle. However, in order to manifest that creativeness into

being, requires the masculine principle. Higher Self Yoga explains that the feminine yin energy, the reflective right hemisphere of the brain, utilizes the masculine yang energy, the analytical left hemisphere of the brain, to manifest that which is created into actuality. The feminine principle is usually hidden and absorbing and is being influenced by the Mother energy of the Mother-Father Source. The masculine principle utilizes the fiery energy of the Mother-Father Source to manifest the Mother energy in the world. Both these energies are high energies that need each other to create and produce anything. Both need to be in balance within ourselves in order for any of us to be balanced. Both need to be in balance within ourselves in order for that which we create to be balanced and harmonious. And we need this homeostatic state whether it is in our academic world or our life world.

According to the Sacred Teachings, Roerich (1981) admonishes, humanity's decline began from the time of the debasement of the feminine principle (359). As well, Agni Yoga Society (2004) expounds that, in this our epoch of woman coming into her own we need to realize that woman contains all power and possibilities equal to man. It is woman who will be instrumental not only in affirming equilibrium but also in bringing enlightenment. It is woman, in collaboration with man, who can combat the confusion and chaos of ignorance in society and create a new and improved world (772).

The creative feminine principle is manifested in nature – indeed the entire cosmos. Woman is a personification of nature, and humanity learns from nature and not the other way around. Many ancient sacred teachings highly regard the feminine principle and consider female divinities as the most sacred. For instance, in the Khamitic legacy, woman was ascribed the role of guardian of the sacred wisdom (Afua 2001). Further,



Roerich (1981) gives us numerous examples: Through her many useful reforms the reign of the woman-Pharaoh Hatshepsut far surpassed that of many male-Pharaohs (359).

Among many ancient American Aboriginal communities, woman governed not only the spiritual aspect of life, but she was also the head of the clan, and the line of inheritance was through the line of woman (304). In Buddha's teaching woman is equal to man and can equally reach a high state of divinity (304). In India, the sages Ramakrishna and Vivekananda worshipped the Divine Feminine Origin (455). These are good examples that show us that where woman was safeguarded and revered society thrived and flourished.

Roerich (1981) continues to admonish humanity. Over centuries demeaning woman and subjugating the position of woman, she points out, caused the coarsening and degeneration of humanity (507). The mind of woman is equal to that of man, she lets us know, because the higher qualities of mind derive from spirit and spirit is sexless (460). What is needed is for us to come to understand the foundation of existence and our destiny and role in the Universe. This understanding would come to expand our aware consciousness and lead us toward the divine purpose of synthesis and unification on a higher plane of existence (521). Only with the equality of woman respected on a planetary scale, she continues, can we hope for the attainment of true humanness and universal peace. Such an understanding would result in the broadening and expansion of our aware consciousness and attitude toward all of life inclusive of academic education.

At the 2009 Peace Summit, His Holiness The Dalai Lama went so far as to proclaim that "the world will be saved by the Western woman". Yet, woman, Roerich (1981) with deep understanding urges, needs to refrain from imitating man and instead

needs to develop her own creative intuition and let it come to the fore and blossom.

Woman, Roerich continues, needs to awaken in herself the awareness of her own origin and develop her own potentialities, as well as strive toward her own self-perfectment and, thus, elevate her own level of consciousness. Woman, she says, needs to continue to use her own knowledge and accept responsibility for the struggle of the general good.

Woman needs to strive to understand her own innately divine wisdom and allow this understanding to empower her for lofty tasks. These tasks are toward new achievements for the betterment of humanity. This, our “new epoch”, Roerich (1981) declares, will bring the renaissance of woman, the torchbearer of wisdom and achievement, by “inspiring humanity on the path of evolution” (468, 469).

### ***Reflective Thoughts***

The ancient Khamitic Nubian Egyptians were aware of and lived this path of wisdom and achievement. The wisdom of their philosophic spiritual tradition was one of achieving evolution through the expansion of aware consciousness. This expansion of conscious awareness pertained to an aware self-consciousness of one’s own responsibility for one’s own way of life. Thus, every aspect of life was part of the path that would lead toward one’s highest realizable evolutionary potential of becoming one with the Divine Itself.

This is a vision of perfectibility that permeated the entire ancient Egyptian culture. From the temple to the collective was one committed undertaking of self-creative unfolding. Their moral, intellectual and spiritual character was one of individual and collective purification and development. As Lawlor (in Critchlow and Lawlor 1980)

points out, many of the ancient Egyptians spent protracted periods of time in the temple and then returned to

ordinary society with the enrichment brought about by this exposure to spiritual life. In this way, spiritual directives could penetrate many reaches of society and influence the entire structure of living. ... Social and individual activity thus became a living ritual, evoking and symbolizing the drama of personal and collective self-evolution (50).

The concept of personal and collective self-evolution intimated the identity of oneself with cosmos. Lawlor (in Critchlow and Lawlor 1980) continues:

For this reason, techniques of introspection known as yoga provided a remarkable instrument for examining not only the individual's psychology and physiology but also the characteristics of the natural and cosmic world (80).

The ancient Egyptian's social philosophy can be said to have been a continuous and equal relationship between the active, the thinking and the mystic. No level of experience was favored over another. The spiritual was equal to that of the intellectual and the physical. Thus, the wisdom of the ancient Egyptian philosophic tradition suggests that no society could prosper and survive without the continuous interaction and interrelationship between these experiences. As Lawlor (in Critchlow and Lawlor 1980) suggests:

Without such a spiritually self-aware, self-perfecting core, guided by the pinnacle of an institution like the Temple, civilization loses sight of its evolutionary purpose and falls inevitably into imbalance and decay (51).

As I have explained, African philosophy calls for the awakening and cultivation of our inner being and reclaiming our spirit, our sacred Self. This means understanding, learning and integrating through aware self-consciousness our innate ways of knowing and being in the world. African philosophy teaches about healing and creating wholeness

in our lives with gentleness, humility and compassion. It lets us recognize and identify with the source of human existence. It makes us realize that we need to ask deeper questions relating to the interconnectedness between ourselves as spiritual beings, the laws of nature, and the learning processes within our academic institutions, and this knowing needs to be synthesized and integrated into contemporary Western education.

African philosophy, this all-encompassing ancient sacred wisdom teaching, very similar in its foundation and essence to Higher Self Yoga, brings to light that, in order for us to find wisdom within ourselves and harmony in our wider community and system of education, we first must find our center, our transcendent core, realize it exists, understand our true beginning and transform our being. Through a progressive inner mastery we can raise ourselves above the way we now experience life and the processes in education and garner all our impulses toward self-perfectment and change. We can tap into our internal potential and transcend beyond the transitory ego self toward the power of self-perfectment. For, to come home in spirit and experience oneness with the Divine means to reach ultimate freedom by way of the knowledge of our sacred Self. “If we relentlessly seek the source of our beginnings, we can unlock the mystery and tap into our powers as the original Sacred” (Afua 2001 : 368; Dillard, Abdur-Rashed & Tyson 2000; Mbiti 2008; Shahjahan 2004).

## Chapter Five

### *Aboriginal Spirituality*

(I am looking at the spirituality of Aboriginal peoples in North America).

[E]very created object is wakan, holy, and has a power according to the loftiness of the spiritual reality that it reflects. . . . The Indian humbles himself before the whole of creation because all visible things were created before him and, being older than he, deserve respect.

Black Elk (in H. Smith 1991 : 379).

There are many diverse Aboriginal peoples spread across North America with distinctive Aboriginal cultures, languages, stories, poetry, art, dance, music, and experiences. However, North American Aboriginal communities or tribes, such as the Apache, the Cree, the Cherokee or Tsalagi, the Mi'kmaq, the Ojibway, and the Plains, from whom I am drawing my examples, even though no two of these are exactly alike, all of them share commonalities in their worldviews, concepts, value systems and their way of living their lives.

These conceptual commonalities, Hogan (in Cordova 2007) informs us, comprise core ethical and moral values of behavior. They comprise “notions of the sacred” as it relates to spirit, energy and divinity in all creation. They comprise the Aboriginal peoples’ lives as being “deeply embedded in nature and place”, and their “relationship with the earth” as a living being that they “must live upon with care and love and respect”

(vii). They comprise Aboriginal peoples' "significant knowledge of the world" and its place in the universe (viii). "Our systems of knowledge" Hogan (in Cordova 2007) continues, "are not about beliefs but about ways of knowing and how we know, through experience itself" (viii).

Thus, although Aboriginal communities or tribal peoples come from different origins or different stories, they acknowledge and respect those differences as well as acknowledge, honor and celebrate their shared commonalities (Cordova 2007). These Aboriginal conceptual commonalities have been preserved in oral traditions and continue to be shared with family and community through stories, cultural practices and ceremonies. These Aboriginal conceptual commonalities continue to determine how Aboriginal peoples understand and live in the world.

### ***Aboriginal Worldviews***

The North American Aboriginal worldviews can be depicted as a deeply spiritual philosophy of life (Battiste and Barman 1995; Bopp et al, 2004; Cordova 2007; Hanohano 1999). The ideas of this philosophy of life that I am sharing are ideals from within the Aboriginal culture that Cajete (1995) calls "the highest thought" (46):

Thinking the highest thought means thinking of one's self, one's community, and one's environment rightly. This thinking in the highest, most respectful, and compassionate way systematically influences the actions of both individuals and the community. It is a way to perpetuate "a good life," a respectful and spiritual life, a wholesome life (46).

These cultural ideals individuals may strive for but not necessarily achieve in daily living. These ideals and attributes may be held by individuals but these may be bounded and limited by fragmentation as a result of colonialism.

Within this ideal philosophy of life, the spiritual life is the conscious foundation of life, the vital element that permeates every aspect of living life. Indeed, the spiritual life that I am sharing represents the Aboriginal peoples' conceptions of living "a good life" that informs their daily thoughts, behaviors, and actions. Living a good life is experienced as a way of life that has its foundation in traditional ethical and moral values. These traditions are fundamental and highly valued standards of social conduct, behavior, culture, and customs, and represent the foundation of such traditional central values as love, respect, humility, fortitude, leadership, courage, generosity, compassion, integrity, and wisdom (Battiste and Barman 1995; Cajete 1995; Cordova 2007).

Some of the attributes of such traditional central values are seen in the kinship Aboriginal peoples have with nature and their reverence for its life force. These attributes are seen in the Aboriginal peoples' respect for individual autonomy and the desire for harmony in interpersonal relationships; their co-operative sharing in the community; the discovery and development of each individual's true nature in its harmonious interrelationship with the universe; and the recognition and awareness of the Divine (Battiste and Barman 1995; Cajete 1995; Cordova 2007; Hanohano 1999).

The Aboriginal worldviews represent a spiritually conscious path of a people embedded in a way of life that honors all creation, a path that orders their lives and supports them in crisis, a path that gives their actions meaning and validity. It is a path of a people who explore the meaning of life by living a spiritual life that is celebrated with practices and ceremonies which heighten their spiritual awareness of life. The aim of the awareness of this spiritual life points to seeking wholeness; that is, seeking wellness, happiness and peace. This wholeness can be attained through personal effort toward

harmony and balance in one's everyday life. This wholeness intimates a search from within through striving toward the fulfillment of one's personal potential. Fulfilling one's personal potential indicates attending to one's inner life that leads to the discovery of one's authentic self. This discovery pertains to a search for truth that powerfully influences one's whole way of living life and being in the world (Bopp et al, 2004; Hanohano 1999 : 210).

However, what constitutes this search for truth that influences Aboriginal peoples' way of living a wholesome life and being in the world?

### ***Community - Place - Space***

The world for the Aboriginal peoples is centered within the community. The community represents their central social reality, and this reality consists of a web of cultural and spiritual interrelationships that give meaning, guidance and sustenance to its people physically, psychologically and spiritually. Within the community the sense of 'we' is held supreme, and every aspect of the Aboriginal way of life is preserved, revitalized and re-energized through that sense of community (Ludwig 2006 : 34). Yet, the people and the community create their meaning beyond this reality.

Within the Aboriginal community the people are solidly embedded in the enfolding natural environment, as are all animals, plants, minerals, and all elements. All are considered to be part of nature. Being part of nature implies being respectful of all creation as all aspects of creation are considered to contain a living spirit, or energy, and as such have life (Cajete 1995 : 48). Our world itself is considered a divine force within nature, and as a living being is part of a surrounding enfolding cosmic order within an infinite universe. "We are co-creators in the universe, the world", Hogan comments in



Cordova (2007), for all of us inhabit the world that is part of the enfolding cosmic order within the infinite universe, and that is what “makes us human” (Hogan in Cordova 2007 : xi; Smith 1991 : 374).

This worldview postulates an ontology that to live in this cosmic order within an infinite universe is to live in harmony and balance within the Sacred Circle of Life (Hanohano 1999 : 211). This implies that the conception of reality is a circle, and that within this Sacred Circle all of life is interconnected, interrelated and interdependent and spirals out through all dimensions within a unitary whole. Understood in its principle, or supreme reality, it is the dynamic interaction of the physical and the spiritual that permeates the Aboriginal peoples’ vision of life and the universe.

This reality of the sacred interrelationship of all life within the oneness of creation is perceived as a way of being in the world that is taught through attitudes, practices, ceremonies and teaching relationships between human beings, between human beings and the earth, and between human beings and the Great Spirit. Thus, within the Sacred Circle of Life all experiences of life are sacred, as all is an expression of the Great Mystery, or All Spirit (Hanohano 1999 : 212; Cajete 1995 : 203; Haig-Brown, et al 1997; Ludwig 2006 : 34).

There are numerous distinct Aboriginal cultural communities with their own languages, rituals, practices and geographical locations. Yet, in the diversity of the community life the unifying common notion that these communities share is that each community has its own unique creation story, its own “set of truths”, and not one is considered superior to any other. Each creation story hypothesizes the creation of a specific place, and community members consider themselves to have emerged into this

specific place for which they were created. Believing themselves as rightfully occupying a specific place in which they find themselves for a particular reason, each community, in turn, recognizes all other communities as being in their rightful specific places (Cordova 2007 : 188).

According to Hogan (in Cordova 2007), Aboriginal philosophies derive from being in a community within a specific place, and knowing and identifying with this specific place and respecting its boundaries (ix). Aboriginal peoples' identity is entwined with place as their cultural values and their stories are anchored in their environment, their place. Within this specific place Aboriginal peoples learn to be aware of how place shapes not only who they are as a people, but also "how they ought to act in relation to the place and to others who live and will live and have lived in that place" (xvi).

This postulates a worldview that within that place Aboriginal peoples' views, values and perspectives are shared notions of who they are and from where they are coming. These shared notions within the community define and reinforce what it is to be human, and their sense of 'we' underpins what it means how to be human (Cordova 2007 : 81). This postulates a view of the world of a people within which the physical place and the philosophical space are deeply related in their way of being and living in the world.

Place may also refer to certain locations of land that are recognized and revered as sacred and that are imbued with special power. These locations are considered sacred places of the spirits and may be burial grounds and purification or healing places. Believed to empower human consciousness and spirituality, these places are respected and honored to ensure that the power of the "living energy that inhabits and/or composes the universe" and the spiritual essence that permeates them continue to benefit not only

the present but all succeeding generations (Hanohano 1999 : 213; Cajete 1995 : 47; Battiste and Henderson 2000 : 107). These sacred spiritual places, which the Aboriginal peoples embrace with humility and reverence, not only bestow a sense of peace and oneness with nature and the world of the spirits; these sacred spiritual places also anchor their being and their identity as a community and who they are as a people.

Higher Self Yoga similarly expounds the significance of a specific place into which each individual is born. The place of birth is considered imbued with a specific energy that is conducive to the spiritual growth of the individual. Individuals are not encouraged to remain in the specific place of birth; however, they are urged to revisit their place of birth sometime within their lifetime. This revisit is a way of reconnecting with the energy of the place of birth in order to come to understand the real meaning of things which can only be understood “by comparing their earlier significance with newly acquired knowledge” (Agni Yoga Society 2003 : 654).

This revisit is meant to be an instructive way of recalling one’s former understandings and comparing these with one’s present experiences, comprehensions and new qualities of aware consciousness. It is useful to think about the new qualities of aware consciousness in order to become more fully aware of how to grow spiritually and how to expand the understanding of one’s spiritual life (Agni Yoga Society 2003 : 654).

However, what is that aware consciousness and how does it relate to creation? How did the world come to be? What are its elements and how do they relate to one another? Does our perception of the origin of the world influence and determine how we live and experience life?

### *Aboriginal Creation Story*

Creation as a metaphysical understanding of the nature of the world is succinctly revealed in a poem published by Cordova (2007) as a “chapbook illustrated with her pen-and-ink drawings” (87). In *How It Is: A North American Creation Story*, Cordova, an Apache philosopher, reaches into the “heart of the indigenous knowledge system and philosophy” (vii), and asks such metaphysical questions as, What is the world? How did it begin and of what is it made? What is the nature of time and space? What is real and how many realities are there?

In *How It Is* Cordova (2007) explains that before anything existed there was energy, or wind, and the motion of this energy, or wind, created a universe, a galaxy, a solar system. Within this field of motion there exist smaller and denser fields called stars and suns. One of these is our sun – Holy Sun - from which Mother Earth derives her creative energy. From deep within the energy of Mother Earth human beings are derived.

From the living energy, or Holy Wind, comes more life; that is, all elements, animals, plants and minerals, all come as fields of energy, or “matterized” energy (90). That which we call Wind, or energy, when it becomes things, fluctuates and is motion. Motion came to be as mother, woman, ground, area, and she produces from within the living fire in all things. From deep within come the potentialities to be completed, and these in the rays of the sun. No two things are exactly alike. If something exists it is in motion, and where there is motion there is life. Everything that exists is in motion; therefore, everything that exists is alive (87 – 97).

Cordova (2007) continues to explain that this is the way of the universe. There is stability, harmony, and balance. All is sacred. By virtue of our being, we all partake in

that which is sacred. We are all equals, children of the same mother and father, connected and related through the one energy, or wind. We are responsible for what we bring into the universe, responsible for the consequences of our actions. We are co-creators! As humans we have minds - that which is immortal, spiritual - where the “higher order” of things happen (87 - 97).

Thus, according to Cordova (2007), the Apache Creation Story also postulates that time in this infinite universe is a “measure of motion: of the motion of the sun, stars, and moon through the sky, of changes that are visible and can be predicted” (118). To exist in the motion of the infinite universe means to live in the present and participate as co-creators to bring the future way of life and circumstances into being and the “future universe into existence” (119). The past exists as part of memory but it is the future to which creative energy needs to be extended. Through the cooperation of each of us in accommodating the changes and variations in nature and the vicissitudes and challenges in our way of life, balance and stability can be attained in our world and harmony can be created as part of the foundation of the universe.

A further creation story is based on the Cherokee, or Tsalagi, traditional teachings as articulated by Dhyani Ywahoo (1987). These teaching stories, Ywahoo (1987) explains, refer to the Tsalagi as the keepers of the Fire of Wisdom, and therefore, they are responsible for rekindling the sacred light of the wisdom fire existent within the heart and the vaster dimensions of the pure mind (6).

Traditionally, Ywahoo (1987) continues, the Tsalagi have called themselves the Principle People, and they trace their origins to the star system known as the “Pleiades, whence first arose the spark of individuated mind” (9). Ywahoo (1987) conveys:

From the mysterious void came forth a sound, and the sound was light, and the light was will, intention to be, born of emptiness: ... fundamental tone of the universal song, underlying all manifestation. Compassionate wisdom arose as will perceived the unmanifest potential of mind streaming forth. Will and compassion together gave birth to the fire of building intelligence, and thus was formed the sacred triangle from which all matter, is derived, the Three in One (9).

As Ywahoo sees it, “The first ‘thought beings’, ... carriers of mind’s pure light, existed like cells in one body, of one mind and purpose: to explore the mysteries of mind. Coalescing along ... elemental lines of energy or force, mind took form, the One became the many” (9).

Ywahoo (1987) continues to inform us that the star people, the ‘Adaweese’, or great angelic beings, came to Earth on five islands known as Atlantis in the Atlantic Ocean (12). Before the star people came there was

emotional nature but not yet the mind to actualize and complete the intention of Earth being a place of learning, ... So the purpose of individuation of mind and the descent from the stars was to quicken life upon the Earth. The star energy came to spark the fire of mind that all might return again to the Mystery. The human being is much like the salmon; we all come forth from the lake of clear mind; we swim out into the ocean of experience, with its many lessons and opportunities and illusions – and like the salmon finds again the stream that leads it back to its spawning ground, so too must human beings find and follow the stream that will bring them again to the vast clear light (11).

Thus, it was decided by the ‘Adaweese’ that “those who came from the stars were to marry and bring forth children with the Children of the Sun” the Earth people, so that at some time “those of Earth would come to full ascendancy” (12). This meant to come to the recognition that the

spark of clear mind, the creative principle, the Great Mystery, is within ourselves. The mystery is unmanifest potential, the void, the emptiness, ... because from the emptiness comes forth your dream, through the vortex of sound, through the energy of will, through the power of clear intention, through the wisdom of equanimity and compassion, through right action (19).

The islands of Atlantis and its civilization were eventually destroyed through the abuse of the power of the sacred light. The migration of the people began, and the Tsalagi became the “temple keepers of the Americas” with the duty to instill the light of the wisdom fire (14).

These fires of wisdom, these sparks of the pure mind, Ywahoo (1987) continues, exist within each of us as unmanifest potential, as “spirals of energy” ever moving within us, “ever bringing forth the fruits of our intention”, ever calling forth “harmony and joy for all relations” (7), ever vivifying spirit, ever encouraging to walk the “Beauty Path” (xiv), spiraling out through all dimensions to return to the “still lake of Mystery” (20), the Source.

There are many similarities between the Tsalagi worldview and the African spiritual traditions. Also, the Tsalagi philosophy deeply converges in many ways with the wisdom teaching of Higher Self Yoga.

According to Higher Self Yoga, in the beginning there was the Word. When the Word was pronounced, its sound gave forth vibrations that activated the mineral and plant kingdoms. These vibrations contain energy and this energy is the source of life itself. Thus, where there is sound there is vibration and where there is sound and vibration there is life. All of life has vibrations. As human beings we contain vibrations. The plants, animals and minerals contain vibrations. These vibrations contain energy that is unique to each.

After sound and vibration came the light. Very similar to the Egyptian philosophy as to who we are, Higher Self Yoga states that we all are made up of all the elements. We are made up of earth, water, air and fire and these elements are composed of energy that

is from light, and light is an energy that comes from the sun. In ancient times the sun was revered as the higher Source, and today the sun is still considered as the light power that is the source of the life force and the basis of human life.

This life force provides human life with a sense of inner vitality. For instance, when we walk in the sun, we feel the warmth that affects our physical body, but we also feel warmth that touches our heart center. The physical warmth is coming from the penetrating rays of the sun, but the warmth in our heart center comes from the light energy of the sun that not only penetrates our body but also touches and lightens our spirit. Thus, light is sound, light is spirit energy, light is within our spirit and within our heart center. This light energy is the source of our creativity. This light energy aligns us with our inner source and brings us joy and beauty in the physical world and peace in our inner being.

Converging with the Apache Creation Story that the motion of the existing energy created the universe, Higher Self Yoga puts forth that energy is the result of vibrations, and for the vibrations to occur there must be a source. It is the source that causes the vibrations and the vibrations result in energy. For instance, our words are vibrations and when we speak we send out vibrations and these vibrations contain energy.

Thus words are energy. It is important to become consciously aware of the words we speak and the tone of these words. For, we are responsible and accountable for what we put forth into the universe. We are co-creators! We participate in the creation of the future way of life and circumstances and the existence of the future universe. We participate in the spiraling unfolding of existence. The goal is to transcend our human nature and become one with the ultimate Source Itself, the Mystery of Mysteries.



Roerich (1981) explains it in a similar way:

The entire Universe is permeated with One Divine Element whose visible and invisible Existence is manifested in the eternal, never-ceasing Motion (Breath), engendering ever new differentiations and combinations in ceaseless change and in the process of unfoldment of this immense, ineffable, eternally unknown Mystery of Mysteries.

At the basis of all Creation lies a great impulse ... Divine Love ... The Whole Cosmos is held by the Divine Love, within the order of Be-ness. ... Thus, ... Divine Love generates all worlds. ... In the Divine Consciousness there is neither beginning nor end, only the eternal IS. ... the cosmic law ... a Greatest Spirit (340, 341).

And Blavatsky (1988) informs us that “the Great Breath”, is eternal, and Motion ... “When the “Great Breath” is projected, it is called the Divine Breath, and is regarded as the breathing of the Unknowable Deity - the One Existence - which breathes out a thought, as it were, which becomes the Kosmos” (43).

For Higher Self Yoga only energies exist in the universe. These energies are formed in the unknown, or ultimate reality. As human beings we contain this source within us. As human beings we are part of the ultimate reality. As human beings we are constantly striving and evolving to return and become one with this divine Source.

### ***Spirit - Matter – Energy***

A metaphysical view of the Aboriginal world, according to Cordova (2004), is that there is an infinite something that has “always been and manifests into the many diverse things in the world. Each thing is ... part of the greater whole” (104). This something is perceived to be indivisible, infinite and divine with all beings or things either participating in it or being manifestations of its divinity (146). This concept of something is a common perception among the North American Aboriginal peoples. The Apache call it “Usen”, whereas the Ojibway call it “Manitou”. Usen or Manitou signifies

essence, potency, mystery (107), a mysterious force that “drives, sustains, and is the universe” (104). It is an energy field that is dynamic, in ceaseless motion and in constant change, yet harmonious, balanced and stable (117). Usen or Manitou is perceived as the notion of something that simply is – the “unidentifiable Is” - and Cordova quotes Basil Johnston:

[Scholars] ... continue to labour under the impression that the word ... means spirit and that it has no other meaning. ... They do not know that the word bears other meanings even more fundamental than ‘spirit’ (107).

The concept of Usen goes beyond the concept of an anthropomorphic deity. The concept of Usen, Cordova (2007) postulates, is an essence, an all-pervasive life force, a mysterious something that “precedes everything else”, it is the foundation of all things, the “manifestation of itself” (107). Usen is the Great Mystery, or the something One. This something One substance in the universe Spinoza theorized as matter and called it “sacred matter”. Einstein clarified the notion of matter. He perceived the world not composed of matter and energy as dualities, but as “matter-energy”, two facets within the something One (110) within a dynamic universe.

The ancient Greeks and ancient Chinese were aware of the concept of eternal motion or vibration in a dynamic universe; therefore, there was no need for an anthropomorphic deity that needed to be explained away as uncaused or towards which all creation needed to strive (Cordova 2007 : 111). The notion of Usen or Manitou the North American Aboriginal peoples arrived at by observing, perceiving and feeling the world around them.

This notion of reality, of matter-energy, within a dynamic, boundless, eternal and infinite universe, is explained to Sinnett in the Mahatma Letters (Barker 1975):

Matter we know to be eternal, i.e., having had no beginning (a) because matter is Nature herself (b) because that which cannot annihilate itself and is indestructible exists necessarily – and therefore it could not begin to be, nor can it cease to be (c) because the accumulated experience of countless ages, and that of exact science show to us matter (or nature) acting by her own peculiar energy, of which not an atom is ever in an absolute state of rest, and therefore it must have always existed, i.e., its materials ever changing form, combinations and properties, but its principles or elements being absolutely indestructible. ... it is the very essence and nature of this boundless eternal matter, its energy and motion (55).

In Agni Yoga Society (2003) it is acknowledged that matter has many states and properties. Matter is the principle of the one fundamental energy. Matter is akin to the concept of Maternal Matter, the foundation that “includes all possible properties of the substance out of which all is born” (638). Starting with the subtlest energies, everything is matter. The very essence of all forms is matter. Matter is crystallized spirit, the Mother Herself, the essence of Nature.

The point of view of Higher Self Yoga and Agni Yoga is that Spirit and Matter are one element and everything emanates from this one element. Matter is perceived to be only a differentiation of Spirit and, in order to exist, Spirit requires Matter to manifest Itself. Matter, Roerich (1981) informs us, “or the subtlest substance – Spirit-Matter – is infinite in its differentiations and in its visible and invisible manifestations, but one cannot act with pure spirit alone” (326). Matter, Roerich (1981) continues, lies at the foundation of the Universe, is the carrier of spirit and “by flowing into it does the spirit reveal its potentiality” (439). Spirit and matter are one, and “only various degrees of the differentiation of this Element in its combination can, and do give all the diversity of the manifest and visible Cosmos” (439). Life in all of the cosmos is composed of spirit - matter and all of life strives for balance of these two elements.

Here I quote from Roerich (1979):

Matter or substance is the basis of our Universe in its visibility and invisibility. As a *foundation, as a potentiality of all existence*, this substance is everywhere *one*, but its differentiations are infinite (382). ...

Spirit-Matter, which is spread throughout Infinity, is the Divine Foundation or the Potential of All-Being. In its endless manifestations, differentiations and changes of forms, it strives toward infinite perfection and self-consciousness in these particular forms (383).

It contains in Itself *Everything*. In Its manifested form, It is *Spirit-Matter*, as *Matter* in reality is only Its differentiation or *Quality* (394). [M]atter does not exist without spirit (440).

Consciously or unconsciously human beings strive to balance these two principles within themselves: spirit, the masculine principle, and matter, the feminine principle. It is imperative that humanity directs its vision and aspiration toward this balance. It is imperative that humanity comes to realize that this balance of oneness is the foundation of themselves as well as the foundation of the universe.

### ***Earth – Mother – Woman***

In Aboriginal cosmology there exists an accepted notion of Mother Earth. However, what does Mother Earth mean to convey? The notion of Earth as Mother, Cordova (2007) explains, is that Earth has been symbolically perceived as sacred, and therefore,

[t]he notion of the Earth as mother is explained as a symbol. That is, the concept of mother as applied to the Earth is *symbolic* of the creative forces inherent in the planet. On this interpretation ‘mother’ does not literally refer to the planet but to a force that exists outside of and apart from the Earth itself (113).

Aboriginal cosmology perceives that Earth brings human beings into existence through the agency of the biological mothers. However, what is the ultimate creative life force that underpins the notion of Earth as Mother? This life force, or energy, Cordova (2007) proclaims, is the universe Itself (113).

This life force has always existed, Cordova (2007) explains, this life force has neither beginning nor end, it “manifests itself into many forms – but the forms once in existence can in turn direct that life force to specific things” (114). Earth is perceived as mother because she is the one who directs the life force into all the specific things that exist. Thus, Earth becomes mother not only in her capacity of bringing human beings into existence, but also because she continues to nurture all that she has created.

From this it can be perceived that the life force that is the universe is beyond the concept of the mere physical Earth. This life force permeates everything that exists. In the Aboriginal perspective, within this life force Earth is perceived as “a good and rightful place” and the concept of Earth as mother is understood as “being in the ‘right’ place” (116). It is further understood that all necessarily exists in a reciprocal relationship; that is not only taking but also giving back in this right place within the universe.

In the Aboriginal view of the world, women are perceived as the personification of Earth as mother. Women are believed to have a sacred relationship to Earth. Women are acknowledged to be acutely aware of how to live life in harmony with nature. Women, Hanohano (1999) explains, are perceived to be the ones who teach the community human virtues and social values. It is women who educate the community how to “maintain the relations that are the essence of existential life”, and it is women who “act through the natural intuition which Creation communicates to those who are open to its laws” (213). By caring for their children, women intuitively learn to go beyond the confines of selfishness. Women learn to care for and safeguard not only the existence of human life. Women care for and safeguard all forms of life.

In Higher Self Yoga and Agni Yoga, Mother, as Mother of the World, Roerich (1981) explains, is perceived as a life force, or energy, of the “Eternal and Everlasting Breath of Be-ness” (243). Mother of the World is perceived as the vibration or Light, “for Light is the movement of Matter, and it creates forms” (182). The Mother of the World is not only the creative force in the human being. The Mother of the World is also the creative energy that sustains all that exists on the planet.

Agni Yoga Society (1956) explains:

There is no life, no expression of spirit, without the Mother of the Universe, the Great Matter of All-Being. The manifested Universe, visible and invisible, from the highest to the lowest, reveals to us the infinite aspect of Radiant Matter ... an emanation of the highest (37).

On this plane of manifestation, the Mother of the World is understood as the eternal Feminine Principle. In Agni Yoga Society (1956) it is stated that woman, as the personification of this Feminine Element, must acknowledge and affirm “her knowledge of Mother-Nature”, and with the fires of her heart must “find true, original ways of self-expression”, and in her fiery achievements must raise the “banner of spirit” proclaiming “Love, Knowledge and Beauty” (42).

In Agni Yoga Society (1956) it is further stated that it is woman who, as the life-giver of humanity and the preserver of humanity’s destiny, may gather “the children of the world, without distinctions of sex, race, nationality and religion” (42). It is imperative for woman to realize her significance not only as mother to family, but also as mother and teacher of the consciousness of nations. It is woman who will lead on the path of human evolution (42). We all need to realize the cosmic law of balance, the law of the

dual Origin, the law of the Feminine and the Masculine Principles as the foundation of the something One existence.

Agni Yoga Society (1956) continues to explain that in this our epoch respect for the Mother of the World, the Feminine Element, must be affirmed. In the words of Vivekananda: “The bird of the spirit of Humanity cannot fly with only one wing” (40). This is meant to affirm the significance of woman, the significance of the Feminine Principle. This is meant for us all to realize the equilibrium of the elements as the foundation of life. It is meant for all of us to strive toward balance of these two principles, toward a balanced awakened consciousness.

For Aboriginal people Earth itself is a living being, an organism that is alive and divine. The interconnectedness and interrelatedness of all people and all things with Earth is perceived to be holy and sacred (Battiste and Henderson 2000; Hanohano 1999 : 214). All human beings are perceived to be a yield of the creation of Earth and dependent on Earth for their nurture, sustenance and subsistence, dependent on Earth for their survival, for life itself. Earth is acknowledged as the “good and rightful place”, a home of a reciprocal relationship of oneness with Earth (Cordova 2007 : 116). This reciprocal relationship is a sacred way of living harmoniously within complete sustainability and beauty that only Earth in her natural environment can provide (Hanohano 1999 : 213).

We are all manifestations of the One Nature, and the natural world thrives when its web of interrelationships is honored, nurtured and kept in harmony. Aboriginal philosophy recognizes aspects of the natural world that can be experienced intuitively. Just as each human has an infinite and measureless inner life of powerful resources, so also nature, it contains life forces that must be addressed for the attainment of true

harmony and balance. This harmonious balance ensues through a natural reciprocal relationship with nature that bestows in life a sense of peace within the oneness of cosmos.

### ***Sun – Father***

Aboriginal cosmology involves and embraces symbolism. For instance, the Sun is symbolic of the “father” or the “grandfather”. Cordova (2007) explains that,

[t]he Sun ‘develops’ into mere symbol. The Sun is symbolic of the life force that is the universe. The Sun represents the whole because it is a visible manifestation of the ‘force’ or energy that is believed to be a characteristic of all that there is (114).

Thus, the Sun, Cordova (2007) puts forth, is the visible manifestation of the life force or energy that is suffused throughout all that exists. “The Sun, or ‘grandfather’, is less of a ‘being’ than the Earth and is symbolic of a greater force in the Universe that provides the fertilizing power that entices the Earth to produce its many things” (105). The Sun, thus, is symbolic of something greater than the visible manifested sun. The Sun, thus, is a symbolic part of the whole that is characteristic of the oneness. This oneness is essentially the life force of the oneness that is Usen.

Higher Self Yoga postulates that our visible sun is the manifested body, or physical expression, of the “manifested Breath of the ever unmanifested ... Be-ness” (Barborka 1998 : 160). The visible sun is a reflection or projection of the real or Central Spiritual Sun (Roerich 1981 Vol. 2 : 71; Barborka 1998 : 244). The real or Central Spiritual Sun is considered a central star and is referred to as the “great Father” (Barborka 1998 : 225) as in Aboriginal cosmology. The real or Central Spiritual Sun, Barborka (1998) continues, is regarded as the “Primal Source of Being” (232), and our visible sun



is perceived to be the storehouse of vital solar energy that feeds the whole system, receiving as much from the Central Sun as it gives out (244). The “radiant energy flowing from the central sun called the Earth into being as a watery globe” (232), and for this reason the real or Central Spiritual Sun is revered as the center of the Universal Life (233). The Central Spiritual Sun is the “ever-emitting, life Centre”, and the visible sun is only a “*window cut into the real Solar palace ... which reflects, however, faithfully the interior work*” (Barborka 1998 : 233, 244).

The real or Central Spiritual Sun is invisible to human sight but not to human sense. To become consciously aware of this real or Central Spiritual Sun one needs to refine the energy of one’s spiritual heart center, which is called the “sun of suns” (Roerich 1981 : 332). The wisdom of this perspective consists of learning and aspiring toward living a life filled with pure thoughts and words and altruistic actions so that these may become a balanced part of a harmonious whole.

### ***The Elders***

To comprehend Aboriginal spirituality one must acknowledge and appreciate the role the elders play within the Aboriginal community. The elders are accorded a place of prominence, and this is a salient feature in Aboriginal communities. It is the elders who are the repositories of, and largely responsible for, much of the knowledge and wisdom of Aboriginal cultural traditions and values.

Thus, the source of Aboriginal cultural traditions, knowledge and wisdom is the elders. The elders, both men and women who are venerated for their age and wisdom, bear an important “responsibility for the tribal community by functioning as parent, teacher, community leaders, and spiritual guide” (Hanohano 1999 : 215). The elders

assume the responsibility for the deeper dimensions of wisdom in Aboriginal communities because of their “accumulated reservoirs of personal experience, knowledge, and wisdom – or compassionate insight and a sense of the enduring qualities and relationships around them” (Hanohano 1999 : 215).

Being the keepers and teachers of Aboriginal traditional values, practices, customs, ceremonies and worldviews, the elders pass these traditional values on to the “living generations of their people in an effort to help them connect harmoniously with their past, present, and future” (Hanohano 1999 : 215). The elders pass these ancestral teachings onto the community through stories, songs, dance and ceremonies so that they become part of peoples’ lives. These teachings are a way of connecting people’s lives to their community and to nature. As well, the elders have a special responsibility for directing the lives of the children and grandchildren of the community. It is their responsibility to make the younger generation aware of the meaning of the interrelationships of which they are a part, and of all within which they co-exists (Hanohano 1999 : 216; Ludwig 2006 : 35).

The role of the elders may also consist of being the healers of the community. Being familiar with the healing properties of plants, trees, and of the natural world all around them, and being familiar with the knowledge required for the interaction between the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual, the elder healers assist their people, individually and collectively, to maintain their good health and well-being (Hanohano 1999).

Intrinsically holistic, North American Aboriginal healing is based on the understanding that we are part of nature and health is a matter of wholeness. We

experience wholeness when our interrelationship with nature is honored, nurtured and kept in balance and harmony. Aboriginal healing recognizes aspects in the world of nature that are experienced directly and intuitively. These include healing forces that must be addressed and integrated for true healing and well-being.

In the traditional Aboriginal worldview, Absolon (in Graveline 1998), points out, these healing forces are revealed as a striving toward wholeness of spirit. Wholeness of spirit entails a therapeutic healing process of balancing the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual, and this balancing can be attained through the use of the Medicine Wheel. The Medicine Wheel, Graveline (1998) explains, “is an organizing principle; it is dynamic and developmental ... and through [its use] people are taught to acknowledge the essential immanence and interconnectedness of all things” (75). According to Absolon (in Graveline 1998),

the word “heal” has the same roots as the word “whole” and “holiness”. The interdependence of holiness and wholeness are integral to healing and teaching ... holiness, or sacredness, of healing is manifested as a striving towards wholeness of spirit and an attempt to incorporate this wholeness of spirit into ourselves, our families, our communities, and the environment ... In the Traditional worldview, wholeness or holism is equated with balance. Healing is a therapeutic process, an evolution toward balance; the process accesses essential healing dynamics which are spiritual in quality and power (76).

Graveline (1998) continues to reiterate that prior to European contact, Aboriginal people had an effective way of healing that was based on a holistic worldview, and quotes Ed Conners:

The healing system accepted that maintaining health and effecting healing required a knowledge of the interaction between the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual (76).

Healing, as a holistic perspective, Graveline (1998) continues to inform us, permits one to experience the integrated whole, that is the psychological, spiritual,

emotional and the physical, and all these are “part of the human consciousness and are inseparable” (76). Graveline (1998) quotes Bill Mussel:

Healing ... is a process of experiencing emotions, gaining insight into their source, and identifying and changing negative beliefs and behaviours. It is a holistic process which calls on the powers of the mind, the emotions, the body and the spirit and results in freeing of these powers for positive action (155).

In the traditional Aboriginal worldview, wholeness of spirit equates with balance on every level of life. It is a process of accessing healing dynamics in harmony with wholeness in an effort to revitalize unity within the individual self and within the web of interrelationships that exist between the individual, the community, and nature.

As a whole, the elders are considered the closest link not only to the community's generations of ancestors, but they are also considered an eternal link between the community's current generation and the first supremely divine ancestors. Perceived as standing closer to these divine ancestors, the elders “are seen as inheriting more of their virtue, which makes them models for conduct” (Smith, 1991 : 374). In this respect, the elders have long been considered the bridge between the ancient traditions and values of the Aboriginal people and the modern-day ways of life that come to be experienced by them in their day-to-day lives. Having lived and experienced a long life and having acquired a lifetime's worth of wisdom, the elders are sought after for advice on what to do in difficult situations, as well as what might be needed to live a spiritually whole life (Hanohano 1999 : 216).

Thus, the elders are honored and highly respected as teachers, guides, healers and spiritual leaders because of their experiences, compassionate insight, vast knowledge and wisdom. These the elders offer to individuals in the hope to treat their physical, mental,

emotional, and spiritual needs. As well, these the elders offer to the community in the hope to help the community maintain its well-being and spiritual life as a whole (Knudtson & Suzuki 1992 : 179; Cajete 1994 :48).

Similarly in Higher Self Yoga and Agni Yoga, the elders are the spiritual teachers, gurus, sages and masters who, having acquired great knowledge and wisdom, use these attainments to inspire and guide humanity. Having realized the essence of truth and leading a life of selfless service, these spiritual teachers inspire and guide individuals toward understanding their own true nature, toward accepting self-responsibility for their own thoughts, words, and actions, and toward developing their own inner insight and wisdom. They counsel individuals how to transcend the darkness of ignorance, how to enlighten the mind with true knowledge, and how to open their spiritual hearts to wisdom. They give guidance to individuals, how to strive toward their own self-perfectment, and how to engage their own potential toward a shift in aware consciousness. They are the spiritual teachers and guides of those individuals who are on their journey toward self-development, toward the acquisition of wisdom, and toward the transcendence of the lower self. All are necessary on the path to become one with their own true or higher Self.

A spiritual teacher or guru in Higher Self Yoga or Agni Yoga is one who has found enduring inner peace and who has attained self-realization and enlightenment through continued studies and practices, prayers, meditation, devotion, and selfless service. A spiritual teacher or guru is one who has found the goal of life, who is following the teaching and guidance of a previous teacher or guru, and who now passes this wisdom and knowledge on to those who seek.

As for any spiritual seekers, for some the path to spiritual awakening and enlightenment may be spontaneous; however, for others the spiritual path may be as the result of prolonged and arduous personal endeavor and spiritual practice. Once seekers find their goal of life, spiritual teachers or gurus offer these seekers their understanding of knowledge and wisdom. They guide and point out the path, warn of danger, and give encouragement. Spiritual teachers truly epitomize the true human spirit.

According to Aboriginal philosophy, the elders teach all those who seek the responsibility of synthesizing knowledge into one that is consistent with the Aboriginal holistic worldview. This knowledge entails becoming consciously aware that all human thoughts, words and actions bear consequences not only upon oneself, but also upon all others, and all of existence. For instance, by learning to understand the consequences of one's actions, the knowledge attained becomes wisdom. This means being able to comprehend how these consequences also affect the whole community and the world within which they coexist (Cordova 2007 : 151). This is the wisdom of understanding the responsibility of being part of a community, part of humanity, and part of an ever-changing universe.

This comprehension of wisdom converges with Higher Self Yoga and Agni Yoga in which the consequences of one's thoughts, words, and deeds bear karma. As stated by de Purucker (1972), karma is created by all our inclinations, motives and actions, and these cause an outflow of energy that impacts upon the surrounding milieu and either attracts or resists possibilities. Karma is inescapable. Being part of the universal nature, karma is "infinite and therefore everywhere and timeless; and sooner or later the reaction will inevitably be felt by the [one who] aroused it" (80).

Being part of the universal nature can be compared with the Indigenous idea of natural law, or law of nature, that balances all spirit energy. For instance, when one takes without giving one disrupts this natural balance and consequences are felt not only by oneself but by humanity as a whole (Jean-Paul Restoule in communication with me).

Thus, everything is based upon the law of karma, the law of nature, the law of self-responsibility, the law of cause and effect. Everything we sow we reap. What is needed, Roerich (1981) informs us, is to discipline one's thoughts and feelings, perfect one's motives and character traits, purify and transmute one's inner nature, and be of assistance wherever needed. For, "all is karma and all is held by karma" (29) and all of cosmos is built upon this law. Being an essential aspect of this cosmic law signifies our immeasurable responsibility as co-creators in the universal nature within the ever-unfolding universe.

The teachings of the Aboriginal elders are transmissions of cultural traditions and values that link and bind Aboriginal communities together. These teachings impart how to satisfy life's continuous needs and how to live the everyday life as a whole life experience. These teachings signify the spiritual prevalence in Aboriginal cultures and the meaning of oneness in the Aboriginal cosmology. Expressed in many different practices and rituals, these cultural traditions and values are constantly evolving and changing over time in response to the needs, the recent experiences, and the new perceptions of the life of the Aboriginal peoples.

### ***Education***

What is it that the Aboriginal worldview of constructing meaning can offer that may bridge and heal our Western conceptual realm of education? What is a valid

transformative inner life source of knowing, a subjective introspection of revealed knowledge as compared to our Western education of acquired knowledge and information? What is an alternative whole life experience of learning as compared to our Western objective perception and exploration of the outer world?

To answer these questions I now look at Aboriginal ways of revealing knowledge, that is, transformative learning processes of subjective introspection, processes of knowing oneself. This search for inner knowledge, Willie Ermine (in Battiste and Barman 1995) explains, “was found in the exploration of the self [and this] became the basis of continued personal development and of Aboriginal epistemology”. This is an exploratory search of knowing oneself “in order to arrive at insights into existence ... authentic insights into the nature and origin of knowledge as truth” (102). This search for knowledge as truth became the foundation of a personal journey of self-exploration into the subjective metaphysical reality of existence, an epistemology congruent with wholeness.

Wholeness incorporates the practice of inwardness, the practice of turning inward to the inner life space. This inner space, Willie Ermine (in Battiste and Barman (1995) explains,

is that universe of being within each person that is synonymous with the soul, the spirit, the self, or the being. The priceless core within each of us and the process of touching that essence is what Kierkegaard called ‘inwardness’ (1965, 24). Aboriginal people found a wholeness that permeated inwardness and that also extended into the outer space. Their fundamental insight was that all existence was connected and that the whole enmeshed the being in its inclusiveness (103).

Thus, wholeness for the Aboriginal peoples equates with the presence of an inner space, a metaphysical space, a self and beingness that is greater than their physical



bodies, an immanence, a mysterious life force or energy. Ermine (in Battiste and Barman 1995) informs us that according to Couture this immanence as a “pervasive, encompassing reality of the life force, manifest in laws - the laws of nature, the laws of energy, or the laws of light ... [in which] knowing becomes possible” (104). As well, Ermine continues that according to Huston Smith this life force “is everywhere and always the same and ... human beings always and everywhere have access to it” (104). Accessing this knowing, Ermine believes, is “an experience in context, a subjective experience that, for the knower, becomes knowledge in itself. The experience is knowledge” (104).

This experience of knowledge and understanding of the self is in relation to existence, and, according to Ermine (in Battiste and Barman 1995),

empowered the people to become the culture of accumulated knowledge. ... Each successive generation ... continued the quest for enlightenment in existence. ... [the] synthesis of insights and tribal understandings acquired through inwardness. ... The value of the ancient ‘cultures’ ... through time is borne out by the persistence of the promise of introspection in constructing meaning for contemporary Aboriginals (105).

This process portrays an inward journey into knowing the unknown, Ermine (in Battiste and Barman 1995) declares, a quest toward self-actualization, a path for “enlightenment in existence ... a deeper exploration into and knowledge from the very self” (105).

### ***Medicine wheels***

Ermine (in Battiste and Barman (1995) continues to inform us that inward journeys are facilitated by rituals and ceremonies which are “corporeal sacred acts that give rise to holy manifestations in the metaphysical world. Conversely, it is the metaphysical that constructs meaning in the corporeal”(106). This conveys an active

circular exploration of the understanding of the inner life synthesized with the physical existence. Physical clues of these meaningful understandings can be found in the outcrops of stone and rock known as medicine wheels.

Medicine wheels, Ermine (in Battiste and Barman (1995) states,

convey concepts derived from introspection and illustrate the pathways to self-discovery, ... They speak, in the silence of the unknown, about the progressive growth of self through a cyclical journey of repetition, experience, and construction of meaning. The wheels mirror the cosmology of the inner space (106).

A physical example of these ancient outcrops of stone and rock can be found near Peterborough and these are called the Petroglyphs. These glyphs record that which constitutes wholeness as found in the inner space and reveal the metaphysics and the interrelatedness of all existential life.

The medicine wheel, Bopp et al (2004) put forth, is an “ancient and powerful symbol of the Universe. It is a silent teacher of the realities of things” (32), and aids as a teaching tool to reveal inner knowledge. Graveline (1998) informs us that the medicine wheels are “actually ancient rock formations used for contact with Ancestral spirit forms during ceremony. However, the metaphor is also used by modern-day Traditionalists to illustrate/invoke/reinspire understandings of Ancestral beliefs in the contemporary world” (75). Through the use of the medicine wheel individuals come to acknowledge the essential, all-encompassing life force. They come to “embrace the circular, ever-evolving dynamic captured in a single phrase: all life is a Circle” (75).

This paradigm is a circular understanding that depicts the wholeness of the inner life space, a cosmology of wholeness found within our self, and is congruent with the wholeness of the human family, the wholeness of all existence. However, to acquire an

understanding of such wholeness requires knowledge of the interaction between the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of our nature, the four areas of the medicine wheel.

Graveline (1998) writes that according to Connors a “healthy lifestyle rests upon the ability to maintain a balanced commitment to growth and maintenance in all four areas of the Medicine Wheel. As applied to transformational pedagogy, all four areas are relevant to the growth and maintenance of an alternative consciousness” (76).

Bopp et al (2004) inform us that we have four aspects of our nature: the physical, the mental, the emotional, and the spiritual. The qualities of each of these aspects must be developed equally to live a well-balanced life (12). This means that the qualities of each direction of the medicine wheel need to be balanced and harmonized with the qualities of every other direction within our selves. With the development and use of the will, we can change our attitudes and actions and balance and harmonize these with the four directions of the medicine wheel. These are then reflected in the four aspects of our nature. In this way we can actualize our unknown or unrealized potential into a living reality (30).

Journeying around the medicine wheel, according to Bopp et al (2004), gives forth a vision not only who we are now but also who we can become, and that “vision becomes the path toward our wholeness” (22). Wholeness being congruent with the development of our inner life, means that developing the qualities of the four directions, the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual, will affect our inner growth and then reflect upon our outer life. Thus, Bopp et al (2004) proclaim,

our outer life can be understood as a reflection of the development of our inner being. By deepening and developing the qualities of the four directions within ourselves, we grow to reflect these spiritual qualities in our daily lives (23).

Essentially, as Bopp et al (2004), explain, this is a “life-long process of becoming our own true self”, and indicates an eternal process “toward a limitless universe” (23). The medicine wheel, thus, is symbolic of the journey of authentic human development in an ever-unfolding universe, and is similar to the wheel of karma of Eastern philosophy.

According to Bopp et al (2004), in journeying around the medicine wheel in a clockwise direction one needs to begin with:

The East is the direction of illumination, of guidance and leadership, and the development of the power of the human will. The South is the place of the heart, to learn sacrifice and sensitivity to feelings of others, to learn discipline, and to fulfill goals. The West is for learning one’s unique purpose, to accept one’s self and others as we really are, to learn how to use power in order to see and know in ways that are in harmony with universal teachings, and to learn to become a true leader. The North is the place of wisdom, a place where the mind can be trained until it becomes a highly developed instrument, a place where we learn how to serve and guide others, have foresightedness and deep spiritual insight (42 – 64).

Journey around the wheel, Bopp et al (2004) explain, is a symbolic one because it is using “the patterns found in nature, such as the turning of the seasons, to understand our own selves” (41). It is useful as a symbolic tool because it aids our understanding that the wholeness of the universe is “reflected within our inner being” and helps us to comprehend our interconnectedness and interrelatedness with the whole world of being (41). Bopp et al (2004) remind us that the medicine wheel could be used as a model of what humanity could become if we all decided to utilize the power of our will to “see potential as another dimension of reality and then decide to act to realize the potential”

(34). In this way it could be used as a model to “further develop ourselves and to serve others” (35). For, we are all one, we are all living unique lives “in the soil of universal truths that human beings share in common” (35).

The North, Bopp et al (2004) impart, is also the door of detachment. “Detachment means freedom from hate, jealousy desire, anger and fear” and stipulates a “complete letting go of all things, even that which we love the best” (66). Detachment, they say, requires that we “step outside its shadow so that things may be seen in a different light”, to stand apart from things to see things clearly, to stand apart from our “strong feelings and thoughts” (66). It means to “learn to look at ourselves from the center of the medicine wheel. From that center, we will be able to see how we fit together with everything else. We will experience ourselves ... [as an] infinitely sacred part of a very large process” (67).

Similarly, in Higher Self Yoga exists the notion of non-attachment or detachment. In one’s development while on this spiritual path there comes a state called non-attachment. It is not a state of removing emotions and perceptions from truth or objective facts. Rather, it is important to recognize and acknowledge this state and realize that when encountering situations or events to disidentify from one’s own emotions and desires in order to perceive clearly from within our heart center. This means to stand outside of what is happening, not to get emotionally enmeshed in any situation or event, or allow one’s desire to have the upper hand. It is important to see beyond one’s emotions and desires, to connect with one’s spiritual heart center, and perceive from that vision of freedom. From this vision of freedom one can perceive with non-attached clarity and insight the steps necessary one needs to take to come to possible resolutions that are good

and true. It is only with such freedom of perceiving that one can truly serve and be of help to others.

When we are centered and balanced within the center of the wheel, or within the center of our being, we cannot be swayed by any of our strong emotions, feelings or thoughts. When in this sacred center, we are then free to take action that we truly know to be right, and that we know to be good to take.

When detached, Bopp et al (2004), note, we learn that

we are not our bodies, we are not our thoughts, we are not our feelings or our insights. We are something ... deeper and wider. We are the being that has thoughts, has insights. We are the being that feels and knows. We can watch our feelings, our thoughts, our insights and know them to be reflections in the mirror of the sacred lake” (68).

In essence, our learning is to always strive toward our inner center, that universe of being, our own true or higher Self, which is part of the Source, or the ‘sacred lake’. The fundamental importance is to find balance and harmony and see all things as they really are and realize that knowledge and wisdom is infinite. Knowledge and wisdom is beyond that of the elders, sages, and masters, and we are “humbled in knowing that the human capacity to develop is infinite” (Bopp et al 2004 : 71).

Converging deeply with Higher Self Yoga, Aboriginal epistemology is based in the Self, the Spirit. When connected to the Self, individuals can delve deeply into the metaphysical inner space to reveal the nature and origin of knowledge and wisdom and thus come to understand life’s mysteries. For instance, Aboriginal philosophy reveals that knowledge and wisdom can be revealed through visions, dreams and prayers. These are spiritual dimensions of true learning when the spiritual alongside the intellectual and feeling dimensions are involved in a whole and balanced process. These are spiritual

dimensions of true learning when accepted as a reflection of our unknown or unrealized potential and responded to and expressed towards action to make the possible potential a reality.

### ***Vision***

Vision pertains to drawing energy from the four directions of the medicine wheel, balancing that energy, and striving toward transformation. Transformation is that aspect of vision that allows one to see what was, what is, and what can be (Graveline 1998 : 276). Vision is a quest, vision is a ceremony written about by Basil H. Johnston (1992):

Creation is, in the concrete, the fulfillment of the vision of Kitche Manitou (the Great Power). ... only men and women are endowed by Kitche Manitou with a capacity for vision ... Vision conferred a powerful sense of understanding of self and of destiny; it also produced a unique and singular sense of worth and personal freedom (in Hanohano 1999 : 215).

Vision, when attained, is the result of great personal conscientious effort. As Johnston (in Hanohano (1999) explains, vision is the “maturation of the soul-spirit ... The vision, when it did come, marked the culmination of the preparation and quest and the beginning of a new order of life” (215). This new order meant a life filled with “meaning or quality in the moral order. To life there was purpose; to conduct a significance in the fulfillment of the vision” (215). Johnston (in Hanohano (1999) continues, vision prescribes a path of life through which “integrity, dignity, peace, fidelity and wisdom” are attained (216).

Vision is a source of revealing knowledge and wisdom from within. Vision means to see clearly with one’s inner eye what is possible for one to develop into and what humanity as a whole could become. Individuals develop and grow through their own understanding of their own unknown or unrealized potential. Vision can inform our

thinking, feeling and willing towards action that is directed at making the possible potential a reality. As Johnston (in Hanohano 1999) states, “no man begins to be, until he has seen his vision”, for without the revelation of vision and without the active participation in the development of one’s own potential, life has no purpose and actions have no meaning (215). But, he points out, vision can only be sought within one’s inner self and the seeking must be carried out alone (215).

### *Dreams*

Dreams is another spiritual modality through which knowledge and wisdom can be revealed. Dreams are the voice of one’s spirit, the voice of one’s true or higher Self. Dreams are the link to the world of spirit, the world of undivided wholeness. Dreams, Couture (in Battiste and Barman 1995) explains,

are the guiding principles for constructing the corporeal. Dreams, the voice of the inner space, give rise to the holy and prescribe all ceremonies on the physical level. Conversely, the physical ceremony, as an enactment of the holy, nourishes the spirit and the energy of the ‘vast scale’ (108).

Dreams, Battiste and Barman (1995) declare, may reveal messages that are meant to indicate one’s direction in life. The messages one may receive may guide one’s future actions for everyday living. The messages one may receive may also prescribe ceremonies. These ceremonies are meant as a holy enactment to honor the Spirit and to nourish the spirit world. The outcome of such a process the Aboriginal perceives as “invaluable in understanding self” and as an “invaluable experience that [the Aboriginals] call knowledge. Experience is knowledge” (108 - 109).

### *Prayer*

Prayer is a deeply spiritual modality that reflects our unknown potential. Prayer is a sacred way of acknowledging the inner life space and the interconnectedness of all life.



Prayer, Colorado (in Battiste and Barman 1995) states, is “an actual place and state of being. ... [It] is the quiet, still place of balance within ourselves. Prayer is a medicine where all life begins, exists within, without and between us and our relationships” (109).

It is through prayer that one may derive guidance, knowledge and wisdom from one’s inner consciousness. Infused with power, prayer is an optional tool for evoking knowledge and wisdom from one’s inner space. Prayer, Battiste and Barman (1995) proclaim, “becomes power and by its very nature becomes another instrument in Aboriginal ways of knowing” (109). For the Aboriginal, prayer is a way of “seeking metaphysical knowledge ... [a] communion with the universe within ... and is a way of connecting to the life force that makes anything and everything possible” (110).

It is through such spiritual modalities as the medicine wheel, vision, dreams and prayers that Aboriginal people, by refining their self-development and affirming wholeness, come to realize, actualize and respond to their unknown or unrealized potential. It is modalities such as these that may reveal a practical way of discovering one’s true or higher Self, one’s inner life space, the oneness of all existence. It is modalities such as these that may reveal a practical way of taking action that one truly knows to be right and good in order to be of service on a planetary scale.

### ***Reflective Thoughts***

The North American Aboriginal worldview is truly a deeply spiritual philosophy of life. It is a spiritual philosophy of life that constitutes traditional ethical and moral values that are central to their culture as a people. It is a spiritual philosophy of life that constitutes their kinship with nature, their respect for individual autonomy and interpersonal relationships, their sharing community life, their harmonious relationship

with the universe and the awareness of the divine. This is truly a spiritually conscious path of life that our Western system of education has far too long only marginally included in its academic discourse.

For Aboriginal people the universe is divine, indivisible and infinite, and all things and beings within it either participate in it or are being manifestations of this one Divinity. Believed to be characteristic of the universe, consciousness or awareness is perceived to be permeating all things and beings and thus is everywhere and in all that exists. As part of this consciousness, the innate Self within all is the spiritual spark that is a manifestation of the Divine. This divine manifestation signifies that we are all more than our ego self, more than just part of the family or part of the human community. Rather, we are part of a larger whole. According to Cordova (2007), “What makes humans *human* is the recognition that the individual is a part of a greater whole” (168).

In the Aboriginal worldview, Cordova (2007) declares, the greater whole constitutes a world as “essentially the manifestation of one single ‘thing’. In this sense, there is no divisibility possible – all humans are constituted of two aspects of one same thing” (149). This means, Dumont (in Cordova 2007) points out, that human beings are constituted of two aspects that comprise a state called ‘soul-body’, and this is a state in which human beings move about and become conscious of both as ordinary and non-ordinary reality that exists as one and two realities at the same time (149).

This reality is further explained in the Aboriginal worldview as the state of matter-energy. As human beings we contain both. We are both, that is soul, spirit or energy, and body or matter. This reality is a singular state with two factors that human beings require for them to exist and evolve. Within this singular state reality Aboriginal

people perceive themselves as part of a greater whole, as part of a sacred universe.

Within this sacred universe all is interconnected and interrelated, all is one.

A further aspect of being human as perceived in the Aboriginal epistemology, Cordova (2007) indicates, is that although all life forms have intelligence, only human beings have greater intelligence because they have a greater capacity to remember. It is memory that is perceived to provide the awareness of consequences. And consequences are the far-reaching fruits of all one's actions. Thus, to "know consequences was to exhibit knowledge and learning. And to know the consequences of actions of those before us was to display wisdom" (174).

Wisdom is thus perceived as the capacity of a deeper memory. Wisdom, knowledge, or memory, implies being able to see how one's actions and its consequences affect the greater whole. This means it affects not just one's family, the community, or the human family. It means it affects the world and the universe. Wisdom is part of the understanding of the natural consequences, and this leads to understanding and having tolerance. Thus, wisdom intimates a responsibility not just for one's own self, but a responsibility to all life in whatever form. It is such knowing awareness that guides toward becoming conscious of one's own thoughts and behavior and the desire to engage in self-transformation.

Self-transformation, Bopp et al (2004) explain, means giving thanks upon rising in the morning and upon retiring in the evening. Self-transformation means listening and receiving with one's heart all members of the human community. Self-transformation means being of service to others. Self-transformation means "following the guidance

given to your heart. Expect guidance to come in many forms; in prayer, in dreams, in times of quiet solitude and in the words and deeds of wise elders and friends” (82).

Thus knowledge and wisdom pertain to learning and understanding who we really are, and in that knowing become aware that we are an integral part of the whole, and, therefore, bear the responsibility of being co-creators in the universe. This responsibility pertains to all one’s actions becoming a balanced part of an essentially harmonious whole in which, Cordova (2007) writes, one needs to “bring beauty into being [and] walk in beauty” as beauty is a “translation of the idea of a harmonious whole” (231) Aboriginal people have come to understand that being part of this whole means being part of an “ever-changing and ongoing process that is the Universe in the process of *being*” (153).

Understanding the Aboriginal spiritual philosophy is a perspective in need to become part of our Western system of education. There is the need to create educational change. There is the need for education to be transformed. The challenge is to find ways to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives and practices in the educational experience of all educators and learners. Aboriginal spiritual concepts are valid complements for integration into education, as are Aboriginal educational approaches that offer valuable ways of knowing and learning who we truly are.

Western education has the responsibility to become aware of and acknowledge our whole life interconnectedness and interrelatedness and support the uniqueness and creativity of each educator and learner. The Western academy needs to adopt a whole life vision of education that creates space for the experience of the inner life force as the authentic insight into truth. The more consciously such education proceeds, the sooner the acquisition of the first steps will lead to the gates of change.

This change can inspire educators and learners toward the wisdom necessary to manifest balance and harmony in education and our family of life. This change can inspire all of us toward right action to manifest peaceful relationships in our human community as a whole. This change can enlighten our minds in synthesis with our hearts toward a higher consciousness, our next inevitable spiral step toward the unfolding of the universe itself.

## Chapter Six

### Reflective Analysis

Why do people avoid all which is unknown to them?  
Because in school they were always instructed to act like  
everyone else. Direct the spirit into the unknown!  
Such striving will bring about new ways of thinking.

Agni Yoga Society (1997 : 191).

What does it mean to direct the spirit into the unknown? What does it mean that such striving will bring about new ways of thinking and knowing? In the process of my spiritual inquiry, what intuitive imaginative discoveries have been revealed and made known to me? Essentially, I have become increasingly aware of an accelerated evolution of a new spiritual planetary consciousness. This new spiritual planetary consciousness pertains to the inner and the outer transcendence of self, of culture, society, nation, and the whole planet itself. Indeed, this new spiritual planetary conscious evolution is directing the spirit into the unknown, the cosmic unitary whole, the “essential oneness of All” (Barborka 1998 : 43).

As I have explained in Chapter Two, throughout Western history there occurred fundamental shifts of perspectives in the development of the Western mind. I have explained these shifts beginning with the Copernican heliocentric theory displacing the human being from the center of the universe. I have continued to explain this shift with Descartes and his understanding of the emerging autonomous modern self. I have also

looked at the perception that human knowledge of the world is interpretive, that is that meaning is imparted by the mind and the mind does not have any direct knowledge of reality beyond itself. These perspectives created a vast epistemological shift essentially trying to explain the alienation or estrangement of the historical mind from the cosmic unity, the essential oneness of all.

As a result of this alienation or estrangement there remained the problem: How can we experience direct knowledge of the universe without the mind having already structured it in its own way of perceiving? How can we come to comprehend the universe as the reality from which we are evolved? How can we come to know the interrelationship that exists between the modern human being and its primordial spiritual foundation?

***The unconscious, the archetypal, the dialectic, the participatory***

In this respect I have looked in Chapter Two at Freud's psychoanalysis and his insight into the unconscious aspect of the human psyche, that is the human soul, and how it influences human perception, cognition and behavior. With Freud's discovery of the personal unconscious began the modern exploration to discover the root of the human experience and cognition. Motivated by the larger context of depth psychology, Jung extended this perspective to an inner quest toward the discovery of the universal archetypes. Universal archetypes Jung perceived as the collective unconscious, the primordial structure of human experience, the primordial foundation of the human psyche itself.

This perspective ushered in the perception that archetypes were necessarily psychological, that is the archetypes were pertaining to the human self, and, as such, are

autonomous patterns of meaning that embrace both the human psyche and the world. To come to a fuller understanding of this perspective, I will now explore the work of the psychoanalytic psychiatrist Stanislav Grof. It was Grof's work that began to verify Jung's perception of universal archetypes and to synthesize it with Freud's biological and biographical perspective on a newer and deeper understanding of the psyche. In his psychoanalytic sessions with patients, Grof proceeded into deeper and deeper explorations of the unconscious. This process he found to be a sequence of a distinct archetypal dialectic (Grof 1985 116 - 126). As Tarnas (1993) explains, Grof found that this distinct archetypal sequence was a powerful dialectic moving from

an initial condition of undifferentiated unity with the maternal womb, to an experience of sudden fall and separation from that primal organismic unity, to a highly charged life-and-death struggle with the contracting uterus and the birth canal, and culminating in an experience of complete annihilation. This was followed almost immediately by an experience of sudden unexpected global liberation, which was typically perceived not only as physical birth but also as spiritual rebirth, with the two mysteriously intermixed (426).

From this we can perceive that this archetypal sequence was experienced both as existential and as spiritual. For Grof (1985) the spiritual is a "genuine and authentic force of the psyche", and, therefore for Grof, "spirituality is an intrinsic property of the psyche that emerges quite spontaneously when the process of self-exploration reaches sufficient depth" (368). This means that, according to Grof (1985), the

unconscious is always associated with a spontaneous awaking of a spirituality that is quite independent of the individual's ... religious ... cultural and racial background. ... The individual who connects with these levels of his or her psyche automatically develops a new world view within which spirituality represents a natural, essential, and absolutely vital element of existence (368).

Tarnas (1993) continues to note, that there was the moment of "extreme narrowing of mental horizons, a sense of hopeless alienation, ... encounter with death



[followed by] a sense of sudden awakening, a feeling of being fundamentally reconnected to the universe, all accompanied by a profound sense of psychological healing and spiritual liberation” (427; Grof 1985 : 360). This process Grof found in later sessions to be associated with “archetypal experiences of paradise, mystical union with nature or with the divine ... dissolution of the ego in ecstatic unity with the universe, absorption into the transcendent One” (in Tarnas 1993 : 427).

Grof’s work opened up our aware consciousness to a far more expanded ontology of human experience and cognition. As in the archetypal sequence, the process of psychoanalysis resulted in the understanding of the psyche as being multidimensional. This means that archetypal experiences and cognition could take place simultaneously on several levels but only when the ego’s control had been let go.

Grof’s work remarkably describes what the Aboriginal purification ceremony does. Often also called a “sweat lodge”, participants enter the unifying warm place of the womb, and emerge through the narrow opening into the world, in the process relinquishing control of the ego and feeling “reborn”. To do it in a group makes the process collective, and joins the individual and the collective. Also, while in the lodge or womb, one is communing with the ancestors, linking past and present (Jean-Paul Resoutle in communication with me; Ywahoo 1987 : xiv; Battiste and Barman 1995 : 315).

Characteristically, archetypal experiences could take place once ego control had been relinquished. Then archetypal experiences brought to human cognition the sense that the human body was the receptacle of the archetypal. Indeed, nature itself was the container of archetypal processes. As well, it came to be recognized that these processes

represent a link between dimensions. For instance, as seen with Freud, these processes represent a link between the biological and the biographical; and as seen with Jung, these processes represent a link between the personal and the collective (Grof 1985).

Further, these distinct archetypal sequences also indicate a process that is decidedly dialectic. This means that the archetypal sequences indicate an evolutionary process of opposition in which the interaction between these opposites are integrated into a synthesis. According to Grof (1985), this synthesis, that is a movement from the undifferentiated primordial unity to a sense of separation and alienation, then to a state of annihilation and followed by a stage of liberation, restored the initial unity but on a new and higher level of aware consciousness (Grof 1985 : 98 – 130).

Such archetypal dialectic processes could be experienced not only on the individual level; that is, not merely on the physical, psychological, intellectual, philosophical and the spiritual. Such archetypal dialectic processes could also be experienced on the collective level. On the collective level such archetypal dialectic processes can be perceived as the evolution of any culture, any society, any nation, or the human community as a whole.

Essentially, the collective archetypal dialectic can be perceived as an evolutionary process moving from the “primordial Unity, through an emanation into matter, with increasing complexity, multiplicity, and individuation, through a state of absolute alienation ... followed by ... a synthesis and reunification with self-subsistent Being” (Tarnas 1993 : 430; Barborka, 1998; Blavatsky 1988a, 1988b).

The individual archetypal dialectic can be perceived as an evolutionary process of the individual spirit emerging out of the collective substance, or the primordial unity, and

moving into matter, or the reality of this world of phenomena and experiences. This archetypal dialectic process represents the evolution of consciousness from the unconsciousness of self to self-consciousness. This is the evolution of the creation of the conscious self toward human freedom and autonomy. This evolution represents the evolution of the conscious self toward individuation from the collective (Grof 1985 : 133). In essence, this evolutionary process represents the development of human self-consciousness. However, today the Western human self-consciousness is in a state whereby the autonomous individual self no longer knows and experiences the essential oneness of all, the unitive numinous Reality.

Nevertheless, with depth psychology founded by Freud and expanded by Jung, and with Grof's archetypal dialectic, emerged an awakened awareness that is being brought forth into the consciousness of the Western mind. This is an aware consciousness that the experiences of the dialectic process, that is between the primordial unity and the creation of the individual self, generate a third state. This third state is a state of reunification (Grof 1985 : 123, 368). This means a state of reunification of the consciously free autonomous individual self with the foundation of its being, that is with the universal or the Source itself.

With such enlightened philosophic thinkers as Kant and Hegel, the vision of the world in relation to the human mind became to be known as participatory. That is, the comprehension of the world went beyond previous epistemological perceptions to the understanding that the human mind is ultimately the instrument within which the world reveals itself. The human mind, therefore, is the agency or medium of communication of

nature unfolding its truth. Thus, through the active participation of the human mind, nature's reality comes into being (Soccio 2007 : 381).

### ***Our kinship with cosmos***

Essentially, the human mind is pervaded by nature and to experience cognition we need the disciplined imagination of a developed inner life. As Tarnas (1993) declares,

from within its own depths the imagination directly contacts the creative process within nature, realizes that process within itself, and brings nature's reality to conscious expression. Hence the imaginal intuition is ... the human fulfillment of that reality's essential wholeness. ... The human imagination is itself part of the world's intrinsic truth ... the spirit of nature brings forth its *own* order through the human mind ... [which] 'lives into' the creative activity of nature. Then the world speaks its meaning through human consciousness. As Hegel emphasized, the evolution of human knowledge is the evolution of the world's self-revelation (434, 435).

As I have explained in Chapter Two, we can deduce that the process enacted by the human mind is not a simple participatory epistemology. Rather, it is a state of the human mind that is necessary for its own evolution. It is a state in search for knowledge that comes not merely from that which is purely human. Rather, it is state in search for wisdom that comes from the universal and reflects within the human mind its kinship with the cosmic unitary whole (Barborka 1998; Blavatsky 1988a, 1988b).

We need to realize that human consciousness becomes inspired through this kinship with the cosmic whole. It is this divine kinship through which the inspired human consciousness comes to know the revelation of the divine. This revelation the individual may intuitively come to experience as a new vision. This new vision then becomes translated into a new worldview, into a new paradigm. For instance, those we perceive as geniuses are individuals who may have experienced an intellectual and intuitive revelation. This revelation is an illumination that is revealed by the creative principle of

the divine itself. I have explained this more fully in Chapter Two wherein I indicated Newton's declaration: "I think Thy thoughts after Thee"! Thus, we need to realize that the imagination of the human mind is following the archetypal path of the numinous, and this path is the unfolding of the universe itself (Grof 1985 : 368; Blavatsky 1988a, 1988b; Barborka 1998).

Thus, we can see, as with the example of the Copernican vision of the world, that with each new historical perspective something has been comprehended and surmounted. And in this process the next stage of comprehending the unfolding of the universe is understood and made known. Because this new worldview, this new paradigm shift, is an archetypal process in evolution, it is a process that takes place both subjectively and objectively. That is, it is a process of evolution that takes place within the consciousness of the individual and the historical consciousness of the world (Grof 1985 : 368). For instance, the documentations of past explorations are being rediscovered and reexamined, as with Galileo's work and its acceptance by the Catholic Church. In time a new epistemology is formulated, new sociological changes take place, and new technologies are invented. Within this perspective new psychological and metaphysical theories and beliefs emerge and these then form a new evolutionary cycle, a new paradigm (Grof 1985).

Looking into the past we can see how one paradigm shift liberates another. We can perceive how each change in the view of the world reflects a new shift in consciousness. For instance, we can perceive how human thoughts, from Plato's metaphysical perspective to Kant's epistemology, from Freud's perspective of the unconscious to the archetypal dialectic of Grof, reflect these philosophers' vision of the

world within a new shift of consciousness. And this shift of consciousness then affects the culture, the society, the nation, and the human community as a whole.

*Toward a new spiritual planetary consciousness*

Today we can increasingly perceive an overall shift in the human consciousness. We can increasingly perceive the epistemological journey of the Western mind in the transformation of its understanding of the conscious and the unconscious, the self and the world. In the Western mind there seems to emerge a searching quest toward a more whole and numinous worldview. In the Western mind there seems to emerge a quest toward getting to know its intrinsic relationship with nature and its innate kinship with the unitive and numinous reality of cosmos.

However, why has this shift in the evolution of the Western mind occurred as it did and when it did? Why has the Western mind been predominantly masculine in its perception? Why has the Western mind primarily developed the left hemisphere of its brain? Why has this masculine self in both men and women repressed the feminine aspect of its nature rather than evolve as a whole being? Why has the evolving independent individual human being negated its wholeness, its interrelationship with the human community, and with nature? Why has the Western mind in its evolutionary process separated itself from the primordial unity with the universal, with cosmos?

Is this part of a dialectic evolution in the process of developing a new and expanded level of planetary consciousness? Did the pendulum of consciousness necessarily have to swing to its extreme masculine one-sidedness for the human self to come to a fuller awareness and understanding of self, the unconscious, and its interrelationship? Is this part of a dialectic quest to reconnect with the feminine aspect of

its being by activating the imaginative right hemisphere of the brain? Is this part of a quest to reconnect with spirit, with nature, with cosmos? Is the underlying perspective of the Western intellectual mind a spiritual evolution in its inner quest to forge its individual conscious self?

Has this spiritual inner quest toward self-consciousness proceeded from its primordial unconscious unity; that is, the undifferentiated unitary consciousness, to a participatory consciousness of self with cosmos? Has this perhaps been an overall archetypal dialectic quest, from an unaware consciousness to an emerging aware participatory consciousness, in its attempt to continue to evolve the autonomous rational human self, the uniquely independent and transcendent self-determining human being, toward conscious unity with nature, with the universal, with the Divine?

I believe all this to be profoundly true. A deep transformation is in the process of happening whereby the Western mind is beginning to perceive and understand its masculine one-sidedness and is beginning to open itself to cross the boundary of its one-sided self and embrace the feminine aspect of its being. It is my perception that in this process of transformation the Western mind is beginning to be open and ultimately come to understand and accept its whole being and embrace the larger and more encompassing reality. In this process of transformation I believe the Western mind has been part of a dialectic evolutionary transition toward knowing and accepting the larger human community, the universe, the divine. I believe this process to be a transition toward a fundamentally new level of spiritual planetary consciousness as a whole.

Today we can perceive the emergence of this new level of spiritual planetary conscious awareness in the increasing acceptance of feminine values in both men and

women. We can perceive this in the expanding collective attention to and acknowledgement of the feminine in our academic institutions and in our culture. For instance, we can see this in the increasing empowerment of women in every intellectual discipline and economic enterprise, as well as in the rising response against the political and corporate exploitation of the environment. We can see this in the growing acceptance of the human community as one whole, and in the opening up toward accepting our unity with nature and with the planet and all its inhabitants.

We can also perceive this new level of consciousness in the growing desire to reconnect with our physical being, with our feelings, with intuitive imagination, with our spiritual heart, with our spirit, and with the innate wisdom of nature and the feminine perspective of the divine. We can perceive this in the West's increasing inner search for and appreciation of indigenous and ancient philosophical perspectives; for instance, North American Aboriginal spirituality and African philosophy, as well as Eastern spiritual philosophies such as Buddhism, Taoism and Theosophy.

I perceive this inner search of the Western mind to be the quest for its own self-transcendence. This quest for self-transcendence required the spiritual dialectic movement that began with such imaginative inspired thinkers as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, then followed through with Copernicus, Galileo, Descartes, Newton, Kant, and finally continued with Freud, Jung, Grof, and numerous others, as I have more fully discussed in Chapter Two. This spiritual dialectic movement in the history of the Western mind pertains to a striving toward a larger synthesis; that is, toward a new reality, a higher state of consciousness, a higher state of being. This truly is an inner search toward a synthesis with the divine Source itself.



As the Western mind expanded its intellectual knowledge and its conscious or unconscious spiritual awareness toward synthesis with the divine, throughout its history a paradigm shift would emerge that resonated with the universal archetypes. This means that the paradigm shift resonated with the collective unconscious, the primordial structure of human experience, the primordial foundation of the evolving collective human psyche. Such an archetypal paradigm shift would then bring forth into the conscious awareness of the Western comprehending intellectual mind new knowledge and wisdom perceived to be more relevant at that time of its spiritual evolution. Such an archetypal paradigm shift would then allow this new knowledge to be integrated into the consciousness of both the individual and the collective mind. It is such an archetypal paradigm shift that deeply resonates with Grof's dialectic in his exploration of the unconscious:

The pursuit of knowledge always takes place within a given paradigm, within a conceptual matrix – a womb that provides an intellectually nourishing structure, that fosters growth and increasing complexity and sophistication – until gradually that structure is experienced as constricting, a limitation, a prison, producing a tension of irresolvable contradictions, and finally a crisis is reached (in Tarnas 1993 : 438).

The dialectic is a continuing evolutionary process in which one state of being unfolds and evolves and gives rise to its opposite. However, the interaction between these two states of being then creates a tension, a constriction, a limitation, that then inevitably generates an irresolvable contradiction producing a crisis in which the opposites are completed, surmounted and integrated one with the other. This integration proceeds in a spiral evolution; that is, beginning with the assertion of the one state to the contradiction of its opposite and then moving toward a more fulfilling, more complete and higher synthesis. This higher synthesis, in turn, becomes the foundation for the next following dialectic process of opposition, integration and synthesis and encompasses an

evolutionary process of a higher state of being, a higher state of consciousness. I believe this to be representative of a spiritual evolutionary dialectic process ultimately unifying the human being with the Divine itself.

In this Western spiritual evolutionary dialectic process what were some of the given paradigms in which the pursuit of knowledge took place that provided an intellectually nourishing structure? What were some of the given paradigms that promoted growth and development with increasing complexity and sophistication?

In the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century science emerged with its conviction to come up not only with tangible evidence to expand and elevate human knowledge of the world, but also to improve human health and general well being. In the twentieth century technology took over the world in its pursuit toward greater human freedom. However, in the ensuing milieu of mechanized industrialization many human beings came to experience a dehumanizing monotony in their work. As well, humanity as a whole has come to be increasingly disconnected from its relationship with the earth's environment. Impacted by mass production and mass media, for many modern life in many ways has become confusing, disorienting, demoralizing and quite overwhelming. Thus, science and technology have come to be a double-edged sword in the ensuing turmoil of constant change.

Today, some of the consequences of science and technology; for instance, the contamination of the planets soil, water and air, the acceleration of human diseases such as cancer and heart disease, and the production of the atomic bomb, have come to cause the very real danger of humanity destroying its own existence on this planet. To this we can add the West's conviction of the superiority of the autonomous human rational self

and its assumptions that its cognitive self can change the world. And all this is hopefully shaking us up to increasingly question all our thinking and actions. Indeed, our planet is in crisis and requires a new and higher synthesis!

However, in order to come to a deeper understanding of the world, throughout there continued the search for unity of the intellect and reason with feeling and imagination. For instance, imagination came to be perceived as the instrument of the infinite, the pathway through which “eternal realities came to expression and consciousness”, and it is through imagination that the human mind could perceive all as it really is (Tarnas 1993 : 369). Thus, intuitive imagination, attainable through intrinsic thinking and feeling came to inform both perception and reason.

Along with intuitive imagination, the will, or conscious choice, came to be understood as an important component in the expansion and elevation of human thought. The human will came to be perceived as a power necessary to propel human consciousness onward toward new levels of understanding, awareness and creativity. It came to be believed that the power of the self-creating active will could transform the qualities and traits of the transcending human self toward, as Assagioli (1992) points out, “solving major human problems” (vii). It came to be perceived that through the power of the intuitive imagination and the active will the human being can come to “reach the realm where the individual will merges with the universal will” (Assagioli 1992 : v).

Indeed, by virtue of the power of the intuitive imagination - the feminine aspect of our being - combined with the active will - the masculine aspect of our being – we as human beings can come to be conscious creative participants in the very process of the world creating and unfolding itself. I believe that by virtue of this creative participatory

consciousness a new and expanded epistemology can be created toward a richer and higher synthesis. I believe that embedded in this new synthesis is the enrichment of the creative spirit of the modern Western mind.

This creative spirit is beginning to be more fully enriched through the arts. For instance, music, painting, drawing, sculpting, poetry, literature, and drama, is beginning to be more fully recognized as uplifting the soul. In its pursuit of beauty, the arts is beginning to be more fully perceived as a liberating agent of transcendence, as a liberating medium between the everyday mundane world and the world of nature and spirit. Through the arts, modern life is beginning to find deeper meaning and value in the everyday life.

The modern world has come to more fully appreciate the artistic intuitive imagination of some of its members. In fact, the modern world has come to celebrate their innate artistic creativity, as we can see with the many musical concerts especially geared for the young today. In this way, the arts is beginning to be looked upon as nourishing the yearning of the collective spirit. In its creativity and inventiveness, the arts is beginning to be perceived as a way of uplifting and transmuting the everyday consciousness to a more expansive conception of reality. Innately linked with the inner life, the arts is beginning to present hope for balance with the world of conventional science and technology.

By virtue of such perspectives as the intuitive imagination, the active will, and the creative spirit of the arts, modern life is becoming increasingly aware of its alienation from nature and its perceived separation from the essential oneness of all. The West's scientific and technological mind, with its intellectual capacity to observe and examine

nature, is beginning to become increasingly aware of humanity's intrinsic unity with nature. Today, by virtue of the intuitive imagination and the active will, in many respects the arts and sciences are beginning to perceive nature as an archetypal essence. The Western mind is beginning to become less beholden to commercial or corporate interests and is beginning to become more consciously aware of this intrinsic archetypal essence in nature that permeates everything including the human mind, the imagination and the will or conscious choice. The Western mind needs to consciously bring this archetypal essence forth in all its intuitive imaginative expressions, in all its human experiences.

***The Western consciousness today***

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, I perceive the Western mind to be far more open and receptive to the prevailing intellectual and cultural diversity both in society and the academic world. From my own experiences in academia and life, I can say that there is now a deeper appreciation that no single thought system is superior to another, that there are multiple human knowledges that can govern understanding and research, and that the search for truth is necessarily relative. I can say that one aspect of this shift in social thought follows the Western scientific and technological discoveries that have assisted the Western world in coming to understand multiple knowledges, truths, and perceptions.. Yet, another aspect of this shift is the academic endeavor in coming to understand multiple knowledges, truths, and perceptions and that these can be healing and transformative.

We need to remember that the human mind is able to be creative, able to develop and change. The human mind can come to comprehend that human understanding is interpretative and that, therefore, there is no such thing as a final interpretation (Tarnas

1993 : 397). This means that the interpretative nature of the Western mind can come to be reflective and critically aware of the past and the present academic tendencies and cultural views of the world. This means that the interpretative nature of the Western mind can come to a deeper understanding of self and thereby come to a more realistic and open-minded attitude toward other perspectives. The interpretative nature of the Western mind can come to a deeper understanding, for instance of its history of colonialism, exploitation and expansionism, the oppression of women and people of color, the destruction of Indigenous societies, and the negation of other cultural traditions and values.

My experience is that the contemporary academic world in which I took part has come to more fully concern itself with the deconstructive criticism and awareness of the Western intellectual assumptions. For instance, critical analysis has brought about a growing awareness of the Eurocentric perception of Western thought, as well as the Western cognitive tendency toward a nonsensical prejudice against race, ethnicity and gender. As a consequence, this critical analysis, as explicated within the Indigenous and anti-colonial frameworks, is becoming increasingly instrumental in unmasking and deconstructing conscious and unconscious assumptions that continue to influence and determine established perspectives in the academic world about education, society and the world.

Furthermore, as I have experienced, explorations into the social construction of knowledge have come to deconstruct established assumptions formulated in texts. Texts are being analyzed in an effort to decenter, demystify and deconstruct the Western conventional intellectual and cultural assumptions of the masculine perspectives of

knowledge, education, society and nature. Texts are being analyzed to lay bare as to who benefits from the existing rhetorical and political strategies. As a consequence, I can perceive how this challenges the contemporary academic perspectives while an alternative view of knowledge and discourse is being created and put forth for assimilation. This critical consciousness contributed towards the revision of my existing intellectual constructs, analyses and research, as well as toward a new and alternative expanded form of intellectual vision.

Thus, I began to understand that knowledge is relative to the interpretation of the mind and, therefore, the nature of truth, reality, and philosophy depends on the 'pond you fish in', to use an expression I heard in undergraduate school. No text can be assumed to be a final authority. The textual and content analyses that determine meaning need to relate to the multiplicity of knowledges and truth. What is significant is coming to the realization that there are multiple approaches to knowledge and wisdom and, therefore, to be open to other perspectives, to be open to the inner and the outer ways of knowing.

There seems to emerge in the contemporary intellectual and cultural scene an appreciation toward open conversation between divergent ways of knowing and experiencing. Open conversation means that divergent intellectual, cultural and philosophical perspectives, for instance those of Plato of the ancient Greek times and more recently those of the Enlightenment philosophers, as well as the perspectives of such mystical traditions as Buddhism and Taoism, continue to influence with renewed appeal the Western cultural and intellectual world. Open conversation means that Indigenous perspectives, such as those of North American Aboriginal Spirituality and African Philosophy that predate Western intellectual thought, are reemerging and finding

new and vital ways of expression. As well, Eastern philosophical perspectives, such as Agni Yoga and Higher Self Yoga, are now poised for integration and synthesis within the Western academic and cultural world.

Open conversation between such a wealth of perspectives can engage with and meet the challenges of the Western world today. Open conversation can reorient the potential of the scientific and technological Western mind and reassess and reevaluate its innate relationship with self, with culture, the world, and the divine. Open conversation can facilitate each individual with a fuller and more authentic awareness of self-responsibility toward the transformation of the self. Self-transformation is a way of life that is an intrinsic part of the human condition, knowledge and experience. Self-transformation is an intrinsic part of the evolution of consciousness.

### **Toward a transformative future**

The evolution of consciousness in the case of whole life education relates to the “perennial philosophy” (Huckley 1970), and “holds that all life is connected in an interdependent universe. Stated differently, we experience relatedness through a fundamental ground of being. ... Perennial philosophy holds that all things are part of an indivisible unity or whole.” (Miller 2001 : 12, 20). This wholeness or holism of the perennial philosophy provides the philosophic foundation for an inner life curriculum.

Miller (2001) continues to explain the basic principles of the perennial philosophy: as the interconnectedness of reality and the fundamental unity in the universe; the intrinsic connection between the individual higher Self and this unity; this unity can intuitively be perceived through contemplation and meditation; values, such as caring for one another and sharing our feelings, hopes, and ideas that influence our



eventual choices, are derived from realizing and knowing this interconnectedness of reality, this fundamental connectedness with others and with the universe; and the “realization of this unity among human beings leads to social activity designed to counter injustice and human suffering” (20).

The realization that we are part of a fundamental unity intuitively makes us feel that we are interconnected to one another and therefore responsible to others. This responsibility necessarily needs to start from within each educator and learner and in time the resultant personal transformation will lead to social activity toward social change. Engaging in social change means to develop in each educator and student the ability to affect not only his or her own being but also his or her social environment. As such, whole life education includes the wholeness of existence.

Whole life education acknowledges a fundamental ground of being, “a vision of an interconnected universe of which we are a part”.(Miller 2001 : 31). By approaching an inner life curriculum from an integrated and interdependent perspective, we can begin to heal ourselves and know that we are whole.. This vision of wholeness, Miller (2001) states, “can be traced as far back as Pythagoras in the West” and its philosophical thought about the Source, and education needs to draw from this philosophical thought and restore this “vision of wholeness as a guiding image for the curriculum” (31).

This guiding image must begin with, Miller (2001) states, “more pluralistic approaches to inquiry that includes aesthetic and spiritual experiences. ... Divergent approaches to problem solving are accepted and encouraged ... linear methods are employed but they are usually linked with intuitive methods so their full benefits can be realized” (30). A further important criteria for whole life education, Miller (2001)

continues, is “an acceptance of the wholeness” of the student, and an inner life curriculum “acknowledges a fundamental ground of being” in which “the student is not reduced to a set of competencies that must be ‘performed’, or an abstract set of mental processes; instead, there is an acceptance of the richness and wholeness of human experience” (30) .

Further, the teacher’s wholeness is central to whole life education. “The teacher is aware that his or her own consciousness is connected to, and has an effect on, the students’ consciousness. The teacher, however, is not a role model in the traditional sense; instead he or she attempts to open more fully to ... the inner self. ... A teacher is ... a potential source of relatedness and wholeness” (Miller 2001 : 30). The challenge is to accept such teachers into higher education. The challenge is to make available and offer sufficient courses and resources to accommodate the influx of students ready to expand their own aware consciousness.

The perennial philosophy thus reminds us of the richness and wholeness of human experience, reveals who we really are, our purpose in life and our role in the universe. We discover and awaken our inner Self and come to balance our inner way of knowing with our outer experiences. This balance will lead to be of service to others and to a participatory understanding within any universal perspectives.

Ferrer (2002) refers to the participatory understanding as a ‘relaxed spiritual universalism’, a participatory spiritual pluralism, a metaphysical framework that affirms, supports and legitimizes a multiplicity of spiritual perspectives (183). According to Ferrer (2002), we must begin with a pluralistic way of understanding before we can address any universal perceptions. That means to perceive the various spiritual and

religious paths as distinct spiritual traditions and not converge them. For instance, emptiness (shunyata) of Buddhism is not to be equated with Brahman of Hinduism. Yet, to come to a participatory vision we need a 'shared spiritual ground' that makes dialogue and inquiry about the spiritual aspect of life possible (183). For instance, the teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama of compassion and the end of suffering, no matter what spiritual or religious path the Western world is enriched by His Buddhist perspective.

Thus, within the framework of a relaxed spiritual universalism a common spiritual dynamic is recognized which underlies and embraces a variety of spiritual traditions. This common spiritual dynamic pertains to the recognition and awareness of the interconnectedness of all life and all worlds, and of this we can become aware through such spiritual practices as meditation, contemplation and dialogue.

Ferrer (2002) refers to the dialectic between pluralism and universalism, between the many spiritual traditions and ways of knowing and the universal shared spiritual ground, as a deep dynamic in which Spirit discloses Itself. Moving from one perspective to the other in an endless striving, Spirit comes to balance and synthesize, compassion, love, knowledge and wisdom more fully into our consciousness. This balance and synthesis relates to the dialectical movement I discussed earlier and represents a natural unfoldment of the Spirit within ourselves, an unfolding movement out of which community is born, a world community of one.

As the Spirit unfolds, according to Wilber (1983b), the evolution of human consciousness is capable of three higher levels of consciousness: the psychic level, the subtle level and the causal level.

At the psychic level an individual moves toward a higher level of consciousness and synthesis and makes “connections, relates truths, coordinates ideas, integrating concepts” (Wilber 1983b : 27). As Wilber (in Miller (2001) puts forth, this level “can freely express itself in single ideas, but its most characteristic movement is a mass ideation, a system of totality of truth-seeing at a single view, the relations of idea with idea, of truth with truth, self-seen in the integral whole” (49). This is the level at which an individual can come to experience deep spiritual insight and illumination.

At the subtle level, Wilber (in Miller 2001) explains, an individual can “experience the highest level of intuition”. This is the level of “direct spiritual insight” of great saints and reflects their level of spiritual development. For instance, Moses and the revelation on Mt. Sinai and this without Moses’ identification with the One (50).

At the causal level the individual experiences the ultimate unity with Spirit. Wilber (in Miller 2001) states: “Passing full through the state of cessation or unmanifest absorption, consciousness is said finally to re-awaken to its absolutely prior and eternal abode as spirit, radiant and all-pervading, one and many, only and all” (50). This is the level of sages, and an example is Lord Jesus who claimed that ‘I and the Father are one’ (Miller 2001 : 50).

These three higher levels of consciousness represent our realizable potential to re-awaken to our eternal being as spirit.

### **Reflective Thoughts**

Embedded within the Indigenous knowledges and the anti-colonial frameworks, as set out in my initial chapter, the Western mind can find support and appreciation for diverse and multiple perspectives of ontology and epistemology - the nature of reality and

the nature of knowing. What has become apparent to me is that on the one hand there is deconstruction and unmasking, yet on the other hand there is integration and synthesis in both the intellectual and the social worlds. What has become apparent to me is that these polarities are complementary in need for balance. By virtue of this perspective, the Western mind can be open to embrace the spiritual heart qualities of its being and bridge and heal the divide between the masculine and the feminine, the intellect and spirit. The Western mind can genuinely be open to the profound freedom necessary toward a new vision and bring forth an authentic and balanced perspective that would guide the future with new possibilities for a new worldview.

Again, imagine a triangle with one apex at the top, the left bottom apex representing the state of assertion, the state of our Western intellectual mind, and the right bottom apex representing the state of contradiction, the state inherent in Eastern Philosophy with the emphasis on Higher Self Yoga, African Philosophy and North American Aboriginal Spirituality. The interaction between the left apex, the state of assertion, and the right apex, the state of contradiction, creates a tension that generates an irresolvable contradiction producing a crisis. This is the crisis the Western world is experiencing today.

Imagine the pendulum of evolution spirally moving upward from the left apex to the right apex, from the Western intellectual state striving to embrace the spiritual states of Higher Self Yoga, African Philosophy and North American Aboriginal Spirituality. In this spiral evolution the crisis of opposition becomes surmounted, completed and integrated one with the other into a new and more fulfilling paradigm, a higher synthesis.

This synthesis, in turn, then becomes the foundation for the next following spiral evolution toward a higher state of being, a higher state of consciousness.

Essentially, this triangle is symbolic of the essence of this thesis. What has become apparent to me is the tremendous responsibility, yet simultaneously the incredible infinite potential, the Western world is now experiencing in the throws toward life-enhancing change. My hope is that this thesis will be instrumental in facilitating such change.

As we open ourselves to the multiplicity of knowledges and wisdom, as explicated in the philosophies and their vision of reality in the foregoing chapters, we will come to find balance and harmony within ourselves, and we will come closer to knowing our true being. In my exploration I have come to realize that, although the various philosophies I mentioned above may vary in their expression and experience, by uncovering and delving deep into the esoteric aspects of each, all draw upon similar spiritual resources. All draw upon similar esoteric resources in their search toward the ultimate relationship of human existence. Indeed, these various philosophies are but divergent approaches that lead to the same divine Source.

## *Conclusion*

Education is a deeply spiritual enterprise. It concerns the whole man [or woman] and that includes his [or her] divine spirit.

Alice A. Bailey (1972 : 34)

At this point in my research as I am looking at the major issues that this planet is now experiencing, I have come to the realization that it is of prime importance for all of us to pay attention to the opportunity to work creatively for change. This purports to be a creative change wherein the necessary basic steps need to be taken that lead to the rethinking of the contemporary human values and the reevaluating of the prevailing mental attitudes and thought processes. In this way new human values, mental attitudes and thought processes may come to be socially acceptable. This purports to be a creative change wherein the initiation of open and receptive human relationships may come to be seen as intrinsic to human perception. The opportunity to work creatively for change is in the hope to commence such open and receptive relationships between all human beings within the human community as one whole.

I have come to the realization that to commence open and receptive relationships within one human community each of us needs to reach deep within ourselves and bring forth and initiate our own imaginative and creative goodwill. Each of us needs to make our own individual beneficent contributions for the good of the whole. By reaching deep within ourselves and connecting to our own inner life spiritual wisdom, we may begin to learn the principles of shared cooperation necessary to live harmoniously within the human community as a whole. In this effort we may well come to the beneficent

realization that we are one humanity, living in one world, and, therefore, it is our responsibility to think of all as one whole. One whole implies the responsibility of each of us realizing ourselves as citizens of the world living within one-world consciousness. As Bailey (1972) points out, this awareness of one-world consciousness is part of humanity's next step in its inevitable evolutionary process (Barborka 1998).

To act with foresight toward our next forthcoming evolutionary step, Bailey (1972) declares, requires whole life educational processes that provide opportunities for spiritual vision and imagination. Spiritual vision implies inspirational ideas that emanate from the divine within each of us and eventually become ideals. These ideals come to value and honor all cultures and all societies of the world in all their diversity as one unity. These ideals come to view the world from the perspective of the general good for the whole human community. This is the perspective of the spirit of understanding and goodwill that needs to be the cornerstone of all education so that in time it will motivate and characterize the attitude of harmony and unity of not only our own community but the world community as one whole.

Whole life educational processes, Bailey (1972) indicates, convey a bridge between the creative life of the past, which emphasizes the larger and higher values of history including literature, music and the arts, and the present and future ways of developing spiritual vision. Developing spiritual vision requires that our educational systems incorporate methods of thinking and acting that prepare educators and learners for whole life living. Whole life living, Bailey (1972) indicates, requires "using all that is true, beautiful and good (inherited from the past)" and accepting "the fact of divinity ... which emphasizes the authority of the human soul" (35). Bailey (1972) continues:



Let us recognize the self-proven fact that there is a peculiar quality in every man, an innate, inherent characteristic to which one may give the name “mystical perception”. This characteristic connotes an undying, though oft unrecognized, sense of divinity; it involves the constant possibility to vision and contact the soul and to grasp (with increasing aptitude) the nature of the universe. It enables the philosopher to appreciate the world of meaning and – through that perception – to touch Reality (35).

This mystical perception of the authority of the human soul, Bailey (1972) writes, is the “power to love and to go out towards that which is other than the self” (35).

Essentially, the history of humanity is the history of the ability to grasp ideas and develop ideals. Inherent in this is “the capacity to sense the unknown ... to seek ... the revelation of that which is hidden and undiscovered and which - century after century ... - is revealed” (36).

It is this inherent spiritual faculty that recognizes that which is true, beautiful and good and through the creative arts, literature, philosophy and history this innate inner knowing can be expressed and brought forth. Whole life educational processes, thus, seek to incorporate this inner life quality of an innate, inherent characteristic of the spirit, this sense of divinity that is within all of us. This inner life quality needs to become an integral and effective part in all our educational institutions.

Whole life educational processes that acknowledge whole life education honor the existence of an inner life and seek to balance and harmonize one’s inner life knowing with one’s outer life experiences. Whole life education creates an educational environment that allows the creativity, imagination, heart and spirit to be led out, and this as part of the well being of the whole student. Whole life education develops in each educator and student inner life qualities and values of “resourcefulness, integrity,

wisdom, courage, compassion”, as well as the life skills necessary to live harmoniously within an outer life environment (Miller 2000 : 11).

Thus, whole life education focuses attention on the inner life. According to Miller (2001), whose field is holistic education and the spirituality in education, holistic education begins with teachers. Teachers need to nourish their own inner life by engaging in some way to connect with their own inner or higher Self. Holistic education “should come from the deepest place in the teacher and meditation as well as other forms of spiritual practice are fundamental to this process” (171).

The inner life or holistic curriculum, as Miller (2001) explains, needs to be embedded in the consciousness of teachers who, through their own authentic way of being and caring, bring their own inner way of knowing into the classroom. Teachers need to be in touch with, and be able to listen to, their own inner being in order to facilitate learning from that connectedness to their own inner Self and communicate with students. A teacher who is in touch with his or her own center realizes that there is a “link between one’s consciousness or inner life and other beings. ... To be fully authentic there must then be a fundamental awakening to our inner life – our thoughts and images and their connection to other beings. By being aware of how thoughts arise in our consciousness we can sense our connectedness to others and to what Emerson called the ‘Oversoul’ ” (178).

It is this aware interconnectedness, which is the foundation of holistic education, that can be developed through various meditative disciplines and spiritual practices as discussed earlier. This aware interconnectedness leads to inner growth and a concern or caring for students and others.

Caring for students and others facilitates change. As an intrinsic part of life, change “occurs at the most basic level from inside out (Hunt, 1987) ... when we feel a deep congruence with holistic principles and begin to live and teach according to these principles” (Miller 2001 :181). Dynamic and interdependent, change facilitates an inner transformation that intrinsically affects the teachers’ life and this deep congruence then extends outward to the classroom.

Ideally, Miller (2001) informs us, the principal also will be holistic and “support teachers in their efforts to develop and use the holistic curriculum ... and help establish a cooperative environment among teachers in the school” (182). This means to have at all levels a vision of whole life education in which all can share and take part in its development. It is this holistic vision that can serve as a catalyst for change.

Whole life education, then, intimates an inward directed awareness of self-discovery, a learning process grounded not merely in acquiring knowledge but also in revealing wisdom. This inward directed awareness of self-discovery awakens educators and students to the discovery of the inner life that signifies that the human evolution is an innate part of the spiritual evolution. This self-discovery may begin by all educational studies teaching spiritual dimensions that make possible the unity of all knowledges. Every educational study can open new horizons. Every educational study can find its true meaning.

Every area of education, Agni Yoga Society (2003) explains, can open to new perceptions and gain new dimensions: Astronomy can be transformed and expanded into the study of life. As a science of life, biology can incorporate ethics and psychology. Physiology can explain the functioning of the microcosm and thus find the connection

between the human organism and cosmos. Alchemy can be restored and new techniques can be found to learn about the subtle energies. History can search for and find valuable knowledge inherent in the ancient writings. In time, all noble concepts can and will be proven by science. All sciences can and will invite and inspire a loftier way of thinking (679, 698). All areas of education necessarily need to serve in the broadening and expansion of our consciousness.

In our contemporary times of change in which we experience much confusion, uncertainty and anxiety, we now begin to break down social barriers by training ourselves to live with others in more harmony and goodwill. We begin to be more open to the concept of looking at how to live life more authentically and how to perceive the reality of the world beyond the merely phenomenal. We begin to be more open to the concept of viewing life and reality more fully and becoming more aware of the beauty and harmony that exists on a vaster scale. We begin to become more aware of our eternal striving to become consciously aware of our innate relationship with the essential oneness of all.

We begin to understand the mystery of North American Aboriginal philosophy and its relationship to nature and life. As Cajete (1994) emphasizes, it is a philosophy of “education about the life and nature of the spirit. ... All education is rooted in or has evolved from, an Indigenous past”, and thus is “founded upon Indigenous basics” (42, 187). Therefore, “we are, indeed, all related” and in need “to enact a collective transformation ... through the path of education” (188).

Indigenous education so parallel to holistic education intimates a system of education, Cajete (1994) states, that prepares individuals for “fulfilling their human potentials, enlivening their creative spirit, and finding their personal meaning. ...

Intellectual, social, and spiritual learning unfolds in a definite context of relationships” (191, 193). Thus, holistic thinking reflects “sophisticated ideas about the processes of Nature and the Universe” (196) in which holistic learning is based on the “understanding of one’s own creative spirit and capacity ... that place of self-knowing and empowerment that forms the foundation for a transformative process of learning” (198; 199). This transformative process of learning, as I have pointed out with the medicine wheel, is the process toward wholeness.

Cajete (1994) points out that students learn about the :”creative center that is within. Students expand their awareness of the environment and of themselves as creative beings who are part of a greater story of creation. ... part of a great human story of being and becoming” (201).

Indeed, we begin to delve more deeply into African philosophy in its divine antiquity and origin of life as I explained in a previous chapter. We begin to become more aware of our role of self-responsibility for self-transformation as explicated in Higher Self Yoga.

These philosophies remind us of our true origins. These philosophies remind us of our roots, from where we have come and to where we strive to return. They reveal to us as to who we really are and what our intrinsic purpose is. These philosophies serve as a catalyst for change. The purpose and significance of this change needs to be the responsibility of education.

In the future, Bailey (1972) informs us, education will make fuller use of psychology, and through the use of psychology individuals will come to recognize themselves as the

one who acts, who feels and who thinks. Thus the responsibility of the central “I”, or the occupant of the body will be taught. This will alter the entire present attitude of the youth of the world to their surroundings and foster ... the recognition of a part to be played and a responsibility to be assumed. Education will be regarded as a method of preparation for that useful and interesting future (57).

In this regard it becomes possible, Bailey (1972) asserts, that in the future education will give “new purpose to any curriculum imparted and yet indicates that nothing hitherto included need be excluded, only a better motivation will be obvious” (57). Future education, Bailey (1972) continues

will concern itself with the right perception and use of ideas, of their transformation into working ideals and their application as the will-to-good, the will-to-truth and the will-to-beauty. Thus a much needed alteration of humanity’s aims from our present competitive and materialistic objectives into those that will more fully express the Golden Rule will come about and right relations between individuals, groups, parties, nations and throughout the entire international world will be established (57).

This indicates that education needs to concern itself not merely with the daily living but necessarily with the life of the whole. Individuals will necessarily learn their responsibility to the whole and what contributions they can make to the whole. In this respect, Bailey (1972) points out, it is useful to look at past and present prominent individuals in philosophy, literature, history, the arts, and politics, and see what it is that their creative contributions and effective leadership has brought to the whole and what it is that can come to be applied to the present and future usefulness of the whole. In this way our past can be evaluated in terms of our present happiness, and our present can become a determinant that influences our future. In this way education will be “given in the form of human interest, human achievement and human possibility” in which the learner’s “imagination will be fired and ... aspiration evoked along true ... lines” (59). In

this way a much needed shift in our attitude to life can be brought about and our responsibility to the whole recognized and accepted.

Education necessarily needs to teach the equality of all human beings and that the differences that exist are largely a matter of the human interpretations of truth. These interpretations need to be the objective of future education. This indicates bridging work and the foresight what it is that needs to happen toward human happiness and welfare. This indicates bridging work of what has gone before and what yet needs to happen in the future for humanity realizing itself as one human community.

In looking at the spiritual wisdom traditions of Higher Self Yoga, African Philosophy and North American Aboriginal Spirituality, I have come to realize their useful bridging work in healing the divide in our system of education. I have come to the realization that all these spiritual teachings reveal one common foundation, one common Source. All these spiritual teachings affirm the same principles based on the universality of what is human and spiritual in all of us. All these spiritual teachings express the same fundamental truth that permeates all. Truth is one!

As wisdom teachings, all these spiritual teachings focus on the transformation of the self to rise above the ego to a higher and more evolved knowing and being. All make us think about the significance of broadening our aware consciousness by restoring balance and harmony in our lives. All emphasize the application of all that is creatively good in all of us and to live in a continuous state of gaining knowledge and wisdom. For the valiant seeker, all represent a search for self-perfection on the path to a more elevated way of being and to a life lived and affirmed upon these foundations.

What is important is that we all learn to be open and receptive to all wisdom traditions so that we may truly benefit from their wisdom. What is important is that we learn to balance and harmonize this wisdom within our meaning of learning and knowing and create opportunities to integrate its essential truth into our contemporary mainstream system of education. What is important is that we do the bridging work and heal the divide in our own aware consciousness and perceive and act in more authentic ways in education and in our every day lives.

Let us be receptive to authentic knowledge and wisdom and achieve equity in education by aiming our learning and knowing toward multiple dimensions of knowing and toward the free flow of the creative spirit in all of us. Let us create an educational atmosphere in which the spiritual qualities of whole life education can flourish and the spiritual characteristics of responsibility and goodwill for whole life living can emerge. Let us understand the essence of the oneness of all and realize the synthesis needed for wholeness. Let us reconstruct our modern mainstream system of education and honor all our learning, all our perspectives. Let us base education upon higher principles and assimilate the ancient principles of wholeness because all knowledge adds to the expansion of consciousness.

Each century bestows a new era in evolution. Within that time period any advances made carried within them earlier knowledge. However, the knowledges of the Western world have become divided into departmental classifications and these resulted in harmful limitations. These limitations we need to become aware of as we are approaching our next evolutionary step.



We need to ask ourselves as to what it is that may bring about a restructuring of our academy. What will raise our thinking to new heights? Our academic education as it presently stands is not sufficient to bring about this change. What is needed is a shift in our aware consciousness when we are again being reminded of ancient truths and the need for synthesis of these truths within our mainstream system of education and our everyday lives. What we need is to engage on a synthesized path that will broaden our consciousness and bring about a whole life change (Agni Yoga Society 2003 : 685).

The core of Higher Self Yoga, African Philosophy and North American Aboriginal Spirituality signifies that we are one humanity sharing one world and our academic world needs to reflect this wisdom for global harmony. Acquired over millennia, this wisdom needs to become an integral and effective part of educational life as a global endeavor. As Swimme and Berry (in Miller 2000) put forth: “Education might well be defined as knowing the story of the universe, of the planet Earth, of life systems, and of consciousness, all as a single story, and recognizing the human role in the story” (94).

What is needed is that the most basic truths be revived so that they will permeate humanity’s consciousness. Let us learn to sense what deeply resounds in our spiritual hearts and innate being. Truth is in our spiritual heart. Wisdom knowledge is in our spiritual heart. Indeed, all the aforementioned spiritual teachings can be called teachings of the spiritual heart. All thoughts need to have their origin in the spiritual heart and only then are they to be synthesized with the intellect of the mind. Let us invoke the power of our spiritual heart for it will guide our thoughts to whole life living. All of us, every

educator, every learner, must first be a student of the spiritual heart. The spiritual heart truly is the gateway to our inner life, to whole life living.

The inner life senses expansion. Such moments may lead to illumination. By refining one's aware consciousness through the power of lofty thinking and striving will come the expansion of aware consciousness and the kindling of the central sacred fire of the spirit. A broadened aware consciousness absorbs all that which has been learned. A broadened aware consciousness seeks synthesis with the ancient truths and understands how the nature of spirituality can become a bridge to heal the divide that exists in our system of education and our everyday lives. A broadened aware consciousness perceives and assimilates the past as a bridge into the future. A broadened aware consciousness comprehends that in its essential essence and fundamental truth all is one.

In the beginning of this the twenty-first century the questions most central to our minds and spiritual hearts are those that relate to the increasingly accelerated epochal transition we all are observing and experiencing. Is this a necessary transition for the human community to become consciously aware of its deviating and destructive ways of being? Is this our civilization's great leap forward that is necessary toward the creation of a new and expanded worldview?

Does it take this momentous shift and transformation for us as a human community to become consciously aware of who we really are? Will coming to truly understand ourselves and realizing our innate intrinsic purpose help us to bring forth our intuitive imagination and innate will and inspire us to create a life-enhancing future? Will we find our way and reconnect with the foundation of our own being, with the wisdom of the cosmic unitary whole, with the true Reality itself?

I believe that the epochal transition we are now observing and experiencing is an essential aspect in the steady unfolding of the spiritual qualities and attributes of human aware consciousness in its divine evolution. I believe that this epochal transition is an integral and effective aspect of a larger synthesis of self-transcendence toward coming to know the essential oneness of all. In fact, I believe that this epochal transition is a necessary and effective factor in the evolution of this planet itself.

In the evolution of this planet, human aware consciousness in its divine evolution, Tolle (2006) states, is aware in those who have

awakened to their essential true nature as consciousness and recognize that essence in all ‘others’, all life-forms. They live in the surrendered state and so feel their oneness with the whole and the Source. They embody the awakened consciousness that is changing all aspects of life on our planet, including nature, because life on earth is inseparable from the human consciousness that perceives and interacts with it (309).

As Tolle (2006) points out, the “foundation for a new earth ... is the awakened consciousness”, the consciousness awakened as our essential true nature. “A new species is arising on the planet. It is arising now, and you are it” (309) Tolle proclaims. It is up to each of us to come to embody this awakened consciousness, our essential true nature, and recognize it in all others. This will change all aspects of life on our planet because life on earth is inseparable from this awakened consciousness.

As Hawken (2007) declares, human consciousness is awakening to what is and what is not human in our understanding about our relationship to each other and nature. We as a human community are coming to fundamentally change in our understanding of who we are as we are grappling with the multiple planetary crises we now experience.

There is a world-changing movement now emerging, Hawken (2007) conveys, in response to human suffering as a result of ecological and economic crises. It is a mental

movement toward social and environmental change that is ethic based and driven by necessity and experience worldwide. This emerges as a movement that reimagines our relationship with each other and the planet. It is a movement that values that which unites us and puts aside that which separates us. The world we live in is the world we have created. Therefore, it is up to each of us to face the issues of our time and participate toward the actualization of one community on the planet as a whole.

To come to this awakened and expanded way of knowing we need the wisdom of the inner life. This inner life wisdom has been with humanity over the ages. At times this inner life wisdom has been part of such cultures as the ancient Egyptians, the Greek mystery schools, and the Aboriginal peoples of North America. At other times it has been taught to those who seek, as with Theosophy, Agni Yoga and Higher Self Yoga. The principles of the inner life wisdom may have been put into different perspectives and various aspects may have been emphasized at different times. However, the fundamental essence remained to be the same throughout the centuries.

Thus, this inner life wisdom is an integral and beneficent quality of aware consciousness that guides not only the evolution of humanity but also our planet as a whole. As human beings we are the primary agents of evolution. It is our responsibility to develop, experience, and live our higher potentials in ever more refined forms. In the evolution of the Western world the rational mind has most recently been developed. This can be seen with the development of science and technology. What the West now needs to further develop is its “intuition and unitive insight” (Leadbeater 1996 : xxv) and this not merely for its own balance and harmony, but for that of the planet as a whole.

We are the creators of our own destiny. It is our innate divinity that explains the continuous transition of our human spirit and the striving in our spiritual hearts toward our return to the Source. All that we think and all that we do are necessary educative experiences we need for spiritual growth. We need to allow these spiritual educative experiences to influence the aware consciousness of our whole being.

We need to allow such spiritual practices, as meditation, prayer, dialoguing with the higher Self, studying and being of service as a way of life, as well as the integration of these and the wisdom knowledges of other spiritual philosophies into our academic world, awaken our latent potential and quicken our spiritual evolutionary unfoldment. It is this unfoldment of the spiritual inner life wisdom that essentially needs to become an integral and effective component of our whole life education and our whole life living experiences. It is the creative aptitude of this spiritual unfoldment that needs to receive our full attention.

## References

- Abdi, A. A., Puplampu, K. P., & Dei, G. J. S. (2006). *African education and globalization: Critical perspectives*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Absolon, K. (1994, March). *Building health from the medicine wheel: Aboriginal program development*. Paper presented at Native Physician Association Meeting, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- Afua, Q. (2001). *Sacred woman. A guide to healing the feminine body, mind, and spirit*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Random House of Canada.
- Agni Yoga Society, Inc. (1956). *Mother of the world*. New York: Author.
- Agni Yoga Society, Inc. (1978). *New era community*. New York: Author.
- Agni Yoga Society, Inc. (1982). *Heart*. New York: Author.
- Agni Yoga Society, Inc. (1994). *Supermundane: The inner life: Book one*. New York: Author.
- Agni Yoga Society, Inc. (1996). *A treasury of terms and thoughts: From the Agni Yoga teachings*. New York: Author.
- Agni Yoga Society, Inc. (1997). *Agni Yoga*. New York: Author.
- Agni Yoga Society, Inc. (2003). *Supermundane: The inner life: Book three*. New York: Author.
- Agni Yoga Society, Inc. (2004). *Supermundane: The inner life: Book four*. New York: Author.
- Amen, R. U. N. (2003). *Maat: The 11 laws of God*. Brooklyn, NY: Kamit.
- American heritage dictionary of the English language, Fourth Edition (2000, Updated 2009). *Theosophy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Asante, M. K. (1998). *The Afrocentric idea*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Asante, M. K. (2000). *The Egyptian philosophers: Ancient African voices from Imhotep to Akhenaten*. Chicago: African American Images.
- Assagioli, R. (1992). *The act of will*. New York: Penguin Books.

- Aurobindo, Sri. (1970). *Letters on yoga: Part three and four* (Vol. 23, Deluxe ed.). Pondicherri, India: Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library.
- Bailey, A. A. (1972). *Problems of humanity*. Albany, NY: The Fort Orange Press.
- Barker, A. T. (1975). *The Mahatma letters to A. P. Sinnett*. Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press.
- Barborka, G. A. (1998). *The divine plan*. Adyar, India: The Theosophical Publishing House.
- Battiste, M., & Barman, J. (1995). *The circle unfolds: First Nations education in Canada*. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: UBC Press.
- Battiste, M., & Henderson, J. Y. (2000). *Protecting Indigenous knowledge and Heritage: A global challenge*. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada: Purich.
- Blavatsky, H. P. (1988a). *The secret doctrine* (Vol. 1). Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press.
- Blavatsky, H. P. (1988b). *The secret doctrine* (Vol. 2). Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press.
- Blavatsky, H. P. (1992). *The key to Theosophy: An abridgement*. J. Mills (Ed.). Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House.
- Bopp, J., Bopp, M., Brown, L., & Lane, P., Jr. (2004). *The sacred tree*. Twin Lakes, WI: Lotus Press.
- Budge, E. A. W. (2008). *The Egyptian book of the dead*. London, England: Penguin Books.
- Cajete, G. (1994). *Look to the mountain: An ecology of Indigenous education*. Skyland, NC: Kivaki Press.
- Capra, F. (1991). *The Tao of physics. An exploration of the parallels between modern physics and eastern mysticism*. London, England: Harper Collins.
- Conners, Edward. (1994, March). *The role of spirituality in wellness or how well we can see the whole will determine how well we are and how well we can become*. Paper presented at the Native Physicians Conference, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- Cooperrider, D. L., & Whitney, D. (2005). *Appreciative inquiry: A positive revolution in change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koebler.

- Cooperrider, D. L., & Hammond, S. (2001). *Lessons from the field: Applying appreciative inquiry*. Bend, OR: Thin Book.
- Cordova, V. F. (2007). *How it is: The Native American philosophy of V. F. Cordova*. K. D. Moore, K. Peters, T. Jojola, & A. Lacy (Eds.). Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.
- Critchlow, K., & Lawlor, R. (1980). *Lindisfarne letter: Geometry and architecture*. Stockbridge, MA: Lindisfarne Press.
- Dei, G. J. S. (2001). The power of social theory: The anti-colonial discursive framework. *Journal of Educational Thought*, 35(3), 297-323.
- Dei, G. J. S. (2002). Spirituality in African education: Issues, contentions and contestations from a Ghanaian case study. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 7(1), 37-56.
- Dei, G. J. S. (2008). Indigenous knowledge studies and the next generation: Pedagogical possibilities for anti-colonial education. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 37(Supplement), 5-13.
- Deloria, V. (1991). Power and place: Equal personality. In V. Deloria, Jr., & D. R. Wildcat (Eds.), *Indian education in America* (pp. 21-28). Boulder, CO: American Indian Science and Engineering Society.
- de Purucker, G. (1972). *Occult glossary: A compendium of oriental and theosophical terms*. Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press.
- Dillard, C. B., Abdur-Rshid, D., & Tyson, C. A. (2000). My soul is a witness: Affirming pedagogies of the spirit. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 13(5), 447-462.
- Diop, C. A. (1974). *The African origin of civilization: Myth or reality*. M. Book (Ed. & Trans.). Chicago: Lawrence Hill.
- Easwaran. E. (Ed.). (1995). *The Upanishads*. Tomales, CA: Nilgiri Press.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Ferrer, J. (2002). *Revisioning transpersonal theory*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Ferrucci, P. (1982). *What we may be: Techniques for psychological and spiritual growth through psychosynthesis*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Gay, P. (1995). *The Freud reader*. New York: W. W. Norton.



- Glazer, S. (1999). *The heart of learning: Spirituality in education*. New York: Penguin Putnam.
- Graveline, F. J. (1998). *Circle works: Transforming Eurocentric consciousness*. Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada: Fernwood.
- Grof, S. (1985). *Beyond the brain: Birth, death and transcendence in psychotherapy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Hawken, P. (2007). *Blessed unrest: How the largest movement in the world came into being and why no one saw it coming*. New York: Viking Press.
- Haig-Brown, C., Hodgson-Smith, K. L., Regnier, R., & Archibald, J. (1997). *Making the spirit dance within: Joe Duquette high school and an aboriginal community*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: James Dorimer.
- Hanohano, P. (1999). The spiritual imperative of native epistemology: Restoring harmony and balance to education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 23(2), 206-219.
- Hofstadter, A., & Kuhns, R. (1964). *Philosophies of art & beauty: Selected readings in aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Huckley, A. (1970). *The perennial philosophy*. New York: Harper Colophon.
- Hucknall, N. V. (1992). *Finding your work, loving your life*. York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser.
- Hunt, D. (1987). *Beginning with ourselves*. Toronto: OISE Press.
- Johnston, B. (1976). *Ojibway heritage*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: McClelland and Stewart.
- Jung, C. G. (1959). *The basic writings of C. G. Jung*. V. S. De Laszlo (Ed.). New York: The Modern Library.
- Klein, A. C. (1997). Ground and opening. In L. Friedman & S. Moon (Eds.), *Being bodies: Buddhist women on the paradox of embodiment* (pp. 139-147). Boston: Shambhala.
- Krippendorff, K. (1984). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.
- Knudtson, P., & Suzuki, D. (1992). *Wisdom of the elders*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Stoddard.

- Leadbeater, C. W. (1996). *The inner life*. Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House.
- Ludwig, T. M. (2006). *The sacred paths: Understanding the religions of the world* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Magee, B. (1998). *The story of philosophy: The essential guide to the history of Western philosophy*. London, Ontario, Canada: Dorling Kindersley.
- Mazama, M. A. (2002). Afrocentricity and African spirituality. *Journal of Black Studies*, 33(2), 217-234.
- Mbiti, J. S. (2008). *African religions and philosophy*. Norfolk, England: Biddles.
- McLuhan, M., & Powers, B. R. (1989). *The global village*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Miller, J.P. ((2001). *The holistic curriculum*. Toronto, Can. OISE Press.
- Miller, J. P. (2000). *Education and the soul: Toward a spiritual curriculum*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Miller, S. (1975). The purposeful imagination. *Synthesis*, 1(2), 122-139.
- Murphy, M. (1992). *The future of the body: Explorations into the further evolution of human nature*. New York: Putnam's Sons.
- Mussell, B. (1994, March). *Rethinking institutional response and support services for First Peoples*. Paper presented at the Native Physicians Conference, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
- Myers, D. G. (1998). *Psychology* (5th ed.). New York: Worth.
- Nakagawa, Y. (2000). *Education for awakening: An Eastern approach to holistic education*. Charlotte, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal.
- Ng, R. (2000). Revisioning the body/mind from an Eastern perspective: Comments on experience, embodiment and pedagogy. In B. Miedema, J. Stoppard, & V. Anderon (Eds.), *Women's bodies, women's lives: Health, well-being and body image* (pp. 175-193). Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Sumach Press.
- Patanjali. (1981). *How to know God: The yoga aphorisms of Patanjali*. Hollywood, CA: Vedanta Press.
- Ramakrishna, Sri. (1996). *The gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Abridged ed., Swami Nikhilananda, Trans.). New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center.

- R. H. H., Guru. (1982). *Talk does not cook the rice: A commentary on the teaching of Agni Yoga*. York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser.
- Richards, D. (1990). The implications of African-American spirituality. In M. K. Asante & K. W. Asante (Eds.), *African culture: The rhythms of unity* (pp. 207–231). Trenton, NJ: African World Press.
- Roerich, H. (1979). *Letters of Helena Roerich* (Vol. 1). New York, NY: Agni Yoga Society Inc.
- Roerich, H. (1981). *Letters of Helena Roerich* (Vol. 2). New York, NY: Agni Yoga Society Inc.
- Rose, S. (2001). Is the term “spirituality” a word that everyone uses but nobody knows what anyone means by it? *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 16(2), 193-207.
- Satprem. (2000). *Sri Aurobindo or the adventure of consciousness* (4th ed.). Faridabad, India: Thomson Press.
- Semali, L. M., & Kincheloe, J. L. (Eds.). (1999). *What is indigenous knowledge? Voices from the academy*. New York: Falmer Press.
- Shahjahan, R. A. (2004). Centering spirituality in the academy: Toward a transformative way of teaching and learning. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 2(4), 294-312.
- Shahjahan, R. (2005). Spirituality in the academy: Reclaiming from the margins and evoking a transformative way of knowing the world. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 18(6), 685-711.
- Smith, H. (1991). *The world's religions: Our great wisdom traditions*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Soccio, D. J. (2007). *Archetypes of wisdom. An introduction to philosophy* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Learning.
- Some, M. P. (1993). *Ritual: power, healing and community*. New York: Swan Raven.
- Stawell, F. M., & Marwin, F. S. (1923). *The making of the Western mind*. London: Methuen.
- Steiner, R. (1994). *Theosophy: An introduction to the spiritual processes in human life and in the cosmos*. New York: Anthroposophic Press.

- Tacey, D. (2002). Student spirituality and educational authority. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 7(2), 171-182.
- Tarnas, R. (1993). *The passion of the western mind: Understanding the ideas that have shaped our world view*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Taylor, J. B. (2006). *My stroke of insight: A brain scientist's personal journey*. Bloomington, IN: Jill Bolte Taylor.
- Thich Nhat Hanh. (1976). *The miracle of mindfulness: An introduction to the practice of meditation*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Tisdell, E. J., & Tolliver, D. E. (2003). Claiming a sacred face: The role of spirituality and cultural identity in transformative adult higher education. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 1(4), 368-392.
- Tolle, E. (2004). *The power of now: A guide to spiritual enlightenment*. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: Namaste.
- Tolle, E. (2006) *A new earth: Awakening to your life's purpose*. New York: A Plume Book.
- van Kessel, I. (2005). *Engaging wisdom knowledge in pedagogical practice*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- Wane, N. N. (2002). African women and spirituality: Connection between thought and education. In E. O'Sullivan, A. Morrell, & M. O'Connor (Eds.), *Expanding the boundaries of transformative learning: Essays on theory and praxis* (pp. 135-150). New York: Palgrave, St. Martin's Press.
- Wane, N. N. (2007). *Theorizing empowerment: Canadian perspectives on black feminist thought*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Inanna Publications and Education.
- Wane, N. N. (2008). Mapping the field of Indigenous knowledges in anti-colonial discourse: A transformative journey in education. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 11(2), 183-197.
- Wane, N. N., & Chandler, D. J. (2002). African women, cultural knowledge and environmental education with a focus on Kenya's indigenous women. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, 7(1), 86-98.
- Wane, N. N., & Waterfall, B. (2005). Hoops of spirituality in science and technology. In P. Tripp & L. Muzzin (Eds.), *Teaching as activism: Equity meets environmentalism* (pp. 47-64). Montreal, Quebec, Canada: McGill-Queen's Press.
- Wells, S. (2003). *The journey of man: A genetic odyssey*. New York: Random House.

Wilber, K. (1983a). *Eye to eye: The quest for the new paradigm*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Wilber, K. (1983b). *A sociable God*. New York: MacGraw-Hill.

Yogananda, P. (2002). *God talks with Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita*. Los Angeles: Self-Realization Fellowship.

Ywahoo, D. (1987). *Voices of our ancestors: Cherokee teaching from the wisdom fire*. Boston: Shambhala.