

MYSTERY, EROS, AND EVOLUTION:
A VISION OF RELATIONAL PARTICIPATION
IN AN OPEN COSMOS

by

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An earlier version of "Flux and Openness: Dissolving Fixity in Whitehead's
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MYSTERY, EROS, AND EVOLUTION:
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ABSTRACT

The evolving complexity of our engagement with the world and the many challenges we now face as a numerous and technologically advanced species require us to develop a vision of reality and a way of participating within it that honors its dynamic complexity, creative potentiality, and ecological sensitivity. Drawing on the thought and vision of three inspiring and transformative thinkers who each sought to bridge the growing gap between the richness and complexity of lived experience and the barrenness and disconnection of scientific materialist philosophy—Carl Gustav Jung, Alfred North Whitehead, and Rudolf Steiner—this dissertation seeks to elaborate a relational, participatory, and evolutionary vision of reality and human existence in which individuality, relationality, and creative expression are understood as interdependent dimensions of a paradoxically single and manifold spiritual reality and evolutionary process. It then examines some of the essential implications of this emerging vision, with particular emphasis on the importance of the aesthetic, moral, and spiritual dimensions of human creative participation, including the existential participation that is inherent in thought and experience. This vision thus also suggests a fundamental shift in epistemological perspective, so that thinking and knowing

are understood as inherently relational and creative acts, which both reflect and transform the realities they engage, and which are characterized by the moral, aesthetic, and spiritual consequences that accompany all influential action.

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DEDICATION

To my son Elessar, in whose eyes the beauty of the future gleams.

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The soul is undiscovered,
though explored forever
to a depth beyond report.

—Heraclitus¹

What we do now echoes in eternity.

—Marcus Aurelius²

We have ways within each other
that will never be said by anyone.

—Rumi³

INTRODUCTION

Fuller being is closer union.

—Teilhard de Chardin⁴

Union increases only through an increase in consciousness,
that is to say in vision.

—Teilhard de Chardin⁵

Literature works from mind to mind and is thus more progenitive. It is at once
more universal and more poignantly particular.

—Tolkien⁶

We are each faced in our own way with the mystery of existence and challenged to form a meaningful relationship with this mystery, both as individuals and as collaborative participants in relationships and communities. Examining our experience reflectively, we discover an open existential and phenomenological horizon—the openness of our experience reflecting a vision of an open and mysterious reality in which we participate and to which we inseparably belong. The vision that we form of this reality is the expression of a creative existential engagement, in which we both come to know and shape reality simultaneously through our participation. Examined rigorously, our experience and its corresponding visions of reality are pervaded by interpretation and uncertainty, as they are products of our collaborative participation in an encompassing reality that we never fully comprehend. As we acknowledge both this uncertainty and the creative character of our existential participation, it becomes evident that the value of our vision consists as much in its capacity to

creatively shape reality as in its capacity for accurate reflection. Therefore the shaping of our individual and collective visions emerges as an existential act of supreme importance. Through this act we shape not only ourselves and our unique worlds but each other and the world we share together. We are therefore each responsible for shaping our own unique visions of reality and for sharing and developing these visions in relationship. And as reality as we know it is always changing, reflected in the shifting fields of our experience, we are challenged to nurture open responsive living visions, through which we can experience and shape existence together at every moment with our creative awareness and activity.

The exploration of such an evolving relational vision is the primary subject of this dissertation. In the process of this exploration, I engage the philosophical visions of three great thinkers—C.G. Jung, Alfred North Whitehead, and Rudolf Steiner—bringing them into dialogue both with each other and with my own living vision. I elaborate a novel relational vision, or creative re-envisagement, out of my engagement with each thinker, and I later bring these into creative relationship with one another, giving rise to the more encompassing integrative vision presented in this dissertation as a whole. These individual engagements and their subsequent integrations take place in a series of interrelated essays, which both stand alone and inform one another. This dissertation thus weaves together and integrates five already interrelated essays, each of which explores facets of a single vision emerging out of my engagement with the philosophies of Jung, Whitehead, and Steiner.

The first essay engages the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, suggesting some ways in which more static or separatistic elements in his philosophy could be modified to create a more fluid and relational process vision. The second essay explores the spiritual vision implicit in the depth psychology and writings of C.G. Jung, elaborating a modified vision that emerges through engaging Jung's later philosophical and spiritual reflections in the context of a more expansive participatory epistemology. The third essay integrates the visions that emerge out of the first two essays, relating the philosophies of Jung and Whitehead, and presenting a novel integrative vision of relational creative process along with a set of values that arise from it. In the fourth essay, I examine the epistemology of Rudolf Steiner, suggesting some modifications to his earlier epistemological position in the light of later comments and reflections. I also emphasize the relational character of this modified epistemology, as well as its ethical and aesthetic dimensions. In the fifth and final essay, I explore the integration of the visions emerging from the four earlier essays: in the first part of this essay I examine the commonality and complementarity of the philosophies of Jung, Whitehead, and Steiner considered on their own terms, while in the second part I present a modified integrative vision based on my previous engagements with each thinker. There are brief prefaces to each essay, which serve as bridge sections, and along with the introduction and conclusion unite them in a single exposition.

We are living in a momentous time in human and planetary history. It is a time of both crisis and tremendous creative urgency. This dissertation is offered as a contribution to the larger collective effort to birth new forms of ecological consciousness, vision, and wisdom, and corresponding ways of participating in the spiritual ecology of existence that are more life-enhancing, spiritually honoring, and beautiful.

ABBREVIATIONS

For frequently cited works, a number of shortened titles have been used, which can be identified by the following abbreviations:

Works of Alfred North Whitehead

<i>PR</i>	<i>Process and Reality</i>
<i>AI</i>	<i>Adventures of Ideas</i>
<i>MT</i>	<i>Modes of Thought</i>
<i>SMW</i>	<i>Science and the Modern World</i>
<i>RM</i>	<i>Religion in the Making</i>

Works of Rudolf Steiner

<i>IT</i>	<i>Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path</i>
<i>Stages</i>	<i>Stages of Higher Knowledge</i>
<i>Theos</i>	<i>Theosophy</i>
<i>HW</i>	<i>How to Know Higher Worlds</i>
<i>Outline</i>	<i>Outline of Esoteric Science</i>
<i>S-K</i>	<i>A Way of Self-Knowledge</i>
<i>Threshold</i>	<i>The Threshold of the Spiritual World</i>
<i>Auto</i>	<i>Autobiography</i>

Works of C.G. Jung

<i>MDR</i>	<i>Memories, Dreams, Reflections</i>
<i>Mysterium</i>	<i>Mysterium Coniunctionis</i>
<i>Alchemy</i>	<i>Psychology and Alchemy</i>
<i>Symbols</i>	<i>Symbols of Transformation</i>

"Nature of Psyche"	"On the Nature of the Psyche"
"Synchronicity"	"Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle"
"Complex"	"A Review of the Complex Theory"
"Transcendent Function"	"The Transcendent Function"
"Undiscovered Self"	"The Undiscovered Self"
"Individuation"	"Conscious, Unconscious, and Individuation"
"Relations"	"The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious"
"Core"	"Psychological Aspects of the Core"
"Job"	"Answer to Job"
"Psychological Foundations"	"Psychological Foundations of Belief in Spirits"

Miscellaneous Authors

<i>Archetypal Process</i>	David Ray Griffin, ed., <i>Archetypal Process: Self and Divine in Whitehead, Jung, and Hillman</i>
"Once More"	Stanley R. Hopper, "Once More: The Cavern Beneath the Cave"
<i>Cosmos and Psyche</i>	Richard Tarnas, <i>Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View</i>
<i>Fabric</i>	Brian Greene, <i>The Fabric of the Cosmos: Space, Time, and the Texture of Reality</i>
<i>Phenomenon of Man</i>	Teilhard de Chardin, <i>The Phenomenon of Man</i>

PREFACE TO CHAPTER ONE

We dream of traveling through the universe—but is not
the universe *within ourselves*?

—Novalis⁷

In its deeper heart time is transfiguration.

—O'Donohue⁸

And you are ever and again the wave
sweeping through all things.

—Rilke⁹

This first essay engages the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead as articulated in his later writings. I was drawn to Whitehead's philosophy because it offers an alternative to the reductive scientific materialist paradigm, seeking to honor the fundamentally relational, creative, and feeling dimensions of existence within the context of a conceptually rigorous and nuanced process-based vision of reality. I also recognized in it a kinship with my own evolving vision, which similarly conceived existence in terms of feeling, relationship, and dynamic creativity. However, in engaging his vision, I found that there were elements of fixity and separation that seemed to be residues of earlier and more static modes of philosophical thinking. These elements seemed to undermine the coherency of his vision and obscure the more fluid and dynamic vision I sensed looming behind his more systematically structured exposition and verbal formulations. This essay therefore seeks to deconstruct some of the conceptual structures and sharp categorical distinctions that perpetuate these more static and separatistic modes of thinking, and to suggest an alternative vision in

which all of existence can be understood as a seamless process of dynamic creative interrelationship and feeling. This is the most sharply focused essay, insofar as it deals primarily with the elements in Whitehead's philosophy that seem to be in need of creative re-conceptualization along the lines I have indicated. In later essays, I return to Whitehead and expand my discussion to include other aspects of his vision that I find valuable and inspiring.

CHAPTER ONE: FLUX AND OPENNESS: DISSOLVING FIXITY IN
WHITEHEADS VISION OF PROCESS

The closed system is the death of living understanding.

—Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 83

No actuality is a static fact.

—Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 90

In separation all meaning evaporates.

—Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 97

Over the course of his later lectures and writings, Whitehead articulates an evolving metaphysical vision in which process and relationship, rather than stasis and independent fixity, are primary. In elaborating a novel process philosophy, he develops a rich tradition whose written origins trace back through Heraclitus in the West, integrating his own contemplative insights with understandings gleaned from the physics and mathematics of his age. The vision he offers is both creatively inspiring and compensatory to the dominant scientific paradigm, incorporating a much needed emphasis on feeling, relationality, and creative process. Whitehead thus performs a valuable philosophical service, pointing the way towards liberation from certain constraining assumptions and habits of thought. However, there are components of his vision that retain elements of fixity and separateness. I find these to be the aspects of his philosophy that are the most problematic, both with respect to internal conceptual coherency, and in relation to my own philosophical and spiritual intuition. My intention is to elucidate some of the ways in which these components of his philosophy are

problematic, and to present an alternative vision in which these elements of fixity and ontological separateness dissolve into a dynamic openness of flux and interrelationship.

Whitehead has been described as a philosopher who is always thinking freshly (Hopper, "Once More," 107), and in keeping with this he makes various remarks on the same subject in different contexts, which suggest somewhat differing conceptions of the topic under discussion. In approaching Whitehead's philosophical writings, therefore, I will not assume a single set of fixed conceptions—a static system—but rather a more flexible and variable collection of perspectives and ideas that collectively constitute a philosophical vision. This is in keeping with Whitehead's insight that, "rationalism is an adventure in the clarification of thought, progressive and never final" (*PR*, 9). Where variation in the treatment of a specific concept seems relevant to my project, I will make note of it. My sense, however, is that there is enough consistency in his thinking and writings that a relatively coherent vision can be presented without the need for frequent or excessive qualification. Conversely, some of the revisions I suggest are in relation to elements of Whitehead's vision that he himself seems to have questioned, so that perhaps they were not intended as fixed conceptions, and their revisioning and evolution is consistent with the dynamic and multidimensional character of his thinking. In conducting my analysis, I refrain from explicating technical aspects of his metaphysical vision that do not have direct bearing on my discussion. The vision that emerges therefore constitutes only a single interpretation and creative evolution of his philosophy, and inevitably one that

cannot do full justice to the richness, variability, and complexity of his thinking. My hope is that the treatment of his philosophy that follows, and the modified vision that arises, are at least in keeping with the broader spirit of his life and writings.

Basic Elements in Whitehead's Vision

There are a number of basic concepts in Whitehead's metaphysical vision—many of them designated by specific terms that Whitehead coined or appropriated—whose meanings are interrelated. One of the most central of these is that of the *actual entity*, or *actual occasion*. Whitehead describes actual entities as “the final real things of which the world is made up,” and as “drops of experience, complex and interdependent” (*PR*, 118). Actual entities are formed through a process that Whitehead calls *concrecence*, in which all of the elements in the universe out of which the entity emerges are brought into a novel unity of feeling through an act of creative synthesis. The actual entity has a dual identity: as the dynamic process of feeling which culminates, through the *satisfaction* of its *subjective aim*, in the completion of a novel entity—what Whitehead calls the *superject*—and as that completed entity itself, which achieves *objective immortality*, in that it becomes permanently available as an object in the concrecent processes of future actual entities.

The completed actual entity, when it functions as an object for synthesis in the concrecent process of a new actual entity, is *prehended* by that entity. Prehension is the basic form of perceptual feeling in Whitehead's philosophy, more fundamental and simple than sense perception. An objectified actual

occasion is always prehended in a particular way which constitutes its *subjective form* in the prehending occasion. This subjective form cannot be understood without reference to the subjective aim of the actual entity in which the object is prehended.

Prehensions can be either positive or negative: A positive prehension constitutes a *feeling* for the prehending subject in question—the actual entity—while a negative prehension eliminates the prehended object from being actively felt in any further stage in the concrescence of that subject. The way in which multiple objectified actual entities are prehended in the concrescent process of a newly forming actual entity involves them in what Whitehead calls *contrasts*—the patterns of interrelationship through which they enter into a unity of feeling in the prehending subject. The formation of novel patterns of contrast is part of what constitutes the creative originality of the newly forming actual entity in question. It is possible to have contrasts of contrasts, and contrasts of contrasts of contrasts, ad infinitum. This allows for a potentially illimitable complexity in the formation of new existential forms.

Actual entities are interconnected by virtue of their prehensions of each other. A specific complex of interconnected actual entities, which is actual and particular in the same way that an actual entity is actual and particular, is termed a *nexus*. A nexus which is characterized by a commonality of form between the entities that constitute it, and in which this commonality of form is derived from the positive prehension of antecedent members of the nexus, is called a *society*. A society of entities which is constituted through a series of direct temporal

successions has *personal order*, and is termed an *enduring object*. Actual entities, prehensions, and nexūs constitute what Whitehead describes as “the ultimate facts of immediate actual experience.” “All else,” he explains, “is, for our experience, derivative abstraction” (*PR*, 20). However, these derivative abstractions form an essential element in Whitehead’s metaphysical vision.

The central “abstractions” of Whitehead’s vision are termed *eternal objects*. Eternal objects are conceived as “pure potentials,” or “forms of definiteness,” which are capable of exemplification in the formation of actual entities. The inclusion of a specific eternal object in an actual entity is termed the *ingression* of that object. The prehension of an eternal object by an actual entity, by means of which that object is ingressed, is termed a *conceptual feeling*; this is contrasted with the prehension of another actual entity, which is termed a *physical feeling*. A *proposition*, which is a pattern of prehension that includes both physical and conceptual feelings, is termed an *impure prehension*, as it fuses prehension of an eternal object, or set of eternal objects, with prehension of an actual entity, or nexūs. The eternal objects involved in a proposition are restricted to just those aspects that relate to the actual entities or nexūs with which they are conjoined, while the actual entities or nexūs are represented only in so far as they exemplify the pattern that the limited application of the eternal objects indicates within the proposition. A proposition thus represents a real possibility for feeling, which may or may not be actualized. The importance of a proposition is not determined primarily by its truth value, but rather as a lure for creative realization.

As with the subjects of "pure" prehensions, a proposition can be prehended positively or negatively.

The eternal objects are infinite in number, and are internally related, in that a dimension of their essence is constituted by their interrelatedness (*SMW*, 160). It is also of their essence to have a potentiality for ingression in actual occasions, although their essence is neutral with respect to ingression in any particular occasion. Eternal objects can be simple or complex: a complex eternal object involves a particular set of relationships between other eternal objects, which may themselves be simple or complex (*SMW*, 166). Eternal objects are eternal in that they themselves do not change; there can be no new eternal objects. Without ingression into actual entities they are deficient in actuality.

At first glance, the concept of eternal objects would seem to violate what Whitehead terms *the ontological principle*, that whatever is real has its reality only in relation to the constitution of some actual entity or set of actual entities: "nothing floats into reality from nowhere" (*PR*, 244). However, Whitehead explains that the eternal objects have their reality in what he terms *the primordial nature of God*. In fact, the primordial nature of God is often defined in terms of being "the unconditioned conceptual valuation of the entire multiplicity of eternal objects" (*PR*, 31). According to Whitehead, it is by virtue of this conceptual valuation that "there is an order in the relevance of eternal objects for the process of creation" (*PR*, 344). Although the eternal objects, as pure potentials, are not conceived as having any causal efficacy or creative agency of their own, they are

described as existing in the primordial mind of God as “lures for feeling” (*PR*, 86).

The primordial nature of God, as Whitehead conceives it, has no spatiotemporal existence; for this reason, it is often referred to as “the non-temporal actual entity” (*PR*, 46). The primordial nature of God is also conceived as deficient in actuality, as it lacks both physical feeling and consciousness (*PR*, 343). Given this characterization, it may seem questionable in what way the primordial nature of God can be thought of as constituting an actual entity. This description seems almost to beg the question, “but where is the primordial nature of God?” In this sense the primordial nature of God, as well as the eternal objects that reside there, seems to be an instance of what Whitehead refers to as the “fallacy of misplaced concreteness,” which is the confusion between an abstract concept and an actuality (*SMW*, 51). This is an issue I will return to in my later analysis.

Like actual entities, God in Whitehead’s philosophy has a twofold nature. In addition to his primordial nature, just briefly introduced, which is conceived as unchanging and therefore, “non-temporal,” God is also conceived as possessing a consequent nature, which is continually evolving. The *consequent nature of God* is constituted through a synthesis of the physical prehensions of the entities that compose the evolving actual world with the conceptual feelings that constitute his primordial nature, thereby giving rise to a novel actual entity in which all of the elements that compose the actual world achieve a transcendent unity and attain objective immortality. Without the comprehensive perception of the consequent

nature of God, completed entities would perish and would not be available as objects for future prehension and synthesis.

Again this discordant multiplicity of actual things, requiring each other and neglecting each other, utilizing and discarding, perishing and yet claiming life as obstinate matter of fact, requires an enlargement of the understanding to the comprehension of another phase in the nature of things. In this later phase, the many actualities are one actuality, and the one actuality is many actualities. Each actuality has its present life and its immediate passage into novelty; but its passage is not its death. This final phase of passage in God's nature is ever enlarging itself. In it the complete adjustment of the immediacy of joy and suffering reaches the final end of creation. This end is existence in the perfect unity of adjustment as means, and in the perfect multiplicity of the attainment of individual types of self-existence. The function of being a means is not disjoined from the function of being an end. The sense of worth beyond itself is immediately enjoyed as an overpowering element in the individual self-attainment. It is in this way that the immediacy of sorrow and pain is transformed into an element of triumph. This is the notion of redemption through suffering which haunts the world. (*PR*, 349–350)

In the case of the consequent nature of God, the actualities of a given instance are integrated both with the actualities of the past, which have already achieved objective immortality in a previous incarnation of God's consequent nature, and with the infinite realm of conceptual feelings that constitute God's primordial ordering and valuation of the eternal objects.

Because of what Whitehead refers to as the "perfection of God's subjective aim" (*PR*, 345), every entity in the actual world enters into a harmony of feeling in which its best elements are preserved and intensified, its immediate potentials realized, and its flaws diminished into faintness and obscurity. In this way, the consequent nature of God combines unity, multiplicity, immediacy, creative advance, and immortality. Every new wave of concrescence in the actual world gives rise to a novel adjustment in the consequent nature of God, so what is

freshly completed is integrated into a new harmony with the immortality of the past. Thus it is by way of his physical prehension of the actualities that constitute the temporal world that God attains the completion of his nature, actualizing what in his primordial nature is pure potential.

God's consequent nature, at whatever stage in its progressive development, is prehended as one among other completed actual entities by those entities who are in the process of concrescence in the moment following his most recent satisfaction. Thus God's feeling of the world at one instance is itself felt by other entities in the instance of concrescence that follows, so that his novel contributions are added to the world of creative flux, as well as being preserved in his own objective immortality. This means that every entity in process of concrescence prehends both the primordial nature of God—in a selection of graded relevance of the eternal objects for ingression in that creative synthesis—and the consequent nature of God, which includes the objective immortality of the completed past up to that point, and includes these elements in its own novel satisfaction.

A foundational concept which has been implicit in what has been introduced thus far but not elucidated in its own right, is the notion of *creativity* itself. Creativity is what replaces the notion of matter as the most basic character of actuality. It is the “universal of universals,” which cannot be characterized because “all characters are more special than itself,” and the “principle of novelty,” whereby the universe in its character as a multiplicity of entities achieves a novel unity of feeling in each new entity. Creativity is thus embodied

in the continual procession of the *creative advance*, whereby in each successive situation a multiplicity of unique entities is synthesized into a multiplicity of novel unities of feeling. The primordial nature of God, in its “unconditioned conceptual valuation of the entire multiplicity of eternal objects,” is itself described as “the primordial created fact,” and as both a “creature of creativity” and a “condition for creativity” (*PR*, 31). The ordering of the infinite realm of possibilities in the primordial nature of God is thus conceived as the one creative act which is unconditioned by any particular actuality, though it presupposes “the general metaphysical character of creative advance” (*PR*, 344).

Creativity always presupposes some degree of freedom from the influence of the past in the formation of a novel unity, though in many cases the degree of creative freedom exercised in an occasion is so negligible as to be almost non-existent. Creative freedom is generally exemplified in creative originality. It is thus the character of higher forms of actual entities that they exercise greater creative originality, and in so doing, greater freedom. It is thus also part of the character of every entity that it is a cause of itself, in the formal sense, and therefore that it transcends every other actual entity, including God (*PR*, 222). Because the active element of freedom in a creative actualization (in the concrescence of an actual entity) is not fully determined by antecedent causes—by the extensive structure of the actual world—it follows that the creative act itself cannot be entirely situated within the realm of extension: “the doctrine is enunciated that the creature is extensive, but that its act of becoming is not extensive” (*PR*, 69). Stated thus, without qualification, this would seem to

constitute a contradiction, since Whitehead says elsewhere that the actual entity is its process of becoming (*PR*, 23). Perhaps it would be more accurate to say, therefore, that an actual entity as the process of its concrescence cannot be localized in the world of extension, but that as an object for prehension in the concrescent process of future occasions, it has spatiotemporal position and extension.¹⁰

Another important concept in Whitehead's metaphysical vision, which has some relevance to my discussion, is that of the *extensive continuum*. Whitehead describes it in the following way:

This extensive continuum is one relational complex in which all potential objectifications find their niche. It underlies the whole world, past, present, and future. . . This extensive continuum expresses the solidarity of all possible standpoints throughout the whole process of the world. It is not a fact prior to the world; it is the first determination of order—that is, of real potentiality—arising out of the general character of the world. . . It is the reality of what is potential, in its character of a real component of what is actual. (*PR*, 66)

The extensive continuum is the realm of potentiality in its relationship to actuality. It is constituted by the interrelationship between the realms of possibility that exist in relation to each actual entity, each of which occupies a unique relative "standpoint." It includes the prehensive interconnections between entities, both potential and actual, and the corresponding emergent continuums of extensive spatiotemporal relationships, with their potential for indefinite extension and division. Because the extensive continuum includes the entire realm of what is possible from the standpoint of what is actual, it contains contrary potentialities. There is an openness to the continuum that is not subject to

foreclosure by any conceivable procession of concretescent actualizations.

Whatever is ultimately actualized is therefore only a limited subset of the extensive continuum.

A single actual entity "atomizes" the continuum, in that it establishes a discrete pattern of actualization that divides the continuum into distinctively realized elements, thereby eliminating contrary potentials, and providing a realized relational context into which future entities must integrate themselves. In so doing the actualized entity, by virtue of its physical relationship with other entities, establishes a specific space-time region within the continuum; although paradoxically, each entity is also present throughout the continuum. Since the continuum contains all possible relationships between all possible entities, is itself prehended by every entity, and carries each of these prehensions of itself as an essential element of its nature, all possible relationships between all possible entities—and therefore also the continuum itself—are present within each entity. "Thus the continuum is present in each actual entity, and each actual entity pervades the continuum" (*PR*, 67).

Analysis and Revisioning

There are a number of assumptions and unqualified distinctions in Whitehead's philosophy that seem to be questionable, problematic, or unnecessary. One of the first of these is the assumption that there are separate individual entities with fixed forms. One question which immediately arises in relationship to the notion of actual entities is: What is it that constitutes their finality and separateness? How is the creative process which constitutes them

encapsulated? Whitehead describes them as “complex and interdependent,” but this interdependence is to be understood in a limited and particular way: They are interdependent by virtue of their prehensions of each other. However, the sequential prehension of actual entities, as understood by Whitehead, already assumes their distinctness; contemporary entities cannot prehend each other. Only completed actual entities can be prehended, so that the creative syntheses involved in the concrescent processes of actual entities are supposed to take place in isolation from one another. Thus they are conceived as mutually implicated, but also as somehow enjoying a finite, separate, and circumscribed existence. This still leaves the question, how are the creative processes of actual entities separated from one another?

It is an important element in Whitehead’s vision that actual entities enjoy some measure of creative freedom over and above the causal determination they receive from the completed entities that constitute their inherited past. Where does this freedom come from? Whitehead derives this freedom from the causal independence of contemporary entities: That in their process of self-formation they are separated from one another, and therefore free from mutual influence (*AI*, 195, 198). This explanation is connected to the conception, mentioned previously, that the process of formation of an actual entity takes place outside the extensive continuum. This raises the question, however, of how the actual entity comes into being as an independent entity, and raises again the question as to what constitutes its separateness. It also raises the question as to how it is possible for a creative process to take place outside of a spatiotemporal continuum.

The somewhat paradoxical response to the first two questions—as to how an entity arises and what constitutes its separateness—is that it is the unbounded creativity of existence that responds to the novel situation in relation to which the formation of a novel entity takes place. The entity is formed in relation to the parameters provided by the extensive character of the immediately inherited past, and is in this sense limited by the character of the past it inherits, but it is free in its creative response in relation to these parameters. It is through its process of self-formation that it becomes a distinctive entity, emerging from unbounded creativity into a particular novel form of feeling and creative relationship within the universe of entities in which it is situated. However, if all contemporary entities participate in this same unbounded creativity, beyond the extensive parameters that otherwise determine and limit their interrelationships, they would seem to be united rather than separated through this mutual participation. In this sense all entities, regardless of their extensive spatiotemporal relationships, would be eternally united through participation in the unbounded creativity of existence, and their relative measure of separateness and independence would belong to the gradual emergence of distinctive forms of self-formation, and to the limited dimension of their emergent extensive structures. Even at the level of extensive relations, as Whitehead makes clear (*PR*, 67), all entities are united through their mutual pervasion of the extensive continuum.

If the freedom of an actual entity is derived from its participation in the fundamental openness and dynamism of creativity itself, this implies that there is no final separation in the realm of creativity: It is less true to say that an entity is

independently the cause of itself, than it is to say that it is the emergent self-manifestation of a creativity that it is beyond itself, and therefore constitutes its larger identity. All entities would be connected through their participation in this trans-temporal dimension of creativity, and would therefore be mutually implicated in their creative processes. It would therefore also be true to say that all contemporary entities—and perhaps all entities throughout the entire creative procession—cause each other, and share their deepest identities with one another.¹¹ If there is a dimension of unbounded openness to creativity, then the creative act cannot be entirely localized or isolated. In its widest and deepest nature, each actual entity would be one with the unbounded openness of creativity itself—and with all other entities—while expressing its nature in a uniquely individualized experience and manifestation. Thus self-determination, which is essential to the freedom of an actual entity, is also determined by the openness and dynamism of creativity itself, which constitutes the largest self-hood of any given entity. This largest identity therefore paradoxically encompasses all selfhoods and creative processes. All entities are united through their participation in creativity, and are differentiated by their unique individual modes and contexts of participation.

Whitehead locates the realm of infinite possibilities in the primordial mind of God, and attributes the potentiality for creative advance to the opportunity for prehension of these pure possibilities, in the form of eternal objects. However, the concept of the primordial nature of God, and of eternal objects, creates its own

problems. This conception of freedom requires that the unbounded creative openness of existence be dependent on a type of existence that is static and fixed.

In relation to the notion of the primordial nature of God, the questions must be posed, where does it come from, where is it, and in what sense is it real? I would also pose the question, is it necessary, or helpful? What in our experience implies or suggests it? All of these questions apply just as much to the notion of eternal objects as pure potentials enjoying an unchanging existence in the primordial nature of God. Is there really such a thing as a pure possibility, and if so, how would we know it as such? Both notions involve epistemological as well as logical difficulties. The primordial nature of God is described as the “primordial created fact” (*PR*, 31), but this does nothing to offer an explanation of how it came to be, or how it is possible. It seems rather to be that which must be accepted on faith. However, I see no reason for doing so. The concept of a realm that is strictly unchanging, which must somehow interact with a realm of change, sets up an unnecessary dualism, with all of the difficulties which this brings.

The idea that the primordial nature of God contains all possibilities in a static form also means that whatever is realized in the temporal world is merely the actualization of a complex static potentiality: No true novelty of form is possible. I would suggest that there is no “primordial nature of God” as thus conceived, and that there are no “pure potentials”—no eternal objects—either. Both seem to be instances of what Whitehead terms the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, or the “error of mistaking the abstract for the concrete” (*SMW*, 51). Though there are patterns that can be abstracted from our experience and have

wide application and conceptual continuity through and across processes, such as numerical relationships and geometric shapes, these are inseparable from the actual world of creativity and experience in which they occur, and do not exist somewhere in a static and independent form. Thus, though they enjoy a high degree of continuity across creative processes, they continue to change and take on subtly different attributes depending on their creative context.

I would suggest that rather than a static realm of fixed potentials, there is a dynamic openness in which both possibility and actuality exist together along a continuum.¹² Potentiality and actuality would together constitute an inseparable reality, in which every actuality enjoys its nature in relation to a dynamic background of integral potentialities, and every potentiality enjoys some degree of actualization. In this sense to be a potential would mean to be ingredient in the actual procession of Creativity, always in relation to some actual occasion or group of occasions in process of creative formation. This understanding avoids the unnecessary duality of the fixed and the changing, and allows every element of existence to be understood in terms of dynamic relational process. It thereby seeks to avoid the fallacy of misplaced concreteness and more fully honor Whitehead's ontological principle, that "everything is positively somewhere in actuality" (*PR*, 40)—meaning within the actual world or subjectivity of some actual entity (*PR*, 24)—since in this conception this need not involve a static entity, the primordial nature of God, that is "deficiently actual" in so far as it lacks both physical feelings and consciousness (*PR*, 343).

Another aspect of the problem concerning the independence and fixity of actual entities has to do with Whitehead's conception and treatment of time. Following the traditional philosophical and commonsense understanding, Whitehead assumes that time is basically linear—insofar as it has a unidirectional vector character—and that the past is fixed and completed, while the future is as yet unformed (*PR*, 337). He also integrates his own understanding of the relativity of space and time, in partial accordance with Einstein's theory of relativity (*PR*, 66). However, Whitehead also sees space and time in the context of his process philosophy as emergent extensive qualities derived from the successive patterned prehensions of actual entities (*PR*, 289). That is, space and time are not the basic elements of existence, or even of extension—which is constituted by the emergent scheme of potential relationships to other entities (*PR*, 67), nor are they necessary qualities belonging to any conceivable actual entity. Rather they are patterns of relatedness which emerge as dominating structural forms of the current epoch of creative manifestation (*PR*, 289). Space and time express the extensive relationship between the physical dimensions of those actual entities which collectively constitute the physical world. The essential creative activity of an entity and the feeling quality which is inseparable from this activity are not expressible in terms of space and time, and are not bound by the space-time parameters which define the superject of the actual entity in its extensive physical relations with other entities (*PR*, 69).

For Whitehead, as already mentioned, the actual entity does not form itself in space and time. Though an actual entity is structured in relation to the

spatiotemporal parameters of its extensive environment, and contains within it the spatiotemporal extensive patterns of the objects it prehends, actual entities are not fundamentally divisible in terms of space or time. The form of a completed actual entity is part of a relational matrix that constitutes the extensive world, and reflects the pre-existent extensive structure in relation to which the entity forms. Thus, though spatiotemporal dimension is internal to an actual entity, in the sense that it is derived from the ways in which other objects in the environment are prehended in that entity, it is not the defining character of the entity as a process of feeling, and it expresses only a limited dimension of its prehensive relations. Space and time as they are generally approached in scientific measurement and discourse are functional abstractions from the actual prehensive relationships, giving the appearance and functional significance of extensive external relationships.

According to Whitehead's philosophy of organism, time at the most basic level is derived from the creative advance, in which actual occasions serve as formative causes and transmit something of their own form and feeling to subsequent occasions (*PR*, 237). In this sense actual occasions precede each other in time. However, according to Whitehead, time emerges as a distinctive and recognizable feature of the relations between entities by virtue of the endurance of patterns of form in successive occasions. If it were not for enduring entities, or temporal societies formed by the substantial repetition of basic patterns of feeling in successive occasions, the discrimination of time would not be a significant factor in experience. Time is primarily a description of the modifications of form

observable in successive occasions, and belongs to the internal constitution of a single entity almost exclusively in respect to its representation of these modifications among the entities it objectifies. However, in the context of an enduring entity and relatively coherent space-time continuum, the negligible durations of each entity, which reflect its relationship to that continuum—and which are not necessarily symmetrical with one another—combine to form a discernible time duration, and to occupy a specific region in the pervading continuum. Because the universe which is readily observable from a human perspective is constituted almost entirely of enduring patterns, the conformation of creative process with temporal succession seems to be nearly complete. However, at the level of the smallest configurations of energy posited by theoretical physics, and in the earliest beginnings of the inception of our universe as currently hypothesized, conditions seem to prevail in which the discrimination of a consistent space-time is not possible (Greene, *Fabric* 334). There is activity, but no clear temporal procession. According to Whitehead's vision, our universe is pervaded by events that do not conform to clear serial order, or belong to a discernible society of any kind, and therefore do not emerge into the field of observation of complex organisms such as ourselves. However, at the level of activity at which most observation takes place, the unfolding of events conforms to the contours imposed upon it by the extensive character of the physical universe, which involves a measurable space-time continuum. The scientifically observable world, and the world of sense impressions, is primarily a world of enduring objects, abstracted from the more ephemeral flux (*PR*, 92, 326).

It is the nature of the extensive space-time continuum, thus conceived, that it is divisible from any given perspective into particular space-time units, which actual entities constitute and occupy, though the actual world of which the extensive continuum is an emergent dimension is constituted and atomized only by actual occasions, which in their distinctiveness are indivisible (*PR*, 62). A single occasion in this extensive context is primarily identified in terms of its spatial relations, though it participates in a temporal sequence; but an enduring entity is identifiable in terms of its spatiotemporal relationships within its shifting environment, including potentially measurable relative time durations. Every type of individual existence or process for which we have a name in our ordinary language is constituted by an enduring entity, or society of enduring entities (*PR*, 92). Even an electron or a wave of light is an enduring entity, or enduring society, since according to Whitehead, a single actual entity which is partially constitutive of such a form would not have a sufficient endurance to be observed or measured.

However, it is difficult to conceive of a process or activity as not taking place in time, in the broader sense, since time in its essence seems to be connected with the process of change and formation. Given that we accept Whitehead's broadest notion of time in terms of the succession of occasions, and his notion of physical time as primarily describing the modifications of form in the relationships between enduring entities—with the completed forms of actual entities implicated in a particular extensive space-time structure—it still seems possible to posit another understanding of time which characterizes the processes through which actual entities are formed and allows for a multi-directional flow of

creative activity through and beyond the space-time parameters which characterize the completed forms of actual entities. I would suggest, therefore, a third understanding of time, which is not strictly linear, which describes the movement and change inherent in the multi-directional formative processes enacted by creativity, and which allows actual entities to enjoy a temporal creative life beyond the confines of ordinary physical space-time.¹³ These three conceptions of time may help to account for the differing experiences of time which have been noted by many individuals.¹⁴ The second understanding—emergent extensive time—corresponds to a more impersonal, regular, linear, and strictly measurable experience of time, which governs all scientifically observable phenomena in the physical world, and which governs our calendars, clock time, and daily schedules. The first and third—which govern the procession of creativity from occasion to occasion and the internal formative process of occasions respectively—are more qualitative and variable, and reflect the patterns of creative feeling which constitute and underlie our experience, and therefore show considerable variability in relation to our state of mind and the alterations of our consciousness. This is perhaps most marked in the experience of time during dreams, which involve occasions of experience that are less bound to material processes than our ordinary waking sensory perceptions.

Uniting these three conceptions of time,¹⁵ we can conceive of the extensive physical time that Whitehead describes as the primary formative current directing all observable physical processes, which emerges out of the more fundamental, multi-directional flow of creative activity in which it arises. Because

any given creative process may be permeated by multiple creative currents, it cannot be entirely situated within the place assigned to it within the space-time continuum established by the dominant extensive current. Each of these alternative currents constitutes a pathway of interrelatedness that diminishes the ultimate separateness of each creative process, and unites all creative process within a more open field of creative dynamism. This understanding of creative process is basically inherent in Whitehead philosophy, but is not conceived in terms of time, and the inter-connective dynamism it implies is obscured by his treatment of time as a strictly unidirectional factor limiting the interrelatedness of actual entities to sequential relationships.

According to Whitehead's view, whatever is actualized comes into a concrete and unalterable form, which on its own would perish from existence, but is preserved through its objectification in other entities—most notably the consequent nature of God, so that it becomes permanently available for prehension in future actualizations. However, if time is as also a continual procession, it cannot be frozen into separate moments, and different creative processes require each other in order to exist. Thus there is an openness created by the flow of creativity itself which Whitehead's view of actual entities does not seem to adequately reflect. If the flow of creativity is a continual transmission, without division into separate momentary bits, then the discrete objectification of separate entities is not needed to explain how various processes of creative actualization are connected. In fact, it becomes more natural to see them as

interpenetrating threads of continuous creativity, that do not admit of any strict separation.¹⁶

Even in Whitehead's vision, the ways in which a so-called "completed" actual entity will be prehended in the creative syntheses of the future always remain open, so that this aspect of its fuller nature is eternally undecided. The specific way in which an entity is prehended and integrated within the concrescent process of another entity changes the distinctive pattern of the prehended entity, so that it is not preserved in a self-identical form, but is necessarily transfigured. Even in the consequent nature of God as conceived by Whitehead, there is an endless series of harmonious adjustments which "save," but nonetheless transform the various entities in their internal and mutual relations. If an entity is partially defined by its relationship to its larger creative context, and this larger context is continually changing, then the entity itself must change within this context. Also, it is possible to conceive of prehended entities as enjoying an active and ongoing creative life within the newly forming entity in which they are prehended, so that rather than being simply subjectless objects of perception and representation, they are dynamic co-creative constituents in the life of the emerging entity, thereby rendering the concrescent process more fundamentally co-creative in nature. Therefore it is the joint treatment of an actual entity as if it were a droplet of experience frozen in a static extensive matrix, and as if its creativity were somehow entirely encapsulated, that makes it appear to be fixed and totally distinctive. Otherwise an actual entity would appear more as a semi-localized pattern of creative actualization whose fullest nature is eternally open and

includes the entire cosmos. A visual metaphor for this conception would be the point of a cone whose base spreads out into the openness of the cosmos. A more dynamic metaphor, suggested by a modified vision in which the elements of creative actualization are conceived as ongoing processes of creativity, would envision these points rather as ripples within the continuous currents of a primordially unbounded river.

If the possibility is entertained that time is not strictly linear, and that what we call the past, present, and future may all be happening, as it were, “simultaneously,” or from some perspective or other, then an even more dynamic picture of the nature of actuality emerges. It is even possible to conceive of all temporal process, including the “past,” as continually unfolding and changing, so that the unbounded openness of reality would include a seamlessness of flux through a multiplicity of spatiotemporal dimensions which are themselves always in flux. This could be conceived in at least two distinctive and coherent ways: the past can be seen as living and changing within the creative flux of the present; and all temporal creative process can be seen as taking place in an ongoing way with its own distinctive dimensionality, all such processes and their corresponding dimensionalities being dynamically interrelated.¹⁷ In either case there would be no absolute fixity attached to actuality, nor would there be a basis for any ultimate separation between the elements of creative actualization. Entities could therefore be conceived as existing along a continuum of individual distinctiveness and undifferentiated unity, in which some form of both individual distinctiveness and relational unity is always present. Interpenetrating, semi-localized patterns of

dynamic actuality would enjoy their largest identities in the unbounded openness of creative flux, and would be subject to change even in the most localized and concrete aspects of their manifestation. They would, as Heraclitus has suggested, be currents in a river which never ceases flowing through time, yet is ever new in every rippling dimension.¹⁸ It is this more dynamic vision of time that increasingly appeals to my own philosophical intuition, and that I believe may actually be more coherent with the spirit of Whitehead's own vision.

However, even within the context of this more dynamic understanding of time, most of the functional temporal relationships observed in everyday experience would be preserved. Because of the almost complete conformity of extensive process to a dominant time current, any changes that might take place in the past from a given perspective would be negligible and difficult to discern. The most meaningful and discernible changes would involve the relationship between elements of the past and those of the unfolding present. These would primarily be experienced as transformations in meaning, so that past creative configurations take on a new meaning in the context of the shifting experience of the present. There would still be substantial and meaningful truth to be discovered in our relationship to our past, but this truth would not be completely fixed and unchanging in its subtle dimensions. Since every element of existence is what it is by virtue of its relationship to everything else, and this pattern of relationship is always changing, nothing remains eternally fixed and unchanging. However, the prevalent continuity of relationship which characterizes our existence allows for

meaningful and accurate discernments, which retain their truth value provided they are understood in a relative, rather than an absolute sense.

Another way of understanding Whitehead's conception of actual entities and concrescence has to do with his vision of creativity as a continual process of pulsation. In every concrescence the entire actualized universe collapses into an individual center of novel creative synthesis, which is the actual entity. Although the concrescent process does not take place within time, as Whitehead conceives it, and is not divisible in time, it is configured according to extensive space-time parameters, and its superject occupies distinctive space-time regions from specific relativistic perspectives. Whitehead makes it a point that his cosmology must do justice to the atomistic perspective of the modern physics of his time, in which "modern physicists see energy transferred in definite quanta" (*PR*, 238–239). This may be among the primary reasons that actual entities are conceived by Whitehead as being discrete, and achieving a final and unalterable form, despite their interdependence. The separation of the creative process into specific pulsations of energy requires that actual entities have a final termination in the process of their formation as extensively expressed, and also in the character of their superject as it becomes available for objectification in the concrescent process of future entities.¹⁹

Whitehead notes that in the progression of scientific thought there is a successive revision of previous assumptions regarding the level at which the fundamental atomic elements are to be located, and this in the direction of ever smaller and more elusive atomic structures and processes. From atoms to sub-

atomic particles, to mysterious quanta of energy, there seems to be a movement away from viewing discrete physical particles as the most fundamental elements of existence, and towards a complex and mysterious interplay of energetic processes variously understood in terms of waves, particles, vibrations, and fields (Greene, *Fabric*, 254–256). It seems highly questionable to me whether the atomic model provides the most fundamental and accurate basis for understanding the ultimate nature of reality. It seems more likely that, as Whitehead's own vision of process suggests, dynamic interconnection and relationship will prove to be a more fundamental principle underlying the existence of individual entities, and that atomic structures eventually dissolve into patterns of interconnection that are not definable in terms of atomic elements. I am therefore challenging the notion that the fundamental elements of existence need to be discrete, either in their separation from other elements, or in the attainment of a concrete and unalterable form which is defined by a final point of termination. Freed from these strictures, actual entities can be conceived as inseparable and continuous elements in a holistic and relational creative process. Their discreteness can be conceived as existing along a continuum, in which some measure of dynamic openness, indeterminacy, and relational unity with the larger creative process always remains. They can also be conceived as having multiple aspects, or dimensions, some of which are more discrete and localized, and some of which are more pervasive and unbounded, but which cannot ultimately be separated from one another, and are united through the fundamental openness and dynamism that pervades them.

If there are no entirely discrete actual entities, then there are no entirely discrete prehensions either; in fact, the strict distinction between prehension and actual entity disappears. There is only interpenetrating creativity. I wish to suggest that the strict distinction between actual entities and eternal objects is also illusory. I would suggest instead an open continuum between possibility and actuality. Whatever is possible possesses some degree of actuality, and whatever is actual is an intensity of actualization of what is possible. I would also suggest that possibility and actuality may be relative to perspective, so that what is distinctly actual from one dimensional vantage point is a distant possibility from another.

Rather than posit an infinite set of fixed possibilities, the eternal objects, existing in static form in the primordial nature of God, I would suggest an open field of flux in which possibility and actuality are constituted by their interrelationships within the whole, and mutually constitute each other. This open field of flux would be more akin to Whitehead's notion of the extensive continuum, in which actuality and possibility are inseparably conjoined. The realm of possibility would still be infinite and unbounded, but it would not be separate from the realm of actuality, and would always be graded in its intensity of relevance and actualization. The notion of entirely separate, singular possibilities disappears with the notion of entirely independent, singular actualities.

Revised Concepts and Conclusion

Despite the foregoing critical reflections, each of Whitehead's concepts seems to point toward an essential dynamic of reality, and can be conceived in a modified form that avoids the difficulties and limitations I have addressed. Actual entities can still be conceived as highly individualized expressions and feelings of existence, possessing a certain degree of unity and centralized coherency. In this modified conception, actual entities need not be considered as fixed or enclosed, or as ultimately distinguishable from the prehensions, patterns of form, or potentials that integrally constitute them.²⁰ However, in most contexts functional discriminations can be made between what is actual and what is possible, or between a highly individualized entity and the patterns of feeling and creativity which envelop and constitute it. The term prehension retains its value as indicating a fundamental and basic form of feeling, upon which all more complex forms of feeling are based.

The concept of eternal objects seems to point toward both the realm of potentials and the archetypal forms and patterns that pervade individual existence and creative manifestation. Rather than use the term eternal objects, which tends to connote stasis and fixity, I prefer to speak of potentials—or possibilities—and archetypal forms and patterns respectively, with the understanding that each of these is dynamic, ever changing, and inseparable from the whole of creation. Archetypal forms and patterns would thus be defined in terms of their breadth and relative universality, embodying themselves in a multiplicity of actualities and potentials in ways that transcend the limitations of more individually localized

creative forms. A nexus, depending upon its character, can be understood as a relatively individualized expression of an archetypal form or pattern, as in a society, or as approaching the character of an actual entity. The term retains its value in its capacity to describe patterns of grouping or relation between elements of existence that are not strikingly universal or archetypal in character, and which also display a minimum degree of individual creative agency, or coherency of feeling.

If actuality and potentiality exist along a continuum, as well as individual determinateness and universality, then movements of feeling and creativity can be described variously in terms of their functional relevance as actual entities, as potentials, as nexūs, as prehensions, or as archetypal forms and patterns. The separate concept of propositions is no longer required, since actualities and potentialities would be understood as necessarily involving each other, and the notion of pure physical, or pure mental prehensions would be correspondingly abandoned. However, the same type of hypothetical and imaginative creative process—including the notion of a particular possibility for realization as entertained by a particular entity— could still be expressed by this term.

What becomes, then, of the primordial and consequent natures of God? If the creative procession of the past does not perish, but is ongoing, then there is eternal dynamism without any fixity of form. Neither the primordial nor consequent nature of God is required. However, both of these concepts seem to point towards profound and mysterious dimensions of existence, and the

consequent nature of God is a beautiful idea, especially as explicated by Whitehead in certain eloquent and moving passages (*PR*, 349–351). The alternative vision that I am sketching does not require either notion as conceived by Whitehead, but integrates both of them in a modified form. The primordial nature of God seems to point toward the fundamental openness and dynamism of existence, the pregnant void, out of which all creative manifestation arises, and in which all creative potentiality exists in an undifferentiated state. I have envisaged this as a paradoxical openness and stillness pervading all flux, which is not a literal realm of absolute stasis, but a mystical vanishing point within all experience. In the context of this vision, stillness and movement, like possibility and actuality, would exist on a continuum within a dynamic, paradoxical openness. This openness would not be ultimately bound to any limited spatiotemporal dimensionality, but would creatively shape and express itself through an endless proliferation of multi-dimensional manifestations. The primordial nature of God would be the element of this openness that is relatively unmanifest, and contains the dynamic potential that is more fully manifested in the creative unfoldment of its nature. Thus the primordial nature of God would still be the ultimate source of all potentiality, but it would be eternally open and dynamically changing with the procession of Creativity, rather than static and fixed.

Correspondingly, the consequent nature of God would indicate the unified fullness of being in its unfolding development and self-manifestation. Rather than necessarily a singular entity, with a “perfection of subjective aim” derived from

the completeness of its static conceptual vision, which preserves the entire past in successive stages of integration, I would conceive a potential multiplicity of interrelated dynamic configurations of experience and creativity, each approaching the unreachable limits of expansiveness and stillness, in which the innumerable discordant details and specificities of actuality are illumined and transfigured into divine harmonies unimaginable from a more limited perspective. These most expansive experiences and configurations of existence could be seen as paradoxically singular and multiple, and as collectively constituting an evolving selfhood that is itself irreducibly manifold. The primordial and consequent natures of God could be integrated into a paradoxically singular and manifold divine selfhood, encompassing both potentiality and manifestation, openness and differentiation, stillness and transformation. This conception of divine creative self-hood would be divested of its absoluteness in respect both to its primordial inclusiveness of fixed potentials, and to its consequent eternal perfection, and would in both of these respects be continually transcending itself.

The terms actual entity and actual occasion are generally treated as interchangeable by Whitehead, with the one exception that he never refers to God as an actual occasion, thereby honoring the eternal character of the Divine, with its primordial nature existing outside of time. Given the modified understanding of both time and the primordial nature of God that I am here suggesting, this distinction between the divine Self and all other entities in respect to time disappears. It therefore seems more conceptually appropriate in the context of this emerging vision to think primarily in terms of occasions, rather than entities, with

the latter term being used when designating what is functionally experienced as a discrete entity, rather than a dynamic process. Thus in analyzing the more philosophically fundamental dynamics underlying our experience we do well to think more in terms of occasions, but in describing the everyday character of our conscious experience the term entity is often more appropriate and useful, and the juxtaposition of the two terms allows for useful contextual distinctions.

Most of the skeptical comments and criticisms that I have made regarding Whitehead's concepts are in relation to assumptions and conclusions that he himself seems to have questioned at times, and therefore may not have intended as fixed elements of his vision. In several places Whitehead stresses that the concept of the eternal objects is a meaningless abstraction if separated from their ingression in actual entities and their role in the unfolding process of creation (MT, 68–69).²¹ Similarly, the concept of novelty is of central importance to Whitehead, and the idea that no true novelty of form is possible—as a certain understanding of the primordial nature of God would imply—seems to violate his spirit of reverence towards the limitless novelty exhibited in the process of creation. My hope and sense is that these modified conceptions of his terms and ideas are in harmony with the deeper spirit of Whitehead's vision, and serve to more fully reveal the limitless dynamism, beauty, and creativity of existence that is reflected in his writings.

At the end of his magnum opus, *Process and Reality*, Whitehead devotes considerable attention to the interplay of opposites in the nature of reality (*PR*, 337–351). The relationship between these opposites—the one and the many,

perfection and imperfection, change and stillness—is fundamental to his, and probably to any worthwhile metaphysical vision. I share Whitehead's perception that the world is fundamentally paradoxical (*PR*, 350), and so dynamic, complex and mysterious as to be beyond the possibility of exhaustive comprehension or adequate verbal expression (*PR*, 4). My sense is of a reality so fundamentally paradoxical and mysterious that absolute and literal statements are often inappropriate and misleading ways of attempting to describe it, since as Whitehead observes, "no language can be anything but elliptical, requiring a leap of the imagination to understand its meaning in its relevance to immediate experience" (*PR*, 13). I am in accordance with Whitehead that art and poetry are often more effective and appropriate means of expression. It seems to me that a use of language that is self-reflectively metaphorical, multivalent, and relational, is best suited to participation in a dynamic and mysterious reality in which only living attunement can give rise to true wisdom and spiritual communion.

This being said, Whitehead's effort to provide a comprehensive and coherent account of reality in the most general terms is a noble, valuable, and impressive one, and the straightforwardness and definiteness of his language allows for a precision and consistency that is difficult to achieve in freer forms of poetic expression. At his best, Whitehead combines the rigor, formality, and precision of a mathematician with the creativity of a poet, and breadth and depth of vision of a mystic. Whitehead is eminently aware that his conceptions and formulations do not literally or exhaustively express the complex fullness of existence. While I have been inclined to dissolve various distinctions and

elements of fixity in Whitehead's philosophy that seem to me to obscure a more fluid and dynamic vision of reality, I also find that his terms and conceptions provide valuable avenues of approach to many complex and elusive reaches of experience. It is my experience that his terms assume a greater richness when their literalness and limitations have to some extent been seen through, and they serve as pointers to a dynamic living vision whose fullness of nature is boundless and inexpressible.

PREFACE TO CHAPTER TWO

How is it that we are not more sensitive to the presence of something greater than ourselves moving forward within us and in our midst?

—Teilhard de Chardin²²

Only our spirit, which is capable of evil, is capable of overcoming it.

—Le Guin²³

In this second essay I engage the more expansive dimension of the psychology and later writings of Carl Gustav Jung, exploring the philosophical and spiritual vision that I believe to be implicit in them. Like Whitehead, Jung seems to play a powerful role as a bridge figure, seeking to reconcile scientific empiricism and discipline with deep attention to inner experience and contemplative vision. His stance as a scientific empiricist and his Kantian epistemological perspective often lead him to qualify his claims and formulate his conceptions in ways that obscure their full philosophical significance—as well as the experiences and intuitions that underlie them. This is revealed not only in the discrepancies in these very formulations, but also in his more private writings, in which he both describes these experiences more directly and speculates on their deeper philosophical and spiritual implications. Like the Whitehead essay, this essay seeks to explore, engage, and reveal the deeper vision that I sense emerging through Jung's writings, allowing it to develop in relationship to my own vision and creative engagement. Though these two essays were written separately, reflecting focused engagements with each thinker, they belong to a larger process of exploration in which their visions were conjoined.

CHAPTER TWO: MYSTERY, PARADOX, AND THE COSMIC SOUL:
EXPLORING THE MYSTICAL HORIZON OF JUNG’S PSYCHOLOGY

Non-ambiguity and non-contradiction are one-sided and thus unsuited to express
the incomprehensible.

—Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, 16

Only the paradox comes anywhere near to comprehending the fullness of life.

—Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, 16

Jung is a psychological and spiritual visionary, whose work has greatly expanded the field of psychology and reconnected it with a deeper spiritual ground. While Jung tends to emphasize a scientific understanding of the phenomena that he investigates and the ideas that he puts forth—and imposes certain limits on his claims and considerations on this basis—he is also keenly aware of their deeper spiritual significance. Thus in reading his writings and exploring his conceptions one is continuously faced with the task of discerning the more subtle and expansive spiritual vision that is concealed beneath his more guarded and restricted observations.²⁴

Jung’s conceptions also evolved throughout the course of his life and writings, and are subject to varying treatments even within a particular work or time period. This reflects the pervasive openness and dynamism of Jung’s thought, as well as his view that it is better to explore multiple perspectives and interpretations of a phenomenon—even when they seem to contradict one another—than to prematurely foreclose exploration for the sake of consistency or the illusion of clear understanding.

Varying modes of conceptualization also seem to reflect differing impulses and tendencies in Jung's own personality and thinking, which continued to interact and to develop alongside one another throughout his life. Seen through the lens of Jung's own psychological theory, the character of his thinking and expression seems to have been powerfully shaped by the archetypal forces and complexes that were active during the course of their inception and development.

Jung also writes to different audiences at different times, and the varying character of his treatments reflects this. When his writings are addressed primarily to his more conservative psychiatric colleagues, or to a materialistically minded general public, Jung maintains certain restrictions on the purview of his claims and conjectures, and is careful that his treatments conform to specific standards of scientific legitimacy. In writings that are less formal and scientific in their orientation,²⁵ Jung expresses his views in a more unguarded manner and is more open in describing the experiences that underlie their conception—though he never fully ceases to qualify his claims in terms of what he holds to be the limits of scientific inquiry and knowledge.²⁶ The character of Jung's comments thus reflects both the archetypal and personal dynamics that were variously operative in his writing and thought, and his relative sense of freedom in expressing ideas that he knew would be subject to criticism, resistance, and incomprehension.

Though Jung was sensitive to epistemological issues, and his writings contain a number of important epistemological insights, the formulation and presentation of his ideas is often hampered by unquestioned epistemological assumptions. Some of his mature later conceptions point towards a more

sophisticated and expansive epistemological understanding, but the implications of these ideas are never fully developed in his writings. Thus the task of elaborating Jung's more expansive psychological and spiritual vision involves seeing his central concepts in the light of a correspondingly expansive epistemology.

The variability of Jung's conceptions, the presence of unresolved tensions and contradictions in his thinking, and his tendency to continue developing concepts over the course of his life can serve as an invitation to further development and modification on the part of those who engage his writings and ideas. An essential question posed in reading Jung, besides the questions of what he actually thought and what his official positions were—though these may be subjects of interest, contention, and concentrated attention—is what his ideas disclose to ongoing reflection and investigation. As a consequence of the reservation with which Jung expressed his ideas, a rich domain of possibilities remains to be revealed through following some of his more suggestive hints and speculations, and exploring the spiritual and philosophical vision that emerges if some of his more constrictive perspectives are expanded and his epistemological limitations transcended. The exploration and development of this often implicit and subtly intimated philosophical and spiritual vision is the central focus of this paper.

Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious

One of the central concepts that marks Jung's psychology apart from other psychologies that were prominent during his life time, as well as those that

continue to dominate the field today, is his theory of the *collective unconscious*. While Freud expanded the field of psychology through positing a personal unconscious,²⁷ in which reside impulses, emotions, memories, and other psychic contents which have either been repressed, have never been made conscious, or have slipped below the threshold of awareness²⁸—and only occasionally reflected on the possibility of some form of *archaic vestiges*, or *phylogenetic inheritance*²⁹—Jung developed the concept of a collective unconscious underlying the personal unconscious as a central feature of his psychology. In doing so he greatly broadened and deepened the purview of psychology, and situated individual consciousness within a larger psychic and spiritual context.

Jung's initial conception of the collective unconscious arose out of his observation that certain images and psychic processes tended to recur with regularity across cultures, in the form of mythic figures and motifs, in the contents of dreams, and in the spontaneous productions of artistic creativity and psychic disturbance. In examining various instances in which such similar images and themes occurred, he concluded that their commonality of form could not be attributed either to direct cultural influence or to externally derived individual experiences. He was thus led to postulate the existence of a deeper layer of the psyche, shared by all human beings, which was responsible for the production of similar contents across individuals and cultures, independent of differences in societal influence and personal experience.

Jung's earlier treatments of the collective unconscious situate it within what he tended to regard as the closed sphere of the psyche.³⁰ Jung adopts an

epistemological stance that allows him to make observations and formulate theories concerning the nature of the psyche without making any claims about its relationship to the external world in which it is situated. In order to lend scientific legitimacy to his ideas, Jung often formulates them in terms that correspond to more scientifically respected fields, such as biology and physics. Thus Jung initially describes the collective unconscious and the archetypes, which are its primary contents, in terms of an archaic inheritance, and relates the archetypes to the biological concept of instincts.³¹ These early ways of conceiving of the archetypes and the collective unconscious, despite their limitations, point towards dimensions that are present in his more expansive understanding of their nature. In contrast to these more reductive formulations, Jung seems from his earliest writings to have simultaneously related to the unconscious as the expression of a fundamental mystery, representing not only the limitations of conscious perception, but the mysterious depths of life itself.

Synchronicity and Archetypes

Over the course of his life and psychiatric career Jung often had powerful experiences and was confronted with phenomena which challenged his more reductive “psychological” understanding of the nature of the psyche and its relationship to the physical world. Prominent among these challenges was the class of phenomena for which Jung eventually coined the term *synchronicity*.³² Though subject to some variability of treatment, the term generally indicates a situation in which two or more apparently independent events, significantly related in time, seem to be meaningfully related without any evident causal

connection, and in a way not explicable in terms of probability and chance. The experience of these events often has a startling and numinous character, and is frequently pivotal in some larger process of transformation, or associated with some major life event, such as a significant birth or death.³³ The frequency of his experiences of such phenomena convinced him that there was a whole category of events that was not explicable in traditional materialistic or psychological terms, and therefore called for an expansion and revision of his own psychological thinking.

The numinous quality associated with many synchronistic experiences suggested to Jung the presence and powerful activation of an archetype, with whose numinous effects and psychological power Jung was deeply familiar. However, the archetypes as Jung had formerly conceived them were bound to the closed sphere of the human psyche, and could not be invoked to explain apparently independent processes in the material world. The phenomenon of synchronicity therefore suggested an expanded understanding of the nature of the archetypes, and of matter, psyche, and the collective unconscious by extension.

Jung therefore speaks in some of his later writings of the “transgressive” nature of archetypes,³⁴ meaning that they transcend the apparent division between the internal realm of the psyche and the external world of physical processes, and are influential in both realms without being bound to either. According to this more expansive conception, archetypes are dynamic factors that underlie both the realms of conscious experience and the physical world in which we are embedded, shaping both and constituting a matrix of potentials and creative

impulses out of which the visible and manifest world arises.³⁵ The capacity of archetypes to be influential in shaping both physical and psychic events—and to do so in precise and meaningful concert with one another—suggested to Jung that what are ordinarily distinguished as physical and psychic phenomena might be polarized manifestations of a single reality that expresses itself along a psychophysical continuum.³⁶ The phenomenon of synchronicity, along with other phenomena of a paranormal and extrasensory character, and the recent discoveries of quantum physics, suggested to Jung that the categories, structures, and laws that appear to define physical reality³⁷ might be limited and contextually situated expressions of a more encompassing and elusive reality.

The Unus Mundus and Archetypes

Drawing on his ongoing explorations of alchemy and Gnosticism, Jung frequently referred to this larger reality that encompasses not only the physical and psychic dimensions, but all polarities and oppositions, as the *unus mundus*,³⁸ or one world:

The psychoid nature of the archetype contains very much more than can be included in a psychological explanation. It points to the sphere of the *unus mundus*, the unitary world, towards which the psychologist and the atomic physicist are converging along separate paths, producing independently of one another certain analogous auxiliary concepts. Although the first step in the cognitive process is to discriminate and divide, at the second step it will unite what has been divided, and an explanation will be satisfactory only when it achieves a synthesis. ("Conscience," 452, ¶ 852)

The last sentence in this passage is significant, as it also points toward an expanded epistemology and mode of analysis that is essential to Jung's emerging vision.

In this context the archetypes can be seen as fundamental patterns of order and creativity belonging to the *unus mundus*, and thus capable of shaping expression along the entirety of the psychophysical continuum. In accordance with some of Jung's later comments, the archetypes can be understood as dynamic and evolving, rather than static and fixed: "The archetype is a living idea that constantly produces new interpretations through which that idea unfolds" (*Mysterium*, 523, ¶ 744). Jung increasingly experienced the archetypes as living presences, recognizable by virtue of their autonomy, numinosity, and sense of transcendent power, or perfection: "The archetypes are continuously present and active; as such they need no believing in, but only an intuition of their meaning and a certain sapient awe" ("Nature of Psyche," 221, ¶ 427). "The 'living idea' is always perfect and always numinous" (*Mysterium*, 524, ¶ 746).

Jung consistently observed that archetypes play a fundamental role in guiding what he refers to as the individuation process, or the movement of the individual self towards wholeness and integration. Dreams, synchronistic experiences, and ordinary life events could be observed to reflect the activity of the archetype in configuring the developmental process of the individual within his relational context.³⁹ Jung was repeatedly struck by the intelligence, wisdom, and intentionality that archetypes seemed consistently to display, especially in relationship to the process of individuation: "As a numinous factor, the archetype

determines the nature of the configurational process and the course it will follow, with seeming foreknowledge, or as though it already were in possession of the goal to be circumscribed by the centering process” (“Nature of Psyche,” 209, ¶ 411). The cooperation of multiple archetypes in furthering the individuation process also suggested to Jung their participation in some form of larger, more coherent intelligence.

The Anima Mundi and the Collective Unconscious

To the extent that the concept of the *unus mundus* contains all polarities and thus cannot be adequately characterized by any mode of polarized expression, another term and concept must be sought to signify the expanded understanding of the psychic and spiritual dimension of existence suggested by the archetypes and synchronicity. Perhaps the most apt term, also drawing on Jung’s engagement with alchemy and Gnosticism, is *anima mundi*, or world soul.⁴⁰ If the archetypes are not merely formal patterns that are discernible in both physical and psychic processes, but are capable of expressing intelligence, autonomy, and intentionality, it makes sense to see them as creative tendencies and potentially autonomous constellations belonging to a more encompassing psychic totality.⁴¹

The concept of the *anima mundi* also calls for an expanded understanding of the nature and extent of the collective unconscious. For if the collective unconscious is not necessarily “unconscious” at all, but rather a realm that transcends individual consciousness, and if it is not bound within a closed psychic sphere, but opens into and potentially includes physical reality, then it makes sense to conceive it rather as a collective dimension of the cosmic soul, that

manifests not only in psychic individualities, but in the meaningful patterning and interiority of all existence.⁴² Thus the collective unconscious, which is only “unconscious” from the limited perspective of a narrowly focused, egoically centered individual consciousness, can be seen as belonging, along with these more individualized expressions, to a more encompassing psychic reality, which is the *anima mundi*, or cosmic soul.

The Self and its Relations

Jung also at times uses the term *self* to refer to this totality, or psychic unity, which encompasses both the conscious and unconscious, the psychic individuality and the larger spiritual ground to which it belongs.⁴³ However, the term self in Jung’s psychology is complex in the manner of its usage and range of meanings, and is therefore best understood in a way that overlaps with but is also distinguishable from the term *anima mundi*.

The self is often discussed by Jung as the most fundamental archetype, the principle of order and unity, which expresses itself not only in individual wholeness, but in the fundamental unity of existence which the term ‘*unus mundus*’ designates.⁴⁴ The self is a multi-dimensional concept, as it refers not only to an archetypal principle of order, unity and wholeness, but also to the psychic totality and individuality which that principle informs. The self can function at once as a *telos*, a supraordinate aim and potential for wholeness, drawing forward the process of individuation, and as the unity and wholeness of the evolving being in its process of growth and transformation.

The self and unus mundus, both paradoxical concepts, paradoxically shape and encompass one another.⁴⁵ The self, as the archetype of wholeness and unity that includes within it all other archetypes, and of which the unus mundus is the most fundamental expression, is also one among many archetypes which belong to the paradoxical unity of the unus mundus. Similarly, as the unus mundus and anima mundi can be seen as paradoxical faces of one another, so also can the self and anima mundi. Here the anima mundi represents the most encompassing expression of the fundamental principle of self-hood, through which it is conceptually distinguishable from the potentially more neutral and impersonal unus mundus. For the archetypal principle of the self comprises at once unity and wholeness, and individual distinctiveness and selfhood, and its expressions may be more pronounced in one or another of these interrelated aspects of its archetypal essence.

Despite these paradoxes and the multiplicity of ways in which these concepts can be conceived in their relationships to one another, a functional set of general relations and distinctions can be traced. The unus mundus seems to be the most inherently pervasive of these concepts, since, following Jung, the question as to the extent of the psyche and its relationship with its potential opposites is left open. The unus mundus inherently contains all oppositions and all unities, all qualities and all manifestations, and thus both the anima mundi, as the psychic face of existence, and the self, as the principle of unity, individuality, and wholeness which embodies itself in many forms.

In the context of this emerging vision, the self can thus be seen as possessing several interrelated levels of meaning and identity. It can be understood as the principle informing the unity of both the unus mundus and anima mundi, and as the encompassing self-hoods which these realities possess. It can be understood as the archetype of order and wholeness informing all individual manifestations, and as the individual self-hoods belonging to these manifestations. It is the relation formed by each individual being to the larger whole, and it is the wholeness toward which every individual being moves, the potential and completion of its nature.

The self is that which we are, and that which we are becoming, that which we cannot help being, and that which we become when we hold a center of integrity in the process of our development. The self is both that mysterious center and the self that forms around it. In the self the individual and unitive dimensions of existence are united. To be a whole and distinctive individual is to be intimately related and united with all else in a pattern that expresses one's uniqueness. As Jung expresses it in terms of the formation of the self through the individuation process, "Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to oneself" ("Nature of Psyche," 226 ¶432).

The self is thus fundamentally relational. Because it comprehends a pattern of identity and wholeness, it does not create ultimate separations but a unique pattern of relational identity within the whole. The self-hood of all selves depends on their relationships to one another.⁴⁶ Conversely, relationship itself loses its meaning if there is no self that enjoys and participates within it. To the

extent that all of existence participates within the archetype of the self—at multiple levels of interrelated identity and relationship, including at the broadest levels, the *unus mundus* and *anima mundi*—all relationship is revealed as ultimately self-relationship, but with a self that is always different than itself, always encountering itself in new and mysterious forms within relationship.

The principle of the self is thus intimately related to the principle of Eros,⁴⁷ or relationality, and creates individual identity and relationship simultaneously, drawing them toward a pattern of ever deepening mutual development. This is the essence of the individuation process. It involves multiple levels of self-hood and interrelationship, and is thus a multi-leveled, multi-stranded developmental process, in which all levels mutually inform each other. The forming pattern of integrity of each individual is related to the forming pattern of each other, and all are related within the forming patterns of the whole, of which each is an individual expression. Individual relationships are mediated by patterns of archetypal relationship, which in turn possess their own measure of distinctive individuality and engage in their own processes of individuation.

Archetypes and the Anima Mundi

One of the characteristics belonging to the archetypes, that emerged in Jung's experience as a paradoxical counterpoint to their seeming universality, is their seemingly limitless variety of expression, which makes any comprehensive understanding or definition impossible: "for what we can establish as the one thing consistent with their nature is their *manifold meaning*, their almost limitless wealth of reference, which makes any unilateral formulation impossible"

("Archetypes," 38, ¶ 80). Not only is not possible to demarcate the extent and range of expression of an archetype, but the archetypes are also revealed as overlapping and interpenetrating in their fundamental natures and identities. Even individual manifestations of the archetypes participate in their relational complexity and multi-valence, so that a single embodiment can carry multiple meanings for a single subject and different meanings for different subjects simultaneously.⁴⁸

As their scope and complexity became apparent to Jung, archetypes were revealed as expressing themselves in multiple spheres of existence, and at multiple levels of creative configuration, as well as in a multiplicity of individual forms.⁴⁹ Thus archetypes can be recognized as both habitual patterns and constellations permeating the psychic sphere,⁵⁰ and as the physical tendencies and structures pervading the physical and biological dimensions of existence. Similarly, archetypes appear both in the form of vivid and numinous archetypal beings and modes of perception, as in the gods and goddesses that appear in various cultural inflections in mythological and religious traditions across the world, and as abstract patterns and concepts, such as the geometrical shapes and relationships of mathematics, and the principles of logic.⁵¹

All discernible patterns and structures and every conceivable dimension and form of being, from the most unified to the most complexly differentiated, can be seen as manifesting archetypal patterns and forces. Everything individual and particular in existence has its form and nature through participation in a complex multiplicity of archetypal patterns and essences.⁵² Rather than standing

above or behind these particularities of being, archetypes can here be seen as evolving through them and engaging in a mutual participation in which both archetypal essence and particular embodiment are co-constituted and recursively affected.⁵³ Even more fundamentally, every archetypal pattern, no matter how inexhaustible and complexly related to other archetypes, is itself also a dynamic particularity, and like all more limited and local manifestations, has its broadest identity in the relational whole of being, the unus mundus, which is itself both universally encompassing and irreducibly particular.⁵⁴

Archetypes thus appear as both forms and essences, potentials⁵⁵ and actualities, the broadest patterns and principles of existence, and the most nuanced forms of relational patterning. Seen in the light of the unus mundus, archetypes span and mutually constitute all oppositions, polarities, and qualitative continuums, expressing themselves simultaneously as conscious intentional beings of transcendent wisdom and beauty, and as diffuse, habitual and unconscious patterns of manifestation, blindly binding energy and consciousness to repetitive and destructive forms of expression.

Because archetypes are essentially trans-local—or multi-local in their manifestation—they can be active in a multiplicity of localized forms simultaneously, and are not limited to any particular spatiotemporal dimension, though they are informed and shaped by every pattern of manifestation in which they participate. Thus, like the unus mundus itself, they seem to be both shaped and inflected by spatiotemporal dimensionality and specificity of form, and eternally open and unbounded in their essence and creative potentiality.

Archetypes and Complexes

Beginning with his association experiments, and drawing on the work of Freud, Jung observed that there were certain unconscious factors which affected an individual's response to a specific stimulus or situation. In the association experiments these effects were initially discernible in terms of delays in response time and abnormal patterns of association. Over time Jung developed a more comprehensive theory of *complexes*, conceiving of them as unconscious psychic constellations possessing a certain energy and affective charge.⁵⁶ Complexes were recognizable in terms of their "possessive" effect, in that they appropriated psychic energy in ways that were not intended by, or ran counter to, the intentions of the conscious ego.

While initially Jung conceived of complexes as psychic constellations that are not associated with the conscious ego, and therefore remain unconscious, he eventually came to see the ego itself as a kind of complex,⁵⁷ which like all conscious contents is conscious only from certain perspectives, at certain times, and under certain aspects. The complex can therefore be understood more broadly as a psychic constellation possessing some measure of autonomy and distinctness, manifesting through its capacity to configure consciousness according to its own distinctive patterns and responses.⁵⁸

Since, as Jung recognized, complexes are themselves archetypally configured, complexes can be conceived as localized expressions of more universal and pervasive archetypal patterns. Similarly, since complexes, like archetypes, are interdependent and defined by their participation in the larger

relational whole, complexes can be seen as localized creative patterns and thought forms of the anima mundi, which are not separate from the archetypes but exist with them on a dynamic continuum, from the most fundamental, pervasive, and universal to the most specific, localized, and individually distinctive.

To the extent that specific complexes are primarily localized in an individual psyche, it is relatively natural to distinguish them from archetypes as being individually localized expressions of the latter. However, to the extent that there are complexes—and complexes of complexes—which are directly operative across a multiplicity of psychic individualities, the distinction between complexes and archetypes becomes less clear.⁵⁹ It appears rather that there are multiple levels of interweaving and nested creative patterning, suggesting the existence of archetypes and complexes, and all forms of being, along a paradoxical continuum, in which the most universal and the most distinctive forms are relationally united.

Jung remarked on the possessive effects that could be observed in association with the activation of both archetypes and complexes. “It is perfectly possible, psychologically, for the unconscious or an archetype to take complete possession of a man and to determine his fate down to the smallest detail” (“Job,” 409, ¶ 648).⁶⁰ This potential possessiveness is among their defining features, as others, notably James Hillman, have observed,⁶¹ and allows them to be recognized as polarized expressions of a single principle and creative tendency. However, the varying extent and nature of their possessiveness is an important issue which bears some examination.

Figures of the Unconscious

The complex and interpenetrating relationship between archetypes and complexes mirrors the relationship between what Jung distinguishes as the personal and collective unconscious. While Jung generally defines the personal unconscious as having contents that are derived from the specific life experience of the individual—in contrast to the collective unconscious, whose contents are universal and archetypal—he also expresses an awareness that the personal unconscious is pervaded by collective and archetypal contents.⁶² The fundamental structures and figures that Jung identifies as belonging to the personal unconscious are themselves archetypal in character, since they are pervasive psychic patterns which express themselves through a multiplicity of individual manifestations.

In a less obvious way, all the contents of the personal unconscious are shaped and informed by archetypal patterns, so that every individual form is rooted in a complex archetypal ground. As conceived in these expanded vision, the archetype does not merely shape or stand behind the individual psychic manifestation, but is actively present within it. Thus not only are the specific figures of the personal unconscious individual embodiments of archetypal patterns, but the archetypes live and shine within them.

This archetypal luminosity is especially visible in the figures which Jung designates as the *anima* and *animus*. During the course of his clinical work and introspective process, and especially through observation of dreams—his own and those of his patients—Jung observed that the psyche tends to constellate powerful

images of a figure possessing the opposite sex⁶³ to that which is outwardly expressed in the individual personality. These figures tend to have a mysterious, numinous, and idealized character, and are often the subject of great longing and desire. Jung viewed these figures as representations of the soul, consisting especially of elements of the psyche that have yet to be integrated into the conscious personality, and are therefore essential for wholeness. Drawing on the gendered Latin words for soul, Jung designates the feminine and masculine figures as the anima and animus respectively.

Jung therefore understands the figures of the anima and animus, like the contents of dreams and the productions of the collective unconscious more generally, as compensatory, meaning that they complement and help to balance and complete the conscious personality, including its manner of self-representation. Jung also noted a tendency to project the unconscious image of the anima or animus onto individuals of the corresponding sex—usually individuals who possessed certain qualities that made them suitable carriers for the projected image, and who were then experienced as objects of idealization and intense desire. The challenge for the individual in this situation is to integrate the projected qualities into his or her own personality, thereby liberating the object of the projections from the need to conform to the projected images, and allowing the other person to appear and be experienced more deeply in terms of his or her own unique qualities and character. This psychic mechanism of projection is complex and plays a significant role in the individuation process in ways that can

be both beneficial and problematic. It is also of special importance in relation to another of the central figures of the unconscious, the *shadow*.⁶⁴

Jung observed that consciousness, which is necessarily selective, as it involves a specific focus of attention amid a myriad of complex dynamics, tends to maintain a consistent self-image through banishing qualities that are experienced as incompatible with the existing self-image. The initial formation of the self-image also involves identification with certain qualities at the exclusion of others, which are for various reasons experienced as incompatible. The qualities with which an individual identifies are often influenced and determined by the values and perceptions of important people in the environment—by what qualities the social and psychological environment supports the individual to express. Qualities and feelings that are experienced as negative, or are painful and difficult to experience because of their incompatibility with the conscious self-image, tend to constellate in the unconscious into the figure which Jung designates as the shadow. This figure is so named because it can be seen as the shadow that is cast by the conscious self-image and its partial mode of self-identification.

Though experienced as negative, the shadow also stands in a compensatory relationship to the conscious personality and self-image. While many of the qualities that constitute an individual's shadow are those which are commonly experienced as negative and unpleasant, such as greed, selfishness, hatred, and feelings of inferiority, there also tend to be elements that would generally be considered positive, but happen to conflict with the conscious self-

image. All of these qualities, whether judged as positive or negative, need to be recognized as belonging to the larger personality, and integrated and transformed—rather than repressed or projected—in order for the individuation process to proceed.

Jung observed that the tendency to unconsciously project shadow elements onto others is responsible for many forms of prejudice, intolerance, and hostility. If the recipients of the shadow projection are experienced as evil and threatening, their persecution and destruction is often seen as justified and necessary. Jung observed this mechanism of projection on a mass scale in the phenomenon of Nazism, and in nationalism and international warfare more generally.⁶⁵ On a smaller scale, projection is often a barrier to interpersonal connection, and a source of irreconcilable conflict between individuals. The withdrawal and overcoming of shadow projection requires a willingness to experience painful and negative feelings without repressing or projecting them. It also involves integrating qualities that are experienced as incompatible with elements in the conscious personality.

Dynamics of Individuation

Jung refers to this capacity to integrate conflicting and seemingly incompatible psychic tendencies as the *transcendent function*.⁶⁶ It is an essential element of the individuation process. Jung sometimes describes this in simple terms as the integration of opposed pairs, resulting in a third reality that both transcends the original two and includes them in a new constellation: however, the transcendent function can here be understood more broadly as a fundamental

dynamic of the individuation process, involving the synthesis of a multiplicity of divergent energies and creative forms into a developing relational wholeness.

Similarly, while Jung at times describes the transcendent function as the capacity to integrate conscious and unconscious contents, this is largely because contents that need to be integrated are usually unconscious in some respect, and because in the sphere of the personal unconscious, the unconscious contents are often unconscious due to their incompatibility with the conscious stance. Often relatively unintegrated and conflicting tendencies existing alongside each other in the conscious personality need to be integrated through being brought into conscious relationship with one another. Given the relativity of consciousness in respect to its variable relationship to different psychic processes, and the fact that conscious contents often have unconscious aspects, it seems more coherent to understand the transcendent function more broadly as the capacity to integrate conflicting elements or tendencies through a process that involves the reconfiguration and development of the individual psyche.

An important element of the individuation process, towards which Jung's aforementioned understanding points, is the need of the psychic individuality and centralized conscious personality to be in continuous relationship with the larger forces and dynamics of the anima mundi, involving the integration of new and often conflicting elements from the collective unconscious. The transcendent function is central to this process, and to the ability of the psychic individuality to engage in a reflexive and co-creative relationship with the dynamism of the archetypes. "The achievement of a synthesis of conscious and unconscious

contents, and the conscious realization of the archetype's effects upon the conscious contents, represents the climax of a concentrated spiritual and psychic effort, in so far as this is undertaken consciously and of set purpose" ("Structure of Psyche," 210–211, ¶ 413). This understanding, stated in terms of a relationship to the unconscious and the archetypes, is naturally extended to include a relationship with the anima mundi, which here represents an extended conception of the collective unconscious and the broader domain of the archetypes.

It is largely this conscious and collaborative relationship with the archetypes that determines the difference between a state of archetypal possession and a free and co-creative exchange.⁶⁷ The same is true in relationship to more localized and personal complexes. The capacity to engage in conscious and reflective relationships with these dynamics allows them to be integrated and transmuted, rather than experienced as threatening, or allowed to unconsciously influence and control the conscious personality. This measure of creative freedom, as opposed to compulsive possession, is therefore constituted by a quality of relationship. Where a centered openness and sensitive receptivity are present, there arises a free and dynamic communion and co-creative exchange, in which the deeper potentials for emerging self-hood and relational beauty are realized in both the individuating subject and the evolving archetypal complex with whose destiny it is conjoined.

One of the paradoxes of this situation is that the psychic center of consciousness, through which these relationships with complexes and archetypes are mediated, is itself a kind of archetypally configured psychic complex,

powerfully constellated around the archetype of the self. In this sense the transcendent function belongs essentially to the self, as a principle of centered relatedness through which divergent creative tendencies can be integrated and transformed. As the individual psyche is a microcosm of the anima mundi in which it is embedded, so too the integration processes that take place in the individual psyche through the operation of the transcendent function mirror cosmological processes in the anima mundi, in accordance with Jung's observation of "the presence in the microcosm of macrocosmic events ("Synchronicity," 489, ¶ 923).

The successful operation of the transcendent function often creates what Jung refers to as a *complexio oppositorum*, or complex of opposites, in which opposing qualities or tendencies are paradoxically united. Jung also uses the term *coniunctio oppositorum*, or conjunction of opposites, to describe a situation in which opposing elements are conjoined. Because the dynamics of the transcendent function belong on a larger scale to the anima mundi, as well as to the individual psyche, the individual psychic process of integration involves both forging novel relationships and syntheses, and coming into an awareness of the inner unity and paradoxical interrelatedness of elements that had been previously experienced as incompatible and separate. It also means that the integration process taking place in the individual is a microcosmic thread woven into a larger integration process taking place in the anima mundi.⁶⁸

One of the spontaneous functions of the psyche is to create symbols in which the inner unity of apparently disparate phenomena is reflected: "It is a fact

that symbols, by their very nature, can so unite the opposites that these no longer diverge or clash, but mutually supplement one another and give meaningful shape to life" (*MDR*, 338). The operation of the transcendent function, though it can take place spontaneously and effortlessly, often requires one to suspend judgment and habitual modes of thinking for a time, while allowing a larger process of synthesis and integration to take place. As the synthesis is usually between conscious and at least partially unconscious elements, so the synthetic process draws on wisdom and intelligence belonging to both conscious and transconscious spheres, including the wider awareness belonging to the *anima mundi* and archetypes. The conscious personality can seldom achieve the needed synthesis on its own, for the precondition of the synthesis is usually the transformation of that very same conscious personality, which must be effected on a larger plane and through transconscious forces.

One powerful example of the *coniunctio oppositorum* is the dynamic interplay and unity of archetypally feminine and masculine principles in the *anima mundi*, which Jung describes as the *hiEros gamos*, or sacred marriage.⁶⁹ This sacred union is played out in individual psychic life and relationships on many levels, both in the internal integration of masculine and feminine elements—as in the ongoing integration of the *anima* or *animus* into the conscious personality—and in the profound communion and procreative exchange that takes place when these divine energies are powerfully embodied in living human relationships. The *anima* and *animus* therefore provide a numinous threshold through which divine cosmic principles can enter into and fulfill themselves

through individual development and relationship. "For we are in the deepest sense the victims and the instruments of cosmogonic 'love'" (*MDR*, 354).

Potentials and Complexities of Projection

As discussed earlier, projection can also be seen to play a positive role in the individuation process. Since projection is an unconscious process, it can be guided by the wisdom of the collective unconscious in the service of individuation in ways that are not comprehensible to the conscious personality. The value and necessity of idealization in the developmental process of both children and adults, which involves projecting inner values and images of perfection onto the idealized individual, is a central insight of the object relations theory of self psychology, as articulated by Heinz Kohut in *The Analysis of the Self* (1971). This projection allows specific qualities belonging to the object of projection to be introjected, which in turn allows the individual to develop inner images and ideals that are clothed with specific, contextually meaningful attributes.

In the case of the anima and animus, projection of these numinous psychic images can create an attraction and dynamism that allows for powerful connection and mutual transformation in relationship. The perception of divine archetypal energies in another person, and the love and devotion it inspires, amplifies the power and presence of those energies, allowing them to illuminate and transform both the individual being and the relationship in which they are constellated. When a man perceives, consciously or unconsciously, Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, in a woman, and is inspired with love and devotion, he potentially amplifies the presence of Aphrodite in the beloved woman, as well as in the

relationship, and both may be deepened, transformed, and irradiated by this divine presence, in which Aphrodite too assumes a new face and dimension.

Individuals are often attracted to each other because each possesses qualities that the other needs for wholeness. These qualities, which are often initially experienced as internally incompatible opposites, can be integrated through the transcendent function in the context of the relationship. Because there are usually manifest qualities in another person that elicit such projections, projections often correspond to existing but unrealized potentials in a person that are related to these manifest qualities, and which the relational process that projections constellate can help to realize and fulfill.

Also, since we are relational beings, it makes sense that we carry potentials not only for our own individual development, but for each other, and for the development of relationships themselves, as well as for the larger archetypal processes in which we participate. Through projection, inner qualities and potentials can be realized in the world, allowing the inward soul to grow into and through external manifestation. And, as already alluded to, because of the microcosmic relationship of the individual psyche to the anima mundi, inner contents can also be archetypal contents belonging to the anima mundi and expressing themselves through human life.

Despite the positive potentials inherent in projection, it is essential that projections not be static, but that individuals and relationships should grow through them, allowing members of a relationship to experience each other in ways that are sensitive and attuned, rather than blinded by unconscious fixations.

The constellated fruits of the projection are then integrated into the relationship as qualities belonging to one or more members of the relationship, to the relationship itself, or to some larger process and pattern of meaning in which the individuals participate.

Because we are not static beings, our potentials and qualities are always changing, and we have the potential to create new potentials for each other through the dynamism of relationship. Projection often plays a powerful role in this process, so long as it draws us toward each other and into our fuller selves, rather than becoming an enduring barrier to intimacy, connection, and attuned perception. Self-reflection—and interpersonal reflection—is therefore a necessary accompaniment and compensation to projection. Without adequate interpersonal and self reflection, the pathological effects of projection proliferate and become powerful obstacles to the individual, interpersonal, and collective individuation processes.

Jung's Psychological Epistemology

Jung's awareness of the limitations of ordinary conscious perception and of the pervasive scope and influence of "the unconscious" allows him to develop a kind of psychological epistemology, according to which perceptions and claims to knowledge must be qualified in relation to the potential for unconscious influence and subjective bias, as well as in relation to specific modes of psychic functioning and archetypal configuration. "With all the more urgency, then, we must emphasize that the smallest alteration in the psychic factor, if it be an

alteration of principle, is of the utmost significance as regards our knowledge of the world and the picture we make of it” (“Nature of Psyche,” 217, ¶ 423).

Not only did Jung observe that contents that do not belong to ordinary conscious awareness influence perception, but also that the conscious stance is rarely characterized by a self-reflective awareness of its own orientation, influences, and subjective bias. As Jung points out, the interconnectedness of psychic phenomena and the limitations of conscious perception create a situation in which any element of conscious experience is inevitably conscious only from a limited perspective, and may have significant aspects that are not perceptible to consciousness.

This paradox becomes immediately intelligible when we realize that there is no conscious content which can with absolute certainty be said to be totally conscious, for that would necessitate an unimaginable totality of consciousness, and that in turn would presuppose an equally unimaginable wholeness and perfection of the human mind. So we come to the paradoxical conclusion that there is no conscious content which is not in some other respect unconscious. (“Nature of Psyche,” 187–188, ¶ 385).

Jung therefore extends his epistemological skepticism to what is ordinarily distinguished as the psychic domain, so that we have just as little grounds for certainty regarding our observations of the psychic world as we do regarding the physical: “That the world inside and outside ourselves rests on a transcendental background is as certain as our own existence, but it is equally certain that the direct perception of the archetypal world inside us is just as doubtfully correct as that of the physical world outside us” (*Mysterium*, 551, ¶ 787). In this passage Jung specifically addresses his skepticism to knowledge of the archetypal realms, potentially reflecting his Kantian-informed treatment of the archetypes as

unknowable noumena. However, given the broader and more dynamic understanding of the archetypes as pervading psychic existence, this skepticism can be extended to certain knowledge regarding any psychic content. Even what we immediately observe and identify as belonging to our own consciousness is therefore mysterious and unknowable in its fullness.

Jung was keenly aware of this mysterious nature of even the most familiar dimensions of our experience. “What we know of the world, and what we are immediately aware of in ourselves, are conscious contents that flow from remote, obscure sources.” (“Spirit and Life,” 327, ¶ 624). He employed the concept of the *symbol* to express the complex and mysterious ways in which elements of our experience reflect hidden dimensions of the larger realities to which they belong. Thus in speaking of the archetypes of transformation, Jung explains that “They are genuine symbols precisely because they are ambiguous, full of half-glimpsed meanings, and in the last resort inexhaustible” (“Archetypes,” 38, ¶ 80).

By a symbol I do not mean an allegory or a sign, but an image that describes in the best possible way the dimly discerned nature of the spirit. A symbol does not define or explain; it points beyond itself to a meaning that is darkly divined yet still beyond our grasp, and cannot be adequately expressed in the familiar words of our language. (“Spirit and Life,” 336, ¶ 644)

In the context of this more profound understanding of the nature of the symbol, in connection with the interdependence and interpenetration of all forms and energies implied in the expanded conception of the *anima mundi*, every element of existence can be recognized as irreducibly symbolic and multivalent.

Jung is thus wary of any claims to complete understanding, even of more limited and apparently discrete aspects of experience. He is wary of the tendency

to assume the adequacy of an interpretation because it seems to possess internal coherency and is substantiated by limited empirical observations.

The moment one forms an idea of a thing and successfully catches one of its aspects, one invariably succumbs to the illusion of having caught the whole. One never considers that a total apprehension is right out of the question. Not even an idea posited as total is total, for it is still an entity on its own, with unpredictable qualities ("Nature of Psyche," 168, ¶ 356)

This last passage refers as well to the autonomy of psychic elements and processes that manifest themselves as conscious ideas. Though we often imagine that we create our own ideas, and know their extent and nature, they are themselves manifestation of mysterious processes that are only to a limited extent available to conscious control and understanding.

Jung is therefore aware that there is no basis for claims to ultimate knowledge: "All that *is* is not encompassed by our knowledge, so that we are not in a position to make any statements about its total nature" (*Mysterium*, 538, ¶ 768). Taken narrowly, this statement might seem to imply that there is no basis even for thoughtful speculation regarding the broader nature of reality. However, Jung undoubtedly engaged in such speculation, and such a prohibition would extend beyond the bounds of his skeptical arguments. This passage is better understood as a warning against claims to certainty and exhaustive understanding regarding the total nature of reality. Jung regards such claims as a manifestation of faulty reasoning and possession by unconscious factors that create a delusion of omniscience and infallibility: "If we are convinced that we know the ultimate truth concerning metaphysical things, this means nothing more than that archetypal images have taken possession of our powers of thought and feeling, so

that these lose their quality as functions at our disposal” (*Mysterium*, 551–552, ¶ 787).

These insights present not only new epistemological difficulties, but also a basis for a more nuanced reflection on the psychic influences that invisibly shape our thinking and perception. However, as Jung points out, our capacity to compensate for these perceptual limitations through enlightened self-reflection is itself limited, since only a limited dimension of our full psychic being and perceptual domain is available to immediate conscious assessment, and this conscious assessment is itself configured by invisible influences. “Nobody drew the conclusion that if the subject of knowledge, the psyche, were in fact a veiled form of existence not immediately accessible to consciousness, then all knowledge must be incomplete, and moreover to a degree that we cannot determine.” (“Nature of Psyche,” 169, ¶ 358).

Despite these difficulties, this heightened awareness of the subjectivity and incompleteness of all knowledge, and of the inevitable influence of specific unconscious factors on experience, actually allows for a more accurate and nuanced mode of apprehension, in which perceptions and thoughts can be understood more profoundly in the light of an expanded awareness of their psychic context. It also requires an ongoing openness and humility on the part of the inquirer, and an attuned sensitivity to symbolic resonance, which allows for a more dynamic engagement with the living mysteries of the psyche.

An Expanded Epistemology

Though never clearly elaborated by Jung, his concepts of the *unus mundus* and *anima mundi*, and his expanded conception of the archetypes, also imply an expanded epistemology, as his earlier quotation introducing the *unus mundus* suggests. If all individual entities are interconnected elements of a single unitary reality, then knowledge requires not only understanding an element in its distinctness, but also seeing it in its relationship to the larger relational whole. Since the whole can never be comprehended in its fullness from a limited perspective, this implies the necessity of a kind of *visionary speculation*, which seeks to comprehend each element in terms of its participation within the unbounded mystery of being, while at the same time maintaining an awareness that all such interpretations are provisional and incomplete, and remaining open to ongoing disclosure and illumination. This in turn requires an attitude of openness, a willingness to live with awareness in the face of uncertainty, and an ongoing receptivity to multiple sources of wisdom and knowledge. Since the meaning of any particular element is determined by its relationship within the larger whole, and the fullness of this relationship can never be completely comprehended, even specific discriminations are subject to the mystery and uncertainty that must necessarily pervade all thought and experience.

This implies a participatory epistemology in which there is no strict division between subject and object; the subject is a participant in the very reality it seeks to know. All that is experienced and known is a self-disclosure of this one reality. It also means that there is no separation between being—or doing—and

knowing. Every way of being—every pattern of relational participation—is also a way of knowing. This means that the experiencing subject is a participant in multiple sources of ongoing revelation, and that the act of participation is a complex, multi-dimensional process of co-creative exchange. Participatory knowing is also a process of mutual and self transformation.

Jung's more expansive conception of the archetypes and the *unus mundus* also provides additional ways of expanding his epistemological horizons. For if the archetypes are not merely subjective factors, operating within the closed sphere of the individual consciousness, but are pervasive cosmological forms of creative patterning and intelligence, then archetypally informed thoughts and perceptions may be a source of profound revelation about the nature of reality that transcend the limitations of ordinary sensory perception. The psyche, which is not apart from reality, but a pattern of sensitive intelligence within it—and perhaps a pattern that paradoxically pervades it—is therefore the recipient of genuine knowledge and wisdom from all sides, or from all the sources that constitute, interpenetrate, and flow into it. Thus in respect to knowledge of the archetypes, the individual conscious subject is formed and pervaded by archetypal presences, which it can experience, know, and recursively inform by virtue of its relational participation, thus overcoming the illusory Kantian boundary between phenomena and noumena.⁷⁰ Similarly, the psyche is no longer seen as separate from the world in which it is embedded, but rather as having its deepest identity in a reality that includes what is ordinarily designated as the external physical world. Thus perception of the physical world, like that of the psychic realms, is neither

unavailable, nor subject to absolute and certain knowledge, but is rather available for ongoing participatory exploration, disclosure, and creative configuration.⁷¹

The various modes of archetypal and relational participation through which an individual subject lives and experiences shape the character of its knowing in ways that are both limiting and informing. Cultivation of an ongoing reflective awareness of the nature of one's archetypal and relational participation is therefore beneficial as a way of clarifying one's shifting epistemological position and potentiating a sensitive engagement with the living sources of one's knowledge and illumination.⁷²

As all knowing is in this sense perspectival and situated, and the dynamics of perspective and situation are continuously changing, there is no basis for completely "objective", final, or absolute knowledge.⁷³ However, paradoxically, since the knowing subject enjoys its fullest identity in the inclusive openness of the unus mundus, and since all dimensions of being are interpenetrating and collectively constitute an integral whole, there is no ultimate limitation on what can be known. According to this expanded epistemological understanding, the process of knowing is at once situated, in that it involves specific centers and patterns of relational participation, and unbounded in that this participation takes place within the fundamental openness of the unus mundus and anima mundi, and is continuously informed by their fullness and creative dynamism. Knowing therefore takes place through a dynamic, multi-dimensional process of participatory attunement, which is most profound and creatively beautiful when there is an open, sensitive, and honoring relational engagement. Knowing is thus a

communion with the living sources of one's knowledge, and participation in an ongoing, multi-dimensional, co-creative process. As such, it has both ethical and aesthetic dimensions since these are inherent in all interactions and creative processes.

Individual and Collective Individuation

While Jung was a theorist and a devoted investigator of the psyche, much of his life was devoted to psychological healing and growth. His theorizing and his investigations of the psyche were primarily lured and directed by this deeper spiritual commitment. This is reflected in the quality and nature of his theories, and in the philosophical and spiritual visions that emerge from them. As Jung himself reflects in the chapter "Late Thoughts" in his autobiography, the very endeavor to understand the mysteries of the psyche is motivated by a calling to come into deeper contact with our own spiritual ground and thereby overcome a spiritual alienation that prevents us from achieving the full potentials of our nature, both as individuals, and as members of a collective and planetary society.

As a psychologist and spiritual visionary who was sensitive to the larger patterns of meaning that pervade human life, Jung was deeply and painfully aware of the disastrous collective tendencies that are even now threatening to destroy the integrity and sustainability of life on the planet.⁷⁴ Thus while his medical duties and commitments charged him with helping his patients to heal from their psychological maladies and move towards psychological and spiritual wholeness, he was also called by his vision and sensitive awareness to help heal the collective

maladies that both impede the spiritual development of the individual, and currently threaten to destroy the planetary ecosystem.

Jung's psychological and spiritual vision, emerging as it does in the context of modern life, with its ground in an adapted mode of scientific thinking and investigation, yet with deeper roots in the world's wisdom traditions and the living reality and vision of the psyche, is in many respects a kind of spiritual response to the needs of our time. In this sense it is uniquely suited to address the psychological tendencies and standpoints of the modern Western human, with our deep need for connection to our environment and a living spiritual ground, but also for a sophisticated and self-reflective mode of participation that honors the achievements of the rational mind and its aspirations to creative autonomy amid meaningful interconnection. Jung was in this sense a voice for the deeper wisdom of the anima mundi, and for its movements towards collective wholeness and individuation. His psychological theories provide the basis for an orienting spiritual vision because they offer a practice through which modern alienation can be overcome, and a sustainable and life-enhancing relationship with our environment and larger spiritual self-hood attained. His psychological and spiritual vision of the individuation process offers an understanding of life as a continuous process of development, in which reflective consciousness has a vital role to play, and in which individual wholeness is attained within and through relationship.

Individual and Cosmic Individuation

The mysterious and dynamic process of individuation in which each individual psyche participates appears to be embedded not only within a social and collective context, but within a larger and even more mysterious cosmic developmental process. This larger developmental process, which can be conceived as the individuation process of the anima mundi, is therefore multi-stranded, and involves multiple levels of interrelated identity and relationship. To the extent that we all share a relational identity grounded in the larger self-hood of the anima mundi, every relatively localized individual psyche is an expression of the anima mundi's need and desire to grow through creative embodiment in relationship.

What then is the nature of the anima mundi that it needs or desires individual embodiment and interrelationship in order to develop and fulfill its potentials? What is the special role that individualized and reflective consciousness plays in this larger developmental process? Toward what end, if any, is the cosmic individuation process aimed? Toward what end, therefore, is the individual process of development directed? These are all questions that call for some reflection in the context of Jung's vision, and which perhaps offer an orientation, by way of a response, to fundamental questions concerning the meaning and purpose of human life.

One of the crucial aspects of the anima mundi that emerges in the context of this vision is its paradoxical fragmentation and incompleteness, so that despite its boundless, encompassing, and self-interpenetrating nature, it is often divided

and in conflict with itself, and must develop towards wholeness and the fulfillment of its potentials. This is reflected in the suffering and injustice that plagues the world, and the extent of conflict and division that exists among the beings of the earth. As the individual psyche is a microcosm of the anima mundi, so the specific characteristics of human life reflect archetypal dynamics active in the anima mundi. “There are many spirits, both light and dark. We should therefore be prepared to accept the view that spirit is not absolute, but something relative that needs completing and perfecting through life” (“Spirit and Life,” 336, ¶ 645). The “many spirits” can be understood as individualized beings and archetypal forces belonging to the anima mundi, which may express more or less individuated aspects of its nature.

It seems that the archetypal dimension of unity within the anima mundi still needs to be more fully integrated with the individualized and relational dimensions. The unity and wholeness characteristic of an undifferentiated state is in some important sense incomplete, as is the unity that is characteristic of mere interrelatedness. There is thus a profound potential for interrelationship within the elements and unrealized potentials of the cosmic soul, whose creative fulfillment is necessary in order for a more profound unity and wholeness to be achieved. These relational potentials appear to unfold according to a unique and mysterious pattern: one that is both specific and universally encompassing, multi-stranded and intimately united, complexly nuanced and eternally open to creative inflection and transformation.

This state of ongoing development, inner division, and incompleteness is thus characteristic of both the localized individual psyche and the anima mundi in which it is embedded. Thus when Jung reflects that “the psychic wholeness comprehended in the unity of consciousness is an ideal goal that has never yet been reached” (“Nature of Psyche,” 175, ¶ 366), this can be understood both in respect to the individual psyche and to the anima mundi of which it is a microcosm. The individual psyche therefore seems to have a crucial role to play in this larger developmental process, of which its own individuation process is a microcosmic reflection.

An essential element of this process involves developing a center of awareness in which both self and *relational reflection* can take place. Jung remarks that in the outwardly visible cosmos, human self-reflective consciousness seems to be a new and unprecedented phenomenon. Through human self-reflective consciousness the anima mundi has the potential to become conscious of itself in a new way. “That is the meaning of divine service, of the service which man can render to God,⁷⁵ that light may emerge from the darkness, that the Creator may become conscious of His creation, and man conscious of himself” (*MDR*, 338).

Thus Jung describes the process of the embodiment of the anima mundi in individual human form in terms of a divine incarnation. Through the challenges and contradictions of human life, the cosmic soul comes to know itself in a new way, and through the human individuation process internal contradictions

belonging to the anima mundi are played out and reconciled on a microcosmic level.

But God, who also does *not* hear our prayers, wants to become man, and for that purpose he has chosen, through the Holy Ghost, the creaturely man filled with darkness—the natural man who is tainted with original sin and who learnt the divine arts and sciences from the fallen angels. The guilty man is eminently suitable and is therefore chosen to be a vessel for the continuing incarnation, not the guiltless one who holds aloof from the world and refuses to pay his tribute to life, for in him the dark God would find no room. ("Job," 460–461, ¶ 746)

This passage reflects Jung's moral vision as it emerges in the context of the individuation process. Because one of the primary tasks of human life is integration, a one-sided identification with good and light is problematic, and often perpetuates a split in the psychic personality that leads to greater fragmentation and unconsciousness, rather than unity and wholeness. Also, that which still needs to be integrated is often 'dark' from the perspective of a limited consciousness. Thus a fear of darkness and a defensive stance towards the unknown, conflictual, and—from the standpoint of consciousness—threatening elements in our makeup, is antithetical to the individuation process. Thus the capacity and willingness to inhabit and endure tensions and contradictions has a heroic quality, and is in this sense morally superior to a one-sided and superficial identification with goodness and light.

That "God . . . also does *not* hear our prayers" potentially indicates both that the anima mundi is paradoxically aware and not aware, on different levels, of the specific experiences of its individual embodiments, and that prayers sometimes remain unanswered because the afflictions from which one desires to escape are the means by which the integration and incarnation processes of the

anima mundi are achieved. Perhaps the anima mundi cannot answer our prayers because it has yet to learn the lessons from our suffering and undergo the transformations that would allow it to come to our aid.

In his call to inhabit the polarities and contradictions of our nature, including the opposites light and dark, and good and evil, Jung is not advocating that we should accept these dimensions of existence as they are initially expressed and experienced, which is generally in conflicting and incompatible forms. “But if a union is to take place between opposites like spirit and matter, conscious and unconscious, bright and dark, and so on, it will happen in a third thing, which represents not a compromise, but something new” (*Mysterium*, 536, ¶ 765). Thus the individual who embraces an internal confrontation of evil and darkness with good and light allows these forces to be mutually transformed and achieve a higher form in relationship to one another. Those who abide by inherited moral precepts and regard good and evil as clearly distinguishable often deny dimensions of their own nature that are necessary for wholeness. What is regarded as evil from one perspective may be necessary and beneficial from another. For instance, historically people who openly questioned or contradicted official Church doctrine were often labeled as heretics, though they may have been driven by deeper spiritual impulses to do so. In a similar sense, both individuation from a family structure and collective social progress often depend on questioning and even transgressing well established values and customs. Such changes are often driven by internal, mysterious, and unintegrated psychic forces. One must have the courage to experience these forces in oneself, and to find one's own unique

relationship to them, in order for their integration and transmutation to successfully occur.

The capacity to successfully engage in this process depends largely on the attitude of the conscious personality. One of the basic conceptions of this vision is that human life is surrounded and permeated by archetypal beings and forces, and involved in a multiplicity of mutually constituting relationships. The modern individual has tended to imagine that he or she possesses a far greater separateness and autonomy than is actually the case. In this way the many relationships in which we participate have remained largely unconscious, and our need to engage in honoring modes of relationship has gone unrecognized.

Similarly, the sources of our experiences, actions, and orientation have remained largely unconscious. This illusion of separateness is accompanied by the belief that one's internal psychic reality is privately enclosed, and is primarily under the control of the conscious personality. "In our waking life, we imagine we make our own thoughts and can have them when we want them. We also think we know where they come from, and why and to what end we have them" ("Psychological foundations," 306, ¶ 580). "But if we step through the door of the shadow we discover with terror that we are the objects of unseen factors" ("Archetypes," 23, ¶ 49). This terror is the response of the conscious personality to the discovery that it does not own or control its psychic reality in the way that it had imagined.

Given the microcosmic embeddedness of the individual psyche in the anima mundi, the inner world is revealed as a wider psychic reality, which

transcends our limited individuality and includes us in its sphere. Thus we have a responsibility to relate to this world, and to the beings and forces that inhabit it, not as something that we control, but as a larger reality in which we are called to collaborate and participate. In integrating the archetypal patterns and forces of the collective unconscious, we are therefore aiding in the incarnation process of the anima mundi. Thus Jung's statement regarding the role of individual consciousness— “For it is the function of consciousness not only to recognize and assimilate the external world through the gateway of the senses, but to translate into visible reality the world within us” ("Structure of Psyche," 158, ¶ 342)—applies also to our microcosmic participation in the individuation of the anima mundi.

Conclusion

As a result of our unconsciousness we have neglected our relationships with many dimensions of our existence, with disastrous consequences both for human life, and for the life of the planet and the beings that inhabit it. In terms of our relationship with the planet itself, and with the material form of existence that we share, a split in the thinking of modern man⁷⁶ has caused us to devalue the physical, and to perceive it as devoid of spirit. This has led to the disastrous exploitation of the planet's resources for our own narrow-minded and shortsighted ends, as well as to a devaluation of our own bodies and physical existence. It has also led to a mode of thinking which is despiritualized and objectifying, which denies the interiority that is present throughout existence, on both sides of the illusory subject-object division. This amounts, both practically and spiritually, to

a form of self-destruction, as well as to a profound dishonoring of the other beings with whom we share our existence and our most encompassing selfhood.

As Jung points out, the process of incarnation, or the embodiment of the anima mundi, involves both the spiritualization of matter and the embodiment of spirit. One is not possible without the other. “But all effects are mutual, and nothing changes anything else without itself being changed” (*Mysterium*, 536, ¶ 764). Willingness to engage in mutual transformation is central to the individuation process, and to the capacity to engage in honoring relationships at many levels. The disconnected ego instead fixates on a narrow representation of the self and attempts to force the environment to conform to and support its limited self-image. This objectification of the world, which approaches it merely as means to support our own ends, rather than as an end in itself and a dwelling place of soulfulness and spirit, condemns us to a relationship of alienation and self-negation.

This mode of relationship has led to a pervasive feeling of meaninglessness and disconnection in modern life. The myths that have given meaning to our lives and the relationships with the natural world have that have grounded and sustained us have eroded in the face of our arrogation of all meaning and spirit to what we believe to be our private inner worlds. Under these circumstances, the deeper meanings and wisdom embodied in the myths and spiritual traditions of the world have become unconscious, and are left to exert their influence without the cooperation of consciousness. “Since the stars have

fallen from heaven and our highest symbols have paled, a secret life holds sway in the unconscious” (“Archetypes,” 23, ¶ 50).

In our usurpation of both the inner and outer worlds, we have assumed a level of power and influence that is incommensurate with our level of wisdom, and with our capacity to live well and beautifully. Our scientific knowledge and the technology it has allowed us to develop gives us the power to manipulate the world in unprecedented ways, which is now leading to the destruction of the planet's ecosystems. The only way for us to remedy this situation is to develop a level of wisdom and moral and spiritual consciousness commensurate with our capacity to affect the world. “The only thing that really matters now is whether man can climb up to a higher moral level, to a higher plane of consciousness, in order to be equal to the superhuman powers which the fallen angels have played into his hands” (“Job,” 460, ¶ 746). This is not something that we can achieve on our own, out of the same disconnected and inflated mode of relating to the world that has led to our current crisis. Instead it requires an expansion and opening of consciousness to receive the sources of wisdom that are presented by the innumerable relationships in which we participate—be they social, environmental, or archetypal.

We are called upon not only to awaken to the larger relational reality in which we participate, but to embrace the principle of relationship itself, the principle of Eros, or love. For as Jung says, “Eros is a *Kosmogonos*, a creator and father-mother of all higher consciousness” (MDR, 353). Through an attitude of loving receptivity to all the beings and forces with whom we are united in

relationship, the divine potential for communion and co-creative exchange that lives between us can be realized on many levels, and the individuation of the anima mundi can proceed through the individuation of all beings. This appears to be an eternal process, without any discernible end point, though a shining goal toward which we might aspire is the deepening of self-relationship to the point that all relationships are mutually enhancing and give rise to ever deeper beauty and meaning.

PREFACE TO CHAPTER THREE

But we, insofar as we have power over the world and over one another, we must learn to do what the leaf and the whale and the wind do of their own nature. We must learn to keep the balance. Having intelligence, we must not act in ignorance. Having choice, we must not act without responsibility.

—Le Guin⁷⁷

Beauty will save the world.

—Dostoevsky⁷⁸

In this third essay I explore the interaction and integration of the two visions that emerged out of my individual engagements with Whitehead and Jung in the first two essays. In relating these two visions, I present an emergent integrative vision, employing concepts drawn from each thinker and modified conceptions that emerge in relation to their interaction. In particular, I emphasize how all of existence can be understood as a relational creative process emerging through the interaction of three interdependent archetypal principles: Self, Eros, and Creativity. I also explore how this vision suggests a set of existential values that may have some relevance to challenges we now face as a species. This essay thus presents one way in which the philosophies of Jung and Whitehead can interact to give rise to fresh vision, and one such vision that arises out my creative engagement in the context of my own evolving vision and exploratory process. It is presented in the spirit of open-ended exploration.

See appendix A for a selection of aphorisms that were written as part of the creative visioning process for this essay.

CHAPTER THREE: EROS, CREATIVITY, AND COSMOLOGICAL
INDIVIDUATION: A VISION OF SPIRITUAL PROCESS EMERGING
THROUGH THE THOUGHT OF JUNG AND WHITEHEAD

The aim at philosophic understanding is the aim at piercing the blindness of
activity in respect to its transcendent functions.

—Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 169

The type of Truth required for the final stretch of Beauty is a discovery and not a
recapitulation.

—Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 266

A mood of universal destruction and renewal . . . has set its mark on our age. This
mood makes itself felt everywhere, politically, socially, and philosophically. We
are living in what the Greeks called the *kairos*—the right moment—for a
"metamorphosis of the Gods," of the fundamental principles and symbols. This
peculiarity of our time, which is certainly not of our conscious choosing, is the
expression of the unconscious man within us who is changing. Coming
generations will have to take account of this momentous transformation if
humanity is not to destroy itself through the might of its own technology and
science. . . . So much is at stake and so much depends on the psychological
constitution of modern man. . . . Does the individual know that *he* is the
makeweight that tips the scales?

—C.G. Jung, *The Undiscovered Self*, 123

The only thing that really matters now is whether man can climb up to a higher
moral level, to a higher plane of consciousness, in order to be equal to the
superhuman powers which the fallen angels have played into his hands.

—Jung, *Answer to Job*, CW 11, 460

Introduction

As Jung prophetically observed, we are living in a period of tremendous
upheaval and spiritual transformation, in which the underlying order of existence
is undergoing a shift. As is almost inevitably the case at such times, we find

ourselves facing multiple crises and beset by turmoil and confusion. The old order that has supported life on the planet for the last sixty-million years is being eroded, seemingly at the hands of human technological manipulation, and the traditions and ways of life that have supported human existence for millennia are being rapidly undermined by these same tendencies and forces. It is a time of both great peril and great possibility. The advances in human understanding that have propelled this massive transition have begun to reveal their devastating potentials as well as their benefits, although the full consequences and potentials of our technological exploitation of the natural world are only beginning to dawn in collective consciousness.

However, as the writings of both Jung and Whitehead suggest, the extremity of what we are now facing as a species is more than can be attributed simply to rapid advancements in understanding and implementation, and the complex challenges that they bring about. It may be equally the reflection of a deficiency in our overall understanding of the profound spiritual reality in which we find ourselves, a coupling of our vastly increased capacity for influence with a lack of pervasive spiritual reflection and awareness. It is thus primarily a crisis of consciousness, seemingly greater than anything that has yet been faced in the history of human life, perhaps even in the life of the planet.

Despite our wealth of technical knowledge and ability, our society's prevailing relationship to the beauty and spiritual complexity of the world in which we live is relatively superficial. Our endeavor to understand and technologically manipulate the world around us is not consistently guided by deep

wisdom or spiritual purpose, nor is it informed by a commensurate endeavor to expand our own self-understanding. It is therefore almost inevitable that we should misuse the power that our newfound knowledge and technological capacities bestow upon us, and that we should allow ourselves to be guided by forces and habits of thought that dishonor the deeper patterns of relationship in which our lives are embedded. If we begin to attend to these relationships, and to comprehend the ways in which our lives and consciousness are interwoven with the whole of existence, a very different spiritual attitude and perspective of might life emerge.

As an element in this process we must look for sources of guidance and wisdom in our past as well as in our present—in the past as it lives and speaks within us in our present moment. There is a special power and relevance to be discovered in the voices of those who have spoken forth in the offering of new vision during the last several centuries, prompted by deep and sensitive responses to the developing currents in their respective societies and cultures. Alfred North Whitehead and Carl Gustav Jung are two such visionaries, each offering a vision of existence that is deeply rooted in both the scientific understanding of their times and a powerful impulse toward spiritual reflection and transformation. Both offer a dynamic vision of human life that is based on self-reflection and a movement toward psychological and spiritual wholeness. Both honor the achievements of human reason, and see the need to put this capacity into the service of a deeper wisdom and spiritual movement.

Though they approach the basic themes and questions of existence in some sense from opposite directions—Jung as a psychiatrist and psychological investigator, Whitehead as a mathematician and cosmologist—they converge in visions of a reality that is pervaded by spiritual depth and purpose, in which the subtle and often illusory boundaries between inner and outer, subject and object, and physical and spiritual are explored and illumined. By virtue of their different emphases and points of departure, each offers to the other a background of depth that is enriching and compensatory.⁷⁹ Jung offers a deep psychological vision in which a spiritual cosmology is implicit; Whitehead offers a contemplative cosmology in which a spiritual psychology is implicit. In the meeting of their visions the cosmological and psychological depths that they each devoted their lives to exploring resound together, creating a greater spiritual fullness and dynamism of vision, and more profoundly uniting the realms that they each sought to bring together in their own lives and thought.

Aim and Purview of This Essay

Jung and Whitehead are two thinkers who have crucial gifts and wisdom to offer to us in our current period of crisis and transformation. However, in each of their respective writings and theoretical systems I have encountered, along with many fruitful ideas and inspiring visions, certain constraining assumptions and conceptual frameworks, which seem to limit the full expression of the spiritual visions that I sense looming behind their written words. In the case of Whitehead, elements of fixity and ontological separateness in his philosophical system seem to obscure a more dynamic and fluid vision of reality that emerges from his

writings. Similarly, Jung's emphasis on strict scientific empiricism, situated within a Kantian epistemological framework, causes him to characterize the fundamental elements of his psychology in misleadingly narrow, reductive, and dualistic terms. If his conceptions are released from these constraining assumptions, a far more expansive and spiritually coherent vision of existence emerges. These expanded and modified visions seem to welcome and mutually encompass each other, suggesting a unified vision in which the psychological and the cosmological are inseparable faces of a single reality.

In this paper I offer a synthesis in which both visions are transmuted⁸⁰ and a new vision emerges. In the first part of the paper I explore a set of interrelated principles and concepts, and in the second I present a set of emergent values that arise from these principles as guides for human life. It goes without saying that each thinker represents a world of vision and creativity whose detail and complexity no single engagement could fully honor or express. What emerges in this present enterprise is a confluence of those currents of thought and vision which have spoken to my own living thought and intuition and evolved through my creative engagement, as well as through the larger processes in which the current threads of my experience are interwoven. This paper is therefore offered as an exploration of an emerging personal vision with the hope that it may play some positive role in an ongoing process of collective integration, healing, and transformation.

Conceptualization and Phenomenology of Archetypal Principles

Both Jung and Whitehead employ specific terms to designate concepts that are integral to their respective visions. In attempting a synthesis of these visions, some creative selection and transmutation of these terms and concepts is necessary. Given the complexity of the current endeavor, all efforts will be made to employ a clear and consistent terminology and use of language.

Whitehead's metaphysical enterprise and Jung's ongoing exploration of the living psyche meet in the space of contemplative experience. The understanding of metaphysics that here emerges does not involve a set of fixed beliefs about the ultimate nature of reality, but a phenomenological reflection on the depths of existence concealed within the immediacy of lived experience. In exploring Jung's and Whitehead's writings and ideas, searching the horizon of their widest conceptions, I find that certain pervasive principles emerge, both within their respective visions and in the convergence between them. These interdependent spiritual and metaphysical principles, which I experience as animating and shaping all of existence, each express themselves along a paradoxical continuum that encompasses their potential opposites. Their emergence and treatment in this essay are spontaneous contextual expressions arising out my contemplative engagement, which should in no way be taken as final or ultimate descriptions of the realities they reflect. Their number, the names with which they are designated, the descriptions given, and the dynamic interrelationships explored, are all limited and contextual expressions of this inexhaustible living mystery.

Fundamental Principles and Concepts

Creativity and the Self—Unus Mundus and Anima Mundi

For Whitehead, the most fundamental principle pervading existence is *Creativity*. Creativity is "the universal of universals," which cannot be adequately characterized because "all characters are more special than itself" (*PR* 21). It is the source of all existence, and the principle of novelty and creative advance, whereby the universe continuously forms itself into a multiplicity of interrelated unities of process and feeling. Every element of existence is a product of Creativity, and every current of process is a dynamic thread of Creativity. Even the *primordial* and *consequent natures of God*, as conceived by Whitehead, are 'creatures of creativity.'

In the cosmological vision that emerges out of Jung's most mature and expansive writings, the principle of the *Self* occupies a place of centrality and fundamental importance. This is the fundamental principle of individuality, coherence, unity, wholeness, and centered awareness. It is what allows for the formation of individual centers of consciousness and distinctive psychic constellations, and it is what guides the individuation process toward ever greater wholeness, differentiation, and integrity. According to Jung's more expansive conception of the self, it pervades not only individualities but also the wider world in which they participate: "What is meant by the self is not only in me but in all beings, like Atman, like Tao. It is psychic totality" ("Good and Evil," 463, ¶ 874)—"But this self is the world, if only a consciousness could see it. That is why we must know who we are" ("Archetypes," 22, ¶ 46). Two of Jung's other most

pervasive and encompassing concepts, the *unus mundus* and *collective unconscious*—which I have conceived in an expanded form in terms of the *anima mundi*—each express different inflections of this underlying principle.⁸¹

The *unus mundus* is the one paradoxical world, which contains all opposites and all elements of existence; it is the paradoxical reality formed by the stillness and movement of the divine spirit in all its dimensions. As Jung expresses it in discussing his expanded conception of the archetypes, "The psychoid nature of the archetype contains very much more than can be included in a psychological explanation. It points to the sphere of the *unus mundus*, the unitary world, towards which the psychologist and the atomic physicist are converging along separate paths" ("Conscience," 452, ¶ 852). The *anima mundi*—literally "world soul"—is the cosmic soul, which grows and develops, feels, experiences, and relates. As described by Jung in the context of exploring various alchemical conceptions, "The world soul is a natural force which is responsible for all the phenomena of life and the psyche" ("Nature of Psyche," 196, ¶ 393) and is "identical with the spirit of God" (190, ¶ 388). Both the *unus mundus* and *anima mundi* enjoy spiritual and creative unity through their participation in the archetype of the Self, the principle of unity and individual distinctiveness, wholeness, integrity, and evolving identity. The Self grants the *unus mundus* its paradoxical and encompassing unity, the *anima mundi* its wholeness, identity, and individual character, and every being and form of creativity its individual existence and integrity. The Self is that principle whereby Creativity assumes distinctive forms and distinctive centers of awareness, and

also the principle whereby all such forms are eternally united in a single selfhood, a single spiritual reality. The Self and Creativity are thus complementary notions, each pervading the other and all of existence. According to this understanding, there is no element of existence that is not an element and a product of Creativity, and there is no creative form or process that is not guided and pervaded by the principle of the Self.

The Primordial Ground and Divine Nature

Two of the most encompassing concepts in Whitehead's vision are those of the primordial and consequent natures of God,⁸² and both of these can be conceived in dynamic relationship to both the *anima mundi* and *unus mundus*. The primordial nature, reconceived in this essay as the *primordial ground*, is here understood as fundamentally inseparable from the consequent nature and divested of its static character. Rather than a static realm of pure potentials, conceived for all time in a "neutral valuation," the primordial ground can be understood as the open ground of existence, containing all potentiality in a dynamic, indeterminate, and ever-changing form. This ground is not separate from the realm of manifestation, but underlies and pervades it, and is thus itself pervaded and transformed by the continuous process of Creativity.

Whitehead's notions of God have at least two prominent aspects, completeness and perfection, which may at times be in conflict with each other. For the most encompassing reality also encompasses imperfection, injustice, evil, and suffering, while perfection is apt to be exclusive and selective. In understanding the primordial ground in terms of a dynamic plenum of possibility

that includes the entirety of existence, a meaningful element of selective perfection is excluded. One could therefore also speak of patterns of divine potential, which act as lures and guides for the self-formation of creativity, and which are elements of the larger plenum of potential. In this context I will therefore refer to this larger plenum as the primordial ground, or *dynamic field of potential*, and will refer to those more perfected and divinely inspired constellations of possibility as *patterns of divine potential*, or *divine potentials*.

A similar conflict between selective perfection and inclusiveness can be discerned as implicit in Whitehead's conception of the consequent nature. The consequent nature of God in Whitehead is the most encompassing and perfectly unified constellation of feeling, selfhood, and creativity emerging out the primordial ground, including all creative manifestation in a transcendent unity of feeling, which is itself continually growing and transforming with the ongoing procession of creativity. However, this unity is conceived as allowing the entirety of the actualized past to exist in a perfected experience of simultaneous unison, in which all diminishing conflicts are minimized, and all beautiful intensities and contrasts are preserved in a harmonious unity of mutual enhancement (*PR*, 349–350). The consequent nature is simultaneously the unified perfection of all realized entities, preserved in "everlastingness," and one particular entity among other entities—albeit the most perfected and encompassing—constituting a particular way of feeling the entirety of creation from its own unique perspective.

This conception of the everlastingness of the consequent nature merits some examination, as does the related concept of its complete and perfect

inclusion of every entity in a harmonious unison of feeling. For although Whitehead does not refer to the consequent nature as an "occasion," and emphasizes its simultaneous feeling of all previously successive creative realizations, he also describes the consequent nature as successively absorbing each new wave of occasions, and as itself existing in a new form at each phase in the procession of Creativity (*PR*, 350). Thus while all events are simultaneous in the consequent nature, the consequent nature is transformed by each new wave of events, and thus is in some sense part of the procession of time in the broader sense, with the past perfectly harmonized and actualized, and the future as yet unrealized in its fullness and specificity.

Each new incarnation of the consequent nature necessarily involves a new synthesis, and therefore a shift in the character and relations of its elements. Thus even in the consequent nature every element of existence is undergoing continuous change, in its character and in its relations. Similarly, the very selective synthesis that is characteristic of the consequent nature implies an emphasis and magnification of certain elements, and a banishing and diminution of other elements. It seems questionable whether there can be a single selective unification of all elements of existence that most fully honors every specific element without emphasizing or arranging some elements to the detriment of others. It seems rather that every specific arrangement—every specific pattern of feeling—does greater justice to some elements or potentials, and less to others. Thus the extent to which any given element of existence can be said to be fully or everlastingly preserved in Whitehead's consequent nature is not clear.

Divested of its static primordial ground, the consequent nature has a dynamic plenum of possibility to draw from in its unique process of envisagement and self-formation. However, the notion of a single, perfect, primordial perspective informing this creative process disappears along with the static conception of the primordial nature, and the relative perfection and inclusiveness of any single experience becomes a still more open question. Along with this the notion that there must be only one single, most-encompassing and perfect divine perspective, or series of perspectives, also becomes more questionable. Instead I would suggest a potentially limitless number of interrelated divine perceptions and modes of feeling, each encompassing the fullness of existence from a different perspective and with a different shading of emphasis, as well as its own unique sense of beauty and meaning. These perspectives can be seen as paradoxically unified and manifold, in that every set of perspectives may potentially belong to yet a larger perspective, yet also lose something of its irreducible beauty and uniqueness through this selective inclusion. Thus, as Whitehead himself indicates (*PR*, 350), the consequent nature can be conceived as a paradoxical unity and multiplicity, with the dimension of unity being relative, rather than absolute.

There could thus be a multiplicity of divine perspectives, and there would need be no absolute demarcation between different orders and scopes of divine creation. Similarly, the paradoxical relationship between unity and multiplicity that already characterizes the consequent nature in Whitehead's conception is here rendered potentially more complex, for this relationship exists not only between

individual temporal entities and the one inclusive entity, but between all entities, at all levels of magnitude and perfection. These paradoxically interrelated dimensions of manifest creative unity are here understood as inseparable from the primordial creative ground—and more specifically, from their corresponding patterns of divine potential—and as belonging with this ground to a paradoxically manifold divine unity, *the divine nature*.

An Integration of Concepts

Since a potentially limitless number of perspectives are possible, it may be helpful to conceive of some more encompassing reality in which these perspectives are interrelated, and to some extent integrated. I would suggest that the divine nature and the anima mundi could both be understood in this sense—as more or less unified constellations of divine perspectives, always subject to further integration, which express the fundamental dynamic unity and fullness of feeling that characterizes existence. In this sense the divine nature and anima mundi each represent the whole of existence conceived in terms of the interior meeting and integration of its constituent feelings, emerging into ever deeper and more complex forms of relational identity and coherent self-expression. For the sake of clarity and specificity however, it may be helpful to conceive of the divine nature as representing the more ideal spectrum of this paradoxical totality, and the anima mundi as comprehending a broader range of conflicting elements and perspectives. The divine nature would therefore include and shape itself directly through the patterns of divine potential which are its uniquely constellated

visionary ground, and would constitute an ideally self-perfected and self-perfecting dimension of the anima mundi.

Since the principle of the Self is here conceived as pervading all of existence, yet manifesting itself more powerfully in certain centers and constellations of creative feeling, the anima mundi and divine nature, as well as every other being in existence, can be conceived as simultaneously containing an element of unified selfhood and a multiplicity of only partially integrated perspectives and modes of feeling. Unity and selfhood would therefore exist on a qualitative continuum, in which the ultimate potentials of unity and selfhood—as well as their opposites, fragmentation and non-entity—would never be fully exhausted, and all oppositions would flow together in a paradoxical unity.

I thus conceive the primordial ground and anima mundi as eternally united and growing. As with the unus mundus and anima mundi, the primordial ground and anima mundi can be understood as complementary expressions of a single reality, reflecting a difference of emphasis and perspective: the primordial ground paradoxically pervades and includes the realm of manifest creation, and the anima mundi has the primordial ground as its ever-present and transforming background. The notion of the primordial ground also has a special correspondence to the paradoxical unity of the unus mundus, which underlies and encompasses all manifest existence. However, it preserves a distinctive meaning in its emphasis on the potential character of existence, just as the unus mundus emphasizes unity.

Archetypes and Possibilities

As already indicated, possibilities are not here conceived as fixed or entirely discrete, but as evolving aspects of a dynamic continuum of creative activity and realization. Archetypes, as I understand them in accordance with Jung's broadest conceptions,⁸³ are patterns that pervade this continuum and interweave among the more localized and individualized creative expressions and modes of activity. Every distinctive entity is pervaded by and participates within innumerable archetypes, all of which are interconnected and pervade each other.⁸⁴ Archetypes, as widespread and recurrent patterns of creativity, exist on a continuum of individuality and universality, and as such interfuse with individual entities and processes. For example, each of the levels and criteria of classification used in biology can be understood as corresponding to archetypal patterns, from the broadest characteristics of living organisms and the five kingdoms of the Linnaean classification system, to the patterns and characteristics used to distinguish subspecies. The characteristics that allow individuals to be classified in this way, which are manifested in unique combinations in different individual organisms, are in some sense always embodiments of larger archetypal patterns, from the most limited and specific patterns of generality to the most widely share traits that pervade all life forms. Such characteristics include the size, shape, color, and function or an animal's bodily structures and organs, and the patterns of perception and instinctual response that inform its behavior. Similarly, like all entities and processes, archetypes can also vary in the extent and nature of their embodiment of the principle of the self, so that they can

emerge as abstract and diffuse patterns of interconnection between relatively disparate creative elements, or as relatively autonomous creative agencies and self-formative thought forms of the anima mundi.⁸⁵ The essentially non-local character of creative activity, reflected in Whitehead's vision of concrescence, allows for the emergence of translocal archetypal entities, which shape and are shaped by more localized individual entities. Thus archetypes pervade the creative continuum both as relatively individualized creative agents and as relatively diffused patterns of form and possibility. As such they can be conceived as comparatively active or implicit thought forms of the anima mundi, with a certain select group of these constellating around and constituting the divine nature. Each of the principles described in this essay, along with their paradoxical counterpoints, can be understood as archetypes, which represent active principles of being and creativity, and belong to the paradoxical fullness of the unus mundus.

The Relational Principle

In the vision thus far expressed, Creativity and the Self appear as the two most pervasive principles shaping existence, giving rise to and implying both the anima mundi and unus mundus, and the primordial ground and divine nature. A third principle that I would add to these, and accord equal importance, is *Eros*,⁸⁶ the principle of relationship, attraction, love, sensitivity, and beauty. Eros, as I conceive it, is the relational principle, whereby the elements of existence are mutually formed, interconnected, and meaningfully related to each other; the principle of attraction and allurements, whereby these elements are drawn into ever

more intimate forms of communion and creative manifestation; the principle of love, whereby beings are moved and united by the highest feelings and impulses of care, compassion and affection; the principle of sensitivity, whereby every element of existence uniquely feels and is felt by every other element; and the principle of beauty, whereby love, aesthetic harmony, and spiritual sensitivity emerge and guide creation. The impulse toward intimacy and ever new depths of communion is an expression of Eros, as is the aim at beauty of both creativity and sensitive experience. Every element of existence is here understood as being constituted by the relationships that form it, and thus as a configuration of Eros. All creativity is conceived from this perspective as a movement of relationship, and all relationship as creative.

Similarly, the movement of the Self is understood as a movement in and through relationship—a movement of Eros—and every form of existence and individualized creative manifestation as a constellation of self-relationship. The paradoxical interrelatedness of elements in the *unus mundus* is also an expression of the unity of Eros and Self, as are Jung's related notions of the *complexio oppositorum*, *coniunctio oppositorum*, and *hiEros gamos*.⁸⁷ Thus Creativity, the Self, and Eros can be seen as three fundamental principles of existence that each encompass and imply each other. The relationship between the three principles is an expression of Eros, their unity is an expression of the Self, and their dynamically unfolding existence is a manifestation of Creativity.

Individuation, Concrecence, and Relationality

The visions of Jung and Whitehead are each centered around respective conceptions of an essential developmental process that can be understood as taking place at multiple interrelated levels. For Jung the central developmental process is the process of *individuation*, in which an individual psyche moves toward ever greater integration and wholeness while increasingly actualizing its specific individuality. Because he was a practicing psychiatrist and healer, much of his focus is on the healing, growth, and development of individuals, although he understood that this process does not take place in isolation, and necessarily involves the relationship of the individual to a complex multiplicity of environmental and relational factors, including the archetypes and the collective unconscious. As Jung explained it, “Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to oneself” (*Nature of Psyche*, 226, ¶432). Over time Jung broadened the purview of his investigations and theories to include an analogous process of development and integration in the collective unconscious itself, here understood in a more expanded form as the *anima mundi*.⁸⁸ In the context of this vision, the individuation process, which is governed by the principle of the Self, can be seen as taking place at all levels of existence in which the archetype of the Self is actively expressed through some form of centered activity and distinctive process of self-formation.

The fundamental developmental and creative process described by Whitehead is *concrecence*, through which the entire universe of distinctive entities and patterns of creative interrelationship is configured into a multiplicity

of new interrelated unities of selfhood and feeling, which Whitehead terms *actual entities*, or *actual occasions*.⁸⁹ As in Jung's treatment of the individuation process, Whitehead generally applies the term concrescence to the formation of contemporary entities in isolation from one another (*PR*, 61, 321), although I have argued that the concrescent processes of individual entities can be seen as profoundly interconnected and interpenetrating in a way analogous to the various interrelated processes of individuation taking place at different levels. The process of concrescence can also be seen as taking place in accordance with the principle of the Self—which continually gathers creative energies and feelings into new forms of individuality and wholeness—and can therefore be understood as a microcosmic expression of the same developmental principle that Jung describes taking place in individual psyches over the course of a human lifetime.

In Whitehead's vision, individual entities, once formed, do not change, but perish as units of active feeling, and attain *objective immortality* through being objectified in the concrescent processes of other entities (*PR*, 29).

This seems to perpetuate the familiar subject-object dichotomy in a new form, and introduces elements of fixity and separateness into the creative process. I have argued that the concrescent process can be seen as fundamentally relational, and that rather than terminating in a single fixed and unalterable form, it can be understood as involving a movement of coalescence within an ongoing creative process, in which the forming entities continue to feel within and creatively shape each other. Thus rather than existing in a static and objectified form in successive future occasions, every distinctive entity lives within, shapes,

and is transformed by the activity of the other entities in whom it is felt and integrated. Therefore both the primary formative process of concrescence and the ongoing development and mutual transformation of distinctive entities can be seen as governed by the principle of the Self, and can be understood as the processes of concrescence and individuation respectively, with the initial process of concrescence being in some sense a seminal stage in the larger process of individuation which encompasses it.

As was noted in the earlier discussion of the interrelationship between the fundamental principles of Self, Eros, and Creativity, the activity of these principles is profoundly interdependent. Thus it is apparent from the discussion above that the processes of individuation and concrescence are governed by the principles of Eros and Creativity, as well as that of the Self. The creative character of these processes is so obvious as to require no explanation, but their relational character may be less obvious, and is less emphasized in the accounts provided by both Jung and Whitehead. The concrescent process is generally described in terms of the single forming entity integrating the universe of completed entities and their relations in a distinctive individual synthesis of feeling. This already implies a gathering of these elements into a novel pattern of feeling and interrelationship, in which the principle of Eros is clearly visible. However, this traditional Whiteheadian understanding is based on the assumption that the entities that are being *prehended* are no longer alive as active subjects, but are merely crystallized creative forms to be objectified in the newly forming entity.⁹⁰ If instead these already existent entities are understood as ongoing processes of feeling and

creativity, the concrescent process can also be understood in terms of the communion and co-creative interrelationship of these existent entities within the creative process of the newly forming entity. In this sense every process of self-formation is also a form of co-creative interrelationship, governed by the principles of Self, Eros, and Creativity. Similarly, if the concrescent processes of actual entities are not separate from each other, but are interconnected elements of a more encompassing cosmic creative process, then their relational character becomes manifestly apparent.

These observations hold equally true of the individuation process at its various other levels. In order for an individual psyche to achieve integration and wholeness, it must integrate a number of elements that would ordinarily be described as internal, as well as establish a meaningful pattern of relationships with factors that would ordinarily be described as environmental. In the light of the vision presently being explored this dichotomy becomes somewhat philosophically problematic, though it can still be used as a functional description in accordance with a frequent mode of everyday experience. Those elements that are ordinarily conceived as internal to the psyche can each be understood as possessing their own measure of autonomy and selfhood, as Jung notes in his description of the nature of *complexes*.⁹¹ The individual psyche, the ego, and the conscious personality can each be seen as higher order complexes, or complexes of complexes, centered around the archetype of the Self. The integration that takes place at the level of the individual psyche can also be seen as a pattern of co-creative interrelationship taking place at the level of constituent complexes.

Similarly, the individual psyche can be seen as participating in larger patterns of creative activity, such as that of the archetypes, or the anima mundi.⁹² The individuation processes of various individual psyches can also be seen as profoundly interrelated, so that they involve participation in what might be conceived as a relational process of individuation, which also involves the individuation of a relationship, or pattern of interrelationships. The wholeness achieved in each individuation process is a relational wholeness, as well as a form of distinctive individual identity. Every unique center of selfhood comes into a unique pattern of interrelationship with the entirety of existence and each of its partially distinctive and individuated elements.

Possibility, Actuality, and Dynamic Participation

In the context of the vision I am explicating here, possibilities are not discrete, unchanging entities, existing in a fixed form in the primordial mind of God, but dynamically interconnected and continuously changing elements of an open creative field, in which possibility and actuality exist along a dynamic continuum. Here we see an expression of what I have termed the *relational principle*: that every element of existence enjoys its existence and identity through its relationship to every other element, and to the entirety of existence, and that as any element of existence changes, so too does every other element—and so also the whole. In this vision the principles of Eros, Creativity, and Self are understood to be inseparable expressions of an ineffable and irreducible spiritual reality, of which each relatively determinant entity is a limited and relative manifestation. This is to some extent an inversion of Whitehead's metaphysical position, in

which individual atomic entities constitute the primary reality, and Creativity is a necessary abstraction. I would suggest rather that completely individual, separate, and distinct entities are abstractions from a fundamentally open and dynamic relational creative flux, in which individual distinctiveness and dynamic interconnection exist on a paradoxical continuum. Individual distinctiveness is a fundamental dimension of this reality, but one which is never fixed and absolute, but always relative to a dynamically unfolding pattern of relationship within an open and paradoxically changing whole.

This means that no element of existence is completely separate, fixed, or definable, and that every relatively individualized entity possesses multiple levels of identity and participates in multiple patterns of relational creativity and communion. Each entity has as its broadest identity the entirety of existence, which can be conceived in multiple archetypal, mythic, and conceptual forms, including in this context the interpenetrating principles of Self, Eros, and Creativity, and the related concepts of the *anima mundi* and *unus mundus*—or the *Divine Spirit* of which they are all expressions. Each entity also participates in the life of every other entity, and therefore in all of the more or less dispersed or coherent creative patterns that pervade existence. These patterns include what Jung refers to as archetypes, as well as the various patterns of possibility which Whitehead describes as eternal objects—here reconceived as dynamically changing elements of the relational creative field, and therefore inseparable from the emergent patterns of actualization with which they exist along a shifting continuum.

Archetypal Dynamics of Creative Process

Following my earlier discussion of Creativity, Self, and Eros, every element of existence can be understood in three fundamental and interrelated ways: as a dynamic element within an ongoing multi-dimensional creative process; as a pattern of interrelationships, situated within, extending through, and participating within other interrelated creative patterns; and as an individualized mode of creative self-expression, with its own measure of autonomy, subjectivity and unity of feeling. As noted before, the extent of individuality, subjectivity, and autonomy varies greatly between creative expressions, and is so negligible as to appear non-existent in a great many cases, at least from the perspective of conscious human thought and perception. In many cases it may appear a mere empty abstraction to attribute any of these qualities to the fleeting, dispersive, and seemingly lifeless patterns pervading our interpreted universe, but in the light of the profound interconnectedness of every element of existence, it is more coherent to understand these patterns as inseparable expressions of a fundamentally vital, creative, relational, and self-formative reality, in which there is a subtle mutual participation and sharing of qualities between the elements of existence.

The focus of this vision is inherently on those dimensions of existence and creative process that appear most significant from the human vantage point, acknowledging in advance that this necessarily involves a highly selective and situated interpretation of the boundless and multidimensional existence in which we find ourselves. However this in itself seems to reflect an essential feature of the creative process that we are investigating—that every being arises in dynamic

relationship to a uniquely constellated world, and to a pattern of relationships within a shared world, and that world and beings are mutually constituted and defined, constituting a dynamic world experience process that is at once individual, relational, and part of a larger indefinable whole and openness. In reflecting on our own sense of self, whether we are identified primarily with our bodies, our minds, our social roles and identities, our conscious personalities, the open flow of experience, or some more spiritual sense of soul, we can understand each of these dimensions as at once the expression of a dynamic creative process, a pattern of meaningful interrelationships, and an emerging and evolving individuality.

Each of these ways of conceiving of ourselves and the entirety of existence implies a set of potential values, which like the principles themselves, are profoundly interrelated. Some of the principles are implicit in Jung's various writings, for example integrity and awareness, and others, such as beauty, are discussed more explicitly by Whitehead, especially in part four of *Adventures of Ideas*. While I draw on both of their reflections, the primary source for these values is the logic inherent in the emerging vision I am here exploring. While the Self, Eros, and Creativity can manifest themselves in countless blind and destructive ways, the following section explores the values that emerge from a consideration of their highest potential expressions. These values apply to every aspect of human life and existence, and offer potential philosophical and spiritual direction to human thought, experience, relationship, and creativity.

Emerging Qualities and Values⁹³

The Self and its Values

Since each of the principles we have discussed informs every manifestation of existence, a discussion of one principle implicitly involves each of the others. With this understanding, we can examine some of the ideal values that emerge most directly out of a consideration of each principle, as well as out of the interrelationships between principles. In some ways it makes sense to begin with the Self, as the Self is the center from which distinctive perspectives and value judgments emerge. Every distinctive being has a unique constellation and experience of the Self, and this irreducible uniqueness of experience and expression is a fundamental reality to honor and recognize. From this uniqueness comes the value of *authenticity*, the value of living and expressing oneself in a way that is true to one's unique character and experience. Authenticity is not a value merely to be embraced for oneself, but also a value to be honored and supported in others. In its broadest sense, this respect for the authentic expression of others is also a respect for truth, just as our authenticity is a form of honesty—toward ourselves and toward others. Thus authenticity promotes truthfulness, both in expression and in perception.

An individual self also strives for *integrity*, or wholeness, which is both a unity and integrity of its parts, and a fulfillment of its individual, relational, and creative potentials. Again, wholeness, or integrity, is a value to be embraced for oneself, but also a value to be supported in others. As Eros in its highest expressions informs us, we need others to be whole, and we need a world of

belonging in which to be whole. Wholeness is not a quality that belongs to static or separate things, but a quality of unification and internal and ecological relatedness, which belongs as well to relationships and to processes. We are not merely whole, but we grow whole, and we grow in a wholesome way, which honors our unique individual natures and our place in an ecological fabric of relationships. This joint quality of wholeness and integrity develops at many levels, and is a value that relates strongly to both Eros and Creativity. There is an integrity in healthy relationships, and there is a wholeness and integrity to inspired creative works and processes. This wholeness and integrity is an expression of the archetypal principle of the Self, but also of the relational principle of Eros, which unites the elements of self and relationship into a pattern of integrity and wholeness whose growth is ultimately shaped and supported by love.

An emerging element in both authenticity and integrity of Self is *awareness*. Every self has a unique center and mode of awareness, and this awareness can become reflectively aware of itself and thus attain to new and higher levels of self-awareness in relationship. Thus centered awareness and self-awareness are essential qualities for human beings, and the fulfillment of one's own nature requires a growth and development in these qualities of awareness. Such awareness naturally emerges in healthy relationships, and self-awareness is a necessary corollary to relational awareness. To develop such awareness, we must usually engage in a conscious process of self-reflection. This process has the potential to bring us into deeper relationship with our own selves, with our world,

and with the selves belonging to the relationships in which we participate. While authenticity, integrity, and a unique mode of centered awareness may be natural and inherent qualities of selfhood, in the face of difficulty, conflict, and outside pressures, self-reflection is often needed to preserve and develop these qualities. These three essential qualities of selfhood—authenticity, integrity, and centered self-awareness—each support and reinforce the development and expression of the others, and each also depends on the loving and relational values of Eros.

Values of Eros

As the Self comes to know itself in and through relationship, each of the aforementioned values emerges through the principle of Eros. Especially the principle of integrity, which always involves a relationship between both relatively internal and relatively environmental elements, brings us into the essential principle of relationality. Thus we might speak of individual and relational integrity as two partially distinctive but interrelated principles, each of which unites the principles of Self and Eros. And the highest expression of each of these depends on the emergence of *love*, the basic feeling of care, compassion, and tenderness toward our selves, all other beings and the entire world process that spontaneously emerges within awakened spiritual awareness. As a great cosmic principle, love belongs to Eros, to the union of Eros and Self, and to the union of both principles with Creativity. Here we will discuss some of the related qualities of Eros that emerge from and lead back to love.

As the Self discovers itself in relationship—where it always dwells—it develops a capacity to sensitively attune to the tendrils and patterns of relationship

in which it participates, and which constitute its own essential being and nature. Such attunement requires *sensitivity*, the capacity to feel, to be aware of, and to respond to beings or elements in our self and environment. This sensitivity involves a spiritual and aesthetic experience of feeling, and an emerging awareness and capacity to respond to another being or aspect of our relational ecology. Thus, as with integrity, there is a sensitivity that is an essential attribute of the Self and its unique mode of experience, and there is a sensitivity that belongs essentially to relationships, and these sensitivities are partially distinctive but interdependent. It is possible to experience sensitively, but not to respond sensitively to the feelings and needs of other beings. Similarly, it is possible to be responsive to the needs of others, and not to the subtlety and tenderness of our own experience. The fullest expression of sensitivity lovingly unites these qualities, and simultaneously enhances the life of the self and the lives of those with whom we dwell in spiritual and creative relationship.

When we think of Eros, we often think first of *attraction* and romantic passion. Eros allures and attracts us and draws us together. This attraction between beings and the passionate feelings and connections it inspires is another essential expression of Eros. It binds all of the elements of existence together, and through their interaction gives birth to ever new forms of life and beauty. It can thus be found at every level of existence, from the subatomic to the cosmic, the personal to the collective. The passion it generates is a fundamental force in creation, and the intermingling it gives rise to spontaneously produces novelty,

freshness and excitement. This quality of attraction is a fundamental element of relationship, and often gives birth to the higher forms of spiritual love.

Another, just as essential quality of Eros, which is implicit in the higher forms of sensitivity, is *compassion*, the ability to feel with another being. With compassion, there is love and care for the feelings, experience, and sensitivity of another. There is a capacity to enter with our fullest awareness, imagination, and sensitivity into the life of another being, and to allow that being's feelings to live in us and inform our actions. Compassion, therefore, usually moves us to kind responsive action when it is in our power to directly aid, nurture, or support another being who is struggling or suffering. Simply the willingness to feel with another, even when we are powerless to directly relieve another's suffering, allows connection and wisdom to live and grow between us. Compassion also allows us to share in the joys and beautiful experiences of another being, and to give our care to that being's nurturance and development. It is the presence of compassion that brings sensitivity into its highest modes of spiritual expression, allowing for loving mutual recognition and mutually enhancing creative relationships. In true wisdom, compassion is always present, and compassion flows seamlessly into the more encompassing presence and mystery of love.

Values of Creativity

Creativity is the fundamental energy of existence, the active source of dynamism, aliveness, and transformation. Thus *vitality* is a fundamental attribute and value of Creativity. Vitality involves both generative force and the spiritual dimension of creative expression, which moves toward ever higher levels of depth

and subjective intensity. Whatever is life-enhancing adds to the vitality of the creative process in one or more of its many interflowing currents, and all creative processes depend upon this underlying energetic dynamism. Therefore vitality—in thought, experience, and creative expression—is a fundamental value for human life, and for the wider life of all beings and their creative patterns of interrelationship.

Another fundamental quality of Creativity, closely allied to vitality, is *imagination*, which gives rise to novelty of creative vision and expression. This element of novelty is very close to what we often mean when we refer to the quality of creativity. Novelty is originality of creative vision and expression, innovation in creative relationship and self-formation. Novelty depends upon and informs the creative imagination, which envisages new forms and possibilities, and through envisagement also shapes the process of their realization. Imagination is thus of fundamental value in the creative process, and combined with skill and vitality, allows for the full expression of Creativity. Imagination is present in all forms of perception and feeling, in all thought, and in all creative action. We can even speak of a kind of cosmic imagination, or the imagination of the *anima mundi* and divine nature. It may be that the full expression of human imagination depends upon a full receptive participation in the imagination of the divine nature and *anima mundi*, as well as in the creative and imaginative processes of other beings. Imagination is self-transformative, and gives shape and direction to all forms of creative process and expression.

Another element of Creativity, to which we have just alluded, is *skillfulness*, or artistry. A being may have a creative vision, but without the requisite skill, its vision will not be realized. Thus an artist must have both skill and imagination, and all creation involves artistry. There is even an element of skill in thought, and in the imaginative process itself, so that like most principles and values, skillfulness and imagination interpenetrate. Despite this, skillfulness is a distinctive and essential quality to be valued and cultivated. Skillfulness also overlaps with wisdom, of which it is an essential element, and which it must serve if its capacities are to be put to beneficial use. Thus the great creator must have vitality, imagination, and skillfulness, and is ideally guided by love, wisdom and beauty.

Values of Self and Eros

As mentioned earlier, when selves are brought together by Eros, it is the force of attraction that draws them together, and this often generates great feelings of love and *passion*. Love is a feeling belonging to both the Self and Eros, uniting them in intimate relationship, and is fulfilled only when there is a deep meeting between them. Love is a value emerging out of the interaction of Self and Eros, and is also a powerful force in Creativity. We could here distinguish self, relational, and creative love, yet all of these qualities are profoundly united, just as love unites sensitivity, attraction and compassion. As *interpersonal love* emerges out of the meeting of Eros and Self, *creative passion* emerges out of the meeting of Eros and Creativity. Thus love is a quality that belongs to all three principles, and is most powerfully expressed when all three are powerfully present

and interwoven. As among the highest principles and values of existence, love unites, deepens, and ennobles all the others.

Another, closely related quality, is that of *intimacy*. Intimacy is born out of the deep meeting between two or more selves, or elements of existence, and is thus also a meeting between Self and Eros. The deeper the selfhood, the deeper the intimacy that is possible, and the deeper the love that can be experienced and shared. Thus self and relationship evolve together, and so move into ever deeper forms of intimacy. Intimacy is one of the great goals and values of existence, which represents in some sense a creative return, in which the differentiated Self of creation discovers and embraces itself in a new form. Deep inner experience is a form of self-intimacy, or intimacy between the living elements that compose our selfhood. Outward presence is a form of intimacy with the living creative patterns and relationships that constitute our spiritual environment, and our own and other selfhoods within it. And as with each of the values of Eros, intimacy achieves its highest and deepest expressions when it is accompanied by love. All of the recently discussed positive values of Eros—sensitivity, attraction, compassion and love—allow us to enter into deeper and more beautiful forms of intimacy, as do the qualities of authenticity, integrity, and centered awareness. As mentioned before, *relational integrity* can also be considered a value belonging to the meeting of Self and Eros, and integrity is profoundly needed if intimacy is to be positive and mutually enhancing. Through growing integrity, intimacy, and love, the creative fabric of existence is ever deepened.

Values of Self and Creativity

Just as with Eros and the Self, the Self and Creativity are never apart, and all qualities are ultimately shared in common. Those values associated with the Self depend implicitly for their existence on Creativity. However, when the meeting of Self and Creativity is considered more directly, a set of specific values emerges. These have to do with the phenomenon of *transformation*, or the growth and development of one form of being into another. In order to grow whole, to grow more aware, and to express their authentic natures, selves must develop, evolve, and transform. Transformation is thus a fundamental value for Self and Creativity, and the visible Cosmos is a continually transforming one. Without such change, existence would be static and without dynamism. Without such change there would be no existence to speak of. And yet, mere change is not enough. The deep meeting of Self and Creativity allows for a continual deepening of existence, a realization of ever deeper forms of Selfhood, Eros, and Creativity. If we wish to refer to a form of transformation that continually deepens existence, we might use the term *evolution*, here understood as not only indicating change over time, as in some biological understandings, but also progressive development. This form of transformation implies both *self-realization* and *self-transcendence*. In order to grow into the full potentials of our nature, we must transcend the current limiting forms of our selfhood. Thus creative evolution is a great value that emerges from the interaction of Self and Creativity.

Values of Eros, Self, and Creativity

Once again we speak of the meeting of those that are never apart. Every Self unites Creativity and Eros, and all Creativity unfolds through the interdependent movement of Self and Eros. Thus in exploring the values that emerge from the meeting of Eros and Creativity, the Self is also powerfully present. From the interaction of all three principles, the challenge of co-creativity emerges. In some sense all creativity is co-creativity, since the element of relationship is never absent. Nonetheless, we can distinguish a form of profound relational creativity, in which multiple selves cooperate in joining their creative processes. This is among the great challenges of existence, and among the great challenges of our time. The elements that makes the highest forms of co-creativity possible are *wisdom* and a wise and loving spirit of *collaboration*.

The compassion and sensitivity that are fundamental qualities of Eros require and develop a kind of relational awareness, and potentiate a mutually enhancing relational responsiveness to other beings and patterns of unfolding creativity. This relational awareness that emerges out of a loving attunement and sensitivity to the beings and living ecological patterns of our relationships and environment, and which informs the creative process, might be described in its higher manifestations as wisdom. Out of deeply attuned and sensitive relational awareness comes the wisdom that guides creation. The more deeply and widely we dwell in sensitive attunement with others—and with the world—the more we develop the living and life-enhancing awareness that we recognize as wisdom.

This gives rise to a fundamental collaborative approach to existence, which is essential to honoring the selfhood of other beings, and joining together successfully in the one great paradoxical creative process. Every act of creation affects all creation. Every activity is an activity within relationship. Thus wise and loving collaboration and relational honoring must be embraced as basic principles governing all activity and existence. Without the ability to collaborate, we interfere with and diminish each other, and ultimately find ourselves in destructive conflicts that imperil all creation. Thus collaboration is a great and pressing challenge for all beings in this paradoxically manifold and relationally united world. The way forward is through ever more profound and refined forms of wise and loving collaboration.

The Intertwining Forms of Beauty

One value which belongs equally and necessarily to all three principles is the quality of *beauty*. There is beauty of individual selfhood and experience, beauty of relationship, and beauty of creative vision and expression. In some sense, beauty is the highest value governing the expression of each of these principles, and all of the values that are associated with them. As Whitehead clearly states, "beauty is left as the one aim which by its very nature is self justifying" (*AI*, 266); and correspondingly, "the teleology of the universe is directed to the production of Beauty" (*AI*, 265). It seems that all existence that is awake to itself and its creative potentials—as an evolving self, as a loving participant in relationship, and as a great shaper and artist of existence—looks to beauty as its highest goal and guide. As the highest of all spiritual values—along

with love, which beauty inspires, and is its deepest expression in the realm of feeling—beauty is a mystery that ultimately defies definition. It is an indefinable harmony and dynamism among interwoven elements, a revelatory experience of sublime aesthetic pleasure, and a profoundly loving spiritual intimacy and communion, which fulfills the deepest longings of existence. In every aspect of life, if we are awake, we strive for beauty. All other values serve this end. And if all of existence is a manifold and paradoxically interwoven process of relational self-creation, then loving beauty in all her intertwining forms is the highest shining guide, the face of divine self-revelation and inspiration.

Conclusion

The divine mystery of existence and creation is inexhaustible—opening into the eternal unfolding of beauty. This essay does not aim to create a complete metaphysical system, nor an exhaustive system of values. Rather, it attempts to articulate what I have experienced as a living vision, in the hope that it might have some relevance to the challenges we now face. Both Jung and Whitehead offer us visions of wisdom and beauty that we have yet to fully assimilate as a society. These visions have great applicability to our time, and they have the potential to inform each other and thus engender new vision in those who creatively engage them. There are many different ways in which this might be done, and this is but one emerging vision, in which these two great voices are for a moment more profoundly united. My hope and sense is that the kind of values reflected in this vision might offer us a noble and beautiful way forward. If we relate to all of existence as a profound and sacred spiritual mystery, which is at once deeply

ensouled by a divine principle of selfhood, fundamentally and pervasively relational, and infinitely and inexhaustibly creative, then we might enter with love, passion and reverence into the creative endeavor of weaving intimacy, self-realization, and creative beauty together, guided by the highest principles and visions of spiritual beauty.

PREFACE TO CHAPTER FOUR

The inner face of the world is manifest deep within our human consciousness, and there reflects upon itself.

—Teilhard de Chardin⁹⁴

There is a god in everything, earth and the expanse of sea and the sky's depths.

—Virgil⁹⁵

The imagination is the great friend of the unknown.

—O'Donohue⁹⁶

In this fourth essay I explore the philosophical worldview and spiritual epistemology of esotericist and polymath Rudolf Steiner. In particular, I seek to examine both his explicitly stated epistemological perspective and the more subtle epistemological insights that seem to be implicit in many of his later philosophical writings, also exploring how his broad epistemology and his more specific epistemology of subtle spiritual perception inform each other. While I examine what I believe to be flaws and limitations in his early epistemological formulations, I also suggest how these may be modified and transformed in the light of insights articulated in his later writings. I then seek to further develop and transform this modified epistemology, suggesting skeptical qualifications to its claims to knowledge, and exploring its significant ethical and aesthetic implications. One of the primary perspectives articulated in this emergent epistemological vision is that all knowing can be understood as involving a relational creative process, which is ethical insofar as it shapes the lives and experience of other beings, and is aesthetic in that it is fundamentally creative and at its best aims toward the creation of spiritual beauty. Because Rudolf Steiner has

a vast worldview based on unusual and extraordinary capacities of perception, I do not attempt an assessment of many of his claims and reports, and limit my discussion to an exploration of his central philosophical concepts from my own subjective vantage point.

CHAPTER FOUR: COLLABORATION, INTIMACY, AND EVOLUTION: EXPLORING STEINER'S EPISTEMOLOGY OF SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION

Elemental devotion is based on the experience of oneself in another being or process; love is an experience of the other in one's own soul.

—Steiner, *Threshold of the Spiritual World*, 105

Only if I love something can it reveal itself to me.

—Steiner, *How to Know Higher Worlds*, 102

Introduction

We are shaping the world at every moment, with our consciousness and through our creative participation. We are discovering that we are powerful creators, and that with this power to create comes tremendous potential and responsibility. In the face of multiple crises, we are called upon to reexamine our fundamental assumptions about the nature of existence and the role we play within it. Essential to this process is an exploration of the ways we know and engage the world through our consciousness, and the ways that this process of knowing shapes the world we are engaging. Rudolf Steiner, philosopher, esotericist, and spiritual leader, recognized in his own time this crisis in modern life and the need to reorient ourselves in a more spiritually aware and sensitive relationship to the living mystery of existence. He perceived that despite our tremendous advances in scientific knowledge and technological capacity, "the price of this gain in outer culture has been a corresponding loss in higher knowledge and spiritual life" (*HW*, 19, ¶ 8). Correspondingly, he observed a disturbing "abyss in modern thinking between natural phenomena and spiritual

and morally universal meaning" (*Auto*, 123). In response to this observation, he elaborated an emerging philosophical worldview and a corresponding epistemology of spiritual perception and method of spiritual development that offer a positive pathway forward for humanity.

According to Steiner, in addition to the world visible through our senses and comprehensible to our sense-bound intellect, there exists a deeper spiritual reality that surrounds and pervades this more limited perceptual world. He confidently and famously pronounces that "the capacities by which we can gain insights into higher worlds lie dormant within each one of us" (*HW*, 13, ¶ 1), and that "every spiritual eye can be opened" (*Theos*, 16, ¶ 3). However, he also observes that "this higher life remains unconscious in most human beings" (*HW*, 173, ¶ 3). Not only does Steiner believe that awakening and development of these higher spiritual capacities is possible for all human beings, he also sees it as necessary for the attainment of true knowledge and the positive development of humanity. He situates his epistemological approach with the insight that we must "begin by investigating the state of consciousness through which a person enters a relation to the world that allows things and facts to reveal their real nature" (*Auto*, p. 34–35), and concludes from his spiritual investigations that "higher knowledge can come about only if a development of human cognitive powers precedes it" (*Theos*, p. 16, ¶ 4). However, he also confidently asserts that "the way stands open to anyone whose will is sincere" (*HW*, 26, ¶ 18) and offers a set of methods by which this process of cognitive and spiritual development can be pursued. Steiner thus offers a broad philosophical and spiritual worldview based on his own

esoteric observations, a general epistemology that includes a more specialized epistemology of higher spiritual perception, and a path of human spiritual development based on these higher modes of cognition that includes a method for developing the cognitive capacities through which this path of spiritual development can be pursued.

My focus in this paper is on an exploration of this epistemological approach and the corresponding philosophical and spiritual worldview that emerges from it. Like many thinkers, Steiner elaborates various perspectives over the course of his life and writings, so that there are both developments and potential discrepancies between his various philosophical positions and formulations. I will begin by examining his basic early epistemological position and explore some limitations of this position, as well as ways that he himself addressed these limitations in his later writings. I will then look at the broad philosophical and spiritual worldview that he elaborated after these early epistemological writings, and at the more complex and sophisticated epistemology that emerges from it. I will in turn examine this more complex epistemology and suggest some ways in which it could be qualified, developed, and applied to the challenges of modern existence. Central to these philosophical and spiritual worldviews are conceptions of human individuality, freedom, and morality. I will also examine these conceptions along with ways that they might be transformed in the context of a more nuanced epistemological perspective. Lastly, I will explore the relevance and application of these emerging

philosophical and spiritual perspectives to the challenges of our current spiritual development and the future evolution of consciousness.

Steiner's Early Foundational Epistemology

Steiner was deeply concerned with the subject of epistemology from an early age, since he felt it to be essential to have a firm basis for knowledge, and especially for knowledge of a spiritual nature. He deals with epistemological issues in many of his early, as well as his later writings, but the most definitive expression of his basic epistemological position is articulated in his work translated as *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path: A Philosophy of Freedom*. Despite important developments in his thinking and in his spiritual vision, he continued to consider this book an essential foundation for situating and understanding his later esoteric writings. For the sake of clarity, I will examine the epistemological position articulated in this foundational work on its own terms before examining his later epistemological insights and perspectives. Addenda to various chapters of the book for the 1918 edition, as well as comments describing his epistemological project in his autobiography, illustrate the ways in which his early conceptions were refined and clarified while still preserving much of their essential structure. While I begin with a critical examination of his early formulations, a more mature, complete, and coherent epistemology grounded in a dynamic relational ontology emerges both in the course of Steiner's life and writings, and in the course of their discussion in this essay.

Steiner clearly states his intention for the book in the preface to the revised 1918 edition:

I try to present a view of the human being that can support all other knowledge. I also attempt to show how this view fully justifies the idea of freedom of the will, provided that one finds the region of the soul where free will can develop. (*IT*, 2, ¶ 1)

From the beginning, Steiner's epistemological project of grounding and situating all human knowledge is connected to both the freedom of the human soul and the ethical character and responsibility that arise from this freedom.

Though he wishes to create a firm foundation for knowledge, he is also aware, especially in his mature reflections, that any static formulation or fixed conception cannot provide the living insight necessary to truly situate human knowledge and understanding. Thus in the same preface to the 1918 edition he adds these qualifying remarks:

But no theoretical answer is given that, once acquired, is simply carried as a conviction preserved by memory. Such an answer would have to be an illusion, according to the style of thought underlying this book. Therefore no such finished, closed-off answer is provided here; rather, reference is made to a region of soul experience in which, through the soul's inner activity, the question answers itself in a living way, always anew, whenever a human being needs it. (*IT*, 2, ¶ 2)

This is an important aspect of his thinking. Despite the formal structure of many of his writings, and the clarity and definiteness with which he often makes his pronouncements, Steiner recognizes the ongoing need for open-mindedness and fresh thinking, and that attachment to beliefs and prior conceptions obscures living understanding. This is important to note, as the power of enlivened thinking and immediate intuition are central to his philosophical position. As Steiner himself states, "in thinking, we are given the element that unites our particular individuality with the whole of the cosmos" (*IT*, 84, ¶ 20), and "when we think, we are the all-one being that penetrates all" (*IT*, 84, ¶ 20). This dynamic, and even

"mystical" experience of thinking is essential to his entire philosophical and spiritual vision, and will be explored in its various conceptions and manifestations throughout this essay.

According to Steiner, when we perceive the world through our ordinary bodily senses, we perceive only certain outer aspects and manifestations of its full living reality. The remainder of this reality must be apprehended through thinking. When we unite our outer sense impressions with a conceptual comprehension of the internal structure and form of the object we are apprehending we arrive at a full picture and understanding of that reality. When we rely solely on our sense impressions, it is as if we only saw the outside of an object, or only so much of its surface as is visible through our senses from a given perspective, but when we arrive at an accurate conceptual understanding of the object in question and relate this to our outward sense impressions, we perceive its complete nature. This assumes, of course, that our sense impressions and thinking are indeed accurate and complete. Whether the completeness or accuracy of such perceptions and thoughts can ever be assumed is another question which bears examination. Even if Steiner's basic epistemological model is accepted, it might still be argued that both basic elements of perception, sense impression and thinking, are liable to error, and that there is never a guarantee that a complete or accurate understanding of any object of perception is attained. Thus this epistemological framework is far from eliminating the possibility of error, uncertainty, and incompleteness from perception.

Another complication, which Steiner himself recognized, is that objects of perception are not really separate from their larger context. It is a process of abstraction to attempt to view and understand a perceptual element independent of its environmental context, and that context ultimately involves the entirety of existence. Since the direct and complete apprehension and understanding of the entirety of existence at a single instance and from a single limited perspective does not appear to be possible, it follows that apprehension of the living reality of any given object must be provisional, subjective, and incomplete. While Steiner recognizes the unitary character of existence, he seems to believe that thinking and intuition allow us to perceive the world and its elements in their wholeness.

To *explain* a thing, to *make it comprehensible*, means nothing other than to place it into the context from which it has been torn by the arrangement of our organization, described above. There is no such thing as an object cut off from the world-as-a-whole. All separation has merely a subjective validity for us, for the way we are organized. For us, the world-whole splits into above and below, before and after, cause and effect, object and mental picture, matter and force, object and subject, and so forth. What meets us in observation as separate details is linked, item by item, through the coherent, unitary world of our intuitions. Through thinking we join together into one everything that we separated through perceiving. (*IT*, 89, ¶ 26)

While it is true that thinking and intuition can allow us to comprehend many complex relationships between disparate elements of experience and combine them into a whole and living vision of reality, it is also true that we must select and abstract from the full living complexity of the world in order to experience it in a coherent and conscious manner. Steiner recognizes that we must do this in our initial perception of reality through our senses, but he seems to believe that this process can be completely and successfully reversed through the process of

thinking and intuition. I would argue that any picture that we form of the world on the basis of combining thinking and intuition with sensory perception is still a limited, simplified, contextually situated, and subjectively configured one, and does not present the reality of the world in its fullness and completeness. The world experience picture we form is a unique creation, and a new edition to that reality, but it does not comprise complete or certain knowledge of the world or its internally related elements. Though wholeness is an essential aspect of living experience and intuition, to the extent that it provides the illusion of a complete representation and understanding of the world that is being experienced, it is deceptive, as is any subjective experience of complete certainty regarding the interpreted relationships within that subjectively configured experiential whole. This is not to say that such an experience of wholeness is not valuable, or even necessary, or that it does not constitute its own form of existential wholeness for the being that shapes and experiences it, but only that it does not fully replicate or encapsulate the integral wholeness of the world in which it arises, and which it reflects.

Steiner also acknowledges subjective dimensions of perception, both in regard to the constitution of the subject and in regard to the subject's contextual perspective. In reference to the perceiver's context he writes:

After all, each of us has a standpoint from which to view the world. Our concepts connect themselves to our percepts. We think universal concepts in our own special way. This characteristic quality is a result of our standpoint in the world, of the sphere of perception connected to our place in life. (*IT*, 103, ¶ 15)

Despite this, Steiner seems to believe that we can apply universal concepts to our sensory perceptions, to our percepts, in an objectively accurate and complete manner. Though the particular concepts that we apply to our particular percepts reflect and constitute our unique subjective individuality and position in the total world process, he believes they can still be objectively accurate and complete in reference to the elements of the world that we are apprehending. As I have argued above, it seems to me that the interrelatedness and interdependence of all elements of the world process precludes complete comprehension of any element from a limited subjective vantage point. Thus any perception is a simplification and an abstraction from the full complexity of the world process, and any perception reflects the limitations of the perceptual vantage point from which it is made, in respect to both sensory observation and the conceptual interpretation through which it is configured. A perception may be relatively accurate and complete, in reference to both its sensory and conceptual contents, and it has its own unique subjective meaning and aesthetic character, but it cannot be totally objective, certain, or complete as a perception and representation of these elements in the context of the larger and fuller reality they reflect. Such individual situated perceptual experiences can certainly inform and complement each other, and they belong together as interrelated living elements of a single whole world process, but they cannot be fitted together as objectively accurate discrete perceptual pieces that collectively constitute an objectively complete and coherent perceptual whole.

In a similar way, Steiner acknowledges the subjective character of our perceptions in relationship to our particular individual constitutions.

In contrast to this particularity is another, dependent on our individual constitution. How we are constituted, after all, makes for a special, well-defined entity. We each connect special feelings with our percepts, and do so in the most varying degrees of intensity. This is the individual aspect of our personality. It remains left over after we have accounted for the specificities of the stage on which we act out our lives. (*IT*, p. 103, ¶ 16)

For Steiner, this individuality has to do with the feelings that we associate with our concepts and percepts. He sees the percepts and concepts as being, at least potentially, objective, though their specific selection and configuration is relative to our unique standpoint, while the feelings with which we imbue them give our perceptions their individual subjective character. He thus treats concepts as if they existed objectively and universally, apart from subjectivity, and are simply clothed with feeling within the perceptual process of the individual subject. Thus Steiner remarks that "feeling is the means by which concepts first gain concrete life" (*Intuitive*, p. 103, ¶ 18), implying that concepts exist objectively independent of any form of subjective feeling.

He also treats this process of imbuing concepts with feeling as if, while giving the individual perception its unique character, it did not change the objective conceptual content. Thus he writes that, "for monism, the conceptual content of the world is the same for all human individuals" (*IT*, 235, ¶ 2). However, for a concept to exist as a concept, it must exist within some kind of mind, and this already seems to imply some form of unique feeling experience, subjectivity, and associative context. Steiner addresses this in terms of a universal primordial consciousness in which all individual subjects participate.

Each person's thinking embraces only a part of the total world of ideas and, to that extent, individuals also differ through the actual content of their thinking. But the contents exist within a self-enclosed whole that contains the thought contents of all human beings. The universal, primordial Being permeating all humanity thus takes hold of us through our thinking. (*IT*, 236, ¶ 2)

Even if Steiner posits a universal world consciousness, the conceptual elements of that consciousness would still enjoy specific internal subjective relationships, and would be felt and experienced in a subjective way by the beings within that world consciousness. For instance, each human being that participates in universal consciousness would do so in a specific way, and perceive and feel the totality from a specific internal vantage point that reflects both its unique subjectivity and relational context. The universal consciousness would therefore be differently configured for that individual—it would be a unique emergent reality. Steiner seems to assume that feeling a concept does not change its conceptual character, but it seems to me that a concept has its character and meaning within its relational context, and this relational context includes the ways in which it is felt and connected to other patterns of perception and feeling. Thus it is not possible to have a concept independent of some experience of feeling and meaning, and the nature and context of the feeling and meaning that surround and suffuse the concept changes its character. Every individual subject would access this universal world consciousness from its own unique perspective, and in its own unique way, both in terms of selecting and combining certain conceptual and perceptual elements into experiential wholes, and in terms of imbuing them with feeling and meaning, and would thus experience a unique conceptual world, though participating in a single interconnected whole. Thus each internal

perspective would be unique and irreducible, and there would be multiple levels and configurations of experience, each with its own unique conceptual content and meaning. The totality of all subjective perspectives and concepts could thus also contain internal errors and contradictions, so that divergent interpretations and perceptions could flow together and collectively constitute a whole without being fully reconciled or constituting a single unified self-consistent conceptual perspective. This issue also has bearing on Steiner's notion of ethical freedom, which we will turn to shortly. According to the alternative position that I am here elaborating, concepts can only exist within a subjective context and are never separate from feeling, value, and meaning, nor is their character unaffected by such feeling and meaning. Ironically, it is this very point that I believe constitutes one of the most important contributions of Steiner's mature epistemology, though he himself might not see it exactly in this light.

Many of the problematic issues surrounding Steiner's early epistemology have to do with his conception of thinking. Steiner believes that it is possible to engage in "sense-free thinking," which is free and independent of the influences and organizational structures of the body.

For our organization has no effect on the essence of thinking but rather retreats when the activity of thinking appears. Our organization suspends its own activity—it makes room—and, in the space that has been made free, thinking appears. (*IT*, 137, ¶ 3 edited for 1918 edition)

In such thinking he believes that we penetrate to the universal consciousness of existence and are free of our own subjective limitations. However, even if it is possible to think in a manner that is entirely independent of our bodily organization while still embodied, which may certainly be doubted, is it possible

to think independently of our mental, psychic or spiritual organization? If so, what allows us to think at all, and what determines the direction and character of our thoughts? In what sense is it we who think? This notion seems problematic and does not seem to be a firm foundation for an epistemological understanding. I would argue, rather, that our unique character and organizational structure always plays a constructive and shaping role in thought, and that we cannot reflectively comprehend our own thinking process without becoming increasingly sensitive to the ways in which our own shifting nature shapes our thinking and perception. Steiner speaks of "the element of thinking, which is completely clear and transparent within itself" (*IT*, 103, ¶ 18). However, I believe this apparent transparency to be partially illusory. For we know already that thoughts necessarily exist within a dynamic living context, and this context includes the entire world process in which thinking takes place, so that within and around the apparent clarity and transparency of thought lie hidden influences and conceptual connections. I would argue that thinking can be relatively clear and transparent, and can allow for an intuitive apprehension of essential dimensions of its larger living context that are not directly available to conscious apprehension, but such clarity and transparency are never absolute. There are always hidden dimensions and associative connections within the immediate transparency of thought, and acknowledging this is essential to situating our own thought processes in a grounded, accurate and honoring manner.

This early epistemological model has two other associated issues, which revolve around the relationship of thinking to other processes. As Steiner

explicates it in *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path*, perception generally involves a physically external object; a mental image, or percept, formed of that object; and a concept which is related to that percept. Steiner seems to believe that we can perceive an object initially in a way that is free of conceptual content, form an image of it, and only later apply the concept that is appropriate to understanding its inner form and conceptual nature. However, I would argue that we cannot even approach and interpret an object perceptually without already having certain conceptual structures informing our perceptions, especially in relation to perceptions that are phenomenologically clear and distinct. Thus our thinking is already brought to bear in our original interpretation of the object and formation of a sense impression, or percept. The conceptual structures we bring to bear on the object are part of a dynamic network of conceptual relationships and associations, and it is not possible to be fully conscious of this entire conceptual and associative network, either in advance of perception, during the perceptual process, or even afterward upon reflection. The concepts we later apply to the percept are already shaped and influenced by the initial concepts we used to interpret and perceive the object, so that there is a fundamental circularity to the conceptual dimension of the perceptual process, and there is no point at which a single, clear, discrete and independent conceptual process takes place.

A similar issue exists in relation to Steiner's early notion of the relationship between thinking, feeling and willing. Steiner initially treats these as at least potentially discrete processes that can be conducted and examined in isolation from one another. One has a perception, attaches a concept to that

perception, imbues that concept with feeling, and on the basis of this feeling wills a particular action. However, in his later writings he clearly acknowledges the complex interdependence and fusion of the processes of thinking, feeling and willing. There is always an element of feeling and willing in thinking, and all three elements are similarly present in each of the other two processes. Thus the notion of thinking that is free of feeling and willing is also illusory, and the whole perceptual process, including the process of thinking, is far more complex and difficult to directly experience and comprehend than Steiner initially describes it to be. Nowhere does entirely clear, discrete, transparent and independent thinking take place. There is no apparent basis for absolute certainty or completeness of understanding in the phenomenology of perception and thought.

Freedom and Morality in Relation to Steiner's Early Epistemology

While it provides the starting point for the later development of a more expansive and paradoxical understanding, Steiner's early basic conception of human freedom, resting as it does on this early epistemological foundation, has some associated problems and stands in need of similar modifications. For Steiner, human freedom rests on the independence of the immediate thinking process from any determining influences, including outward physical causes, physical organization and bodily processes, and even mental, psychic or spiritual influences that we do not fully understand or relate to with complete clarity and independence of will. Based on our previous discussion, I would argue that such complete independence from influences does not exist, and that the type of conscious immediate clarity in relationship to the totality of these influences that

Steiner describes is also unattainable. Thus complete and absolute freedom as described by Steiner seems to be an impossibility. In so far as Steiner's ethical position is based on the assumption of such an absolute freedom, it too becomes groundless and problematic. However, I would argue that his basic ethical position can be coherently understood in terms of a qualified, relative and paradoxical notion of freedom, which I will return to later.

Steiner describes his position of "ethical individualism" as follows:

The sum of ideas active within us, the real content of our intuitions, constitutes what is individual in each of us, notwithstanding the universality of the world of ideas. To the extent that the intuitive content turns into action, it is the ethical content of the individual. Allowing this intuitive content to live itself out fully is the highest driving force of morality. At the same time, it is the highest motive of those who realize that, in the end, all other moral principles unite within it. We can call this standpoint *ethical individualism*. (IT, 149–150, ¶ 28)

According to this position, the ethically free individual apprehends or intuits certain values and potentials for existence as an element in the intuitive thinking process, and the translation of these intuitions into practice and action constitutes the ethical life of the individual. To the extent that an individual is truly free, she will select intuitions that reflect and constitute her own unique creative character as an existential and ethical being. My previous argument that the universality of ideas is also paradoxically qualified by the irreducible particularity and subjective character of all actual conceptual processes supports and strengthens the individual dimension of the intuitive thinking process that Steiner describes. Thus the free individual shapes both reality and herself at every moment, and this creative shaping of reality through intuitive thought and action is both ethical and aesthetic in character. To the extent that an individual is not free, that individual

perpetuates tendencies and values that do not reflect free individual choice, and which may in fact not reflect the deeper soul nature of the individual who is thus compelled to think and act. Even in Steiner's initial conception, few individuals are ever completely free in their thinking, and relatively free intuitive thinking is interspersed with relatively compulsive, unconscious and unfree thinking. Only decisions and actions that arise from intuitive freedom and clarity can be characterized as fully ethical in nature. To the extent that freedom is always relative, decisions and actions would be relatively free and ethical in their character, and an individual would attain to relative rather than absolute freedom and ethical self-realization. We will return to this notion of relative and paradoxical freedom and its ethical implications in relationship to exploring the implications of Steiner's mature epistemological observations and insights.

For Steiner, the free intuitive thinking process depends on accessing a higher dimension of our being and consciousness. Thus he writes that "in each of us there dwells a deeper being in whom the free human comes to expression (*IT*, 157, ¶ 38). Through accessing this deeper soul dimension of our being we connect with a higher realm of creative freedom and active spiritual knowledge. In so doing we also to some extent transcend our individual separateness and connect with a universal consciousness and creative process. Thus Steiner writes that "the urge for knowledge arises in us because thinking in us reaches out beyond our separateness and relates itself to universal world existence" (*IT*, 84, ¶ 21). However, as I have argued, this transcendence is partial and paradoxical. We raise our consciousness to consciously participate in a universal creative process, but

we still do so with our own unique individuality, including its unique gifts and moment to moment characteristics and limitations. To the extent that we participate in a larger creative consciousness, our participation is a co-creative act, which involves the meeting and collaboration of multiple centers and levels of creative awareness and activity.

According to Steiner's ethical vision of free human intuition and spiritual activity, this higher mode of conscious intuition is inherently motivated by love and respect for the creative freedom of all other free beings. As it is the higher being within us that is active during this intuitive process, and this being is inherently loving and inherently free, any freely willed intuition will be expressive of both love and freedom, and will respect the right of other beings to will and act out of their own free and loving intuitions. Thus he asserts that, "only when I follow my love for an object is it I myself who act" (*IT*, 151, ¶ 29), and "*to live* in love of action, and *to let live* in understanding of the other's will, is the fundamental maxim of *free human beings*" (*IT*, 155, ¶ 36). From this, and from his notion of the universality of higher thinking and intuition, he reasons that "an ethical misunderstanding, a clash, is impossible among ethically *free* human beings" (*IT*, 155, ¶ 36). This view seems to imply that there is a single coherent spiritual vision in which each individual soul participates through his own contextually situated center of awareness, and that all free intuitions of this larger vision must be compatible and complementary. However, even if such a single, encompassing and coherent higher spiritual vision exists, which again seems questionable, it seems that each individual would have to select and interpret

some aspect of this vision from his or her own more limited intuitive vantage point. To the extent that these intuitions are limited and therefore imply some degree of selective simplification, and are liable to error, it seems possible that relatively ethically free human beings could arrive at initially divergent or incompatible intuitions, especially as they are applied to differing circumstances that must each be navigated based on a network of potentially divergent associations and interpretations. However, it does make sense that spiritually open and mutually respectful beings would be far more likely to be able to harmonize their intuitions, especially if they are all motivated by love and respect for the freedom and intuitive wisdom of the others. To the extent that there is a more encompassing spiritual visionary process in which all spiritually awakened souls participate, such differences in perception and perspective could be continuously overcome through open conscious dialogue and creative exchange. It is also possible that such variance and divergence of perspective is internal to the higher visionary creative process that Steiner describes, so that each individual soul is challenged to participate in the harmonization of the manifold universal creative process through integrating her own individual intuitions and intuitively informed actions.

Steiner emphasizes that humans are not always or inherently free in their perceptions and actions. Freedom is something that must be attained for each individual by rising to higher consciousness and transcending the limitations of instinctual and societal conditioning. For Steiner, every individual has the potential for free intuition and action, and the free human being represents the

highest stage and ideal of human evolution on both an individual and collective level. This freedom may be experienced and exercised on a momentary basis, and it may also be cultivated as a higher mode of continuous conscious spiritual participation. This requires active self-transformation, for as Steiner asserts, "humans remain in an incomplete state if they do not take in hand the transformative substance within themselves, and transform themselves through their own power" (*IT*, 159, ¶ 42). Much of Steiner's later writing is devoted to exploring how this transformative spiritual growth process can be productively approached and carried forward.

Later Conceptions of the Foundational Epistemology

As noted before, in the addenda to the 1918 edition of *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path*, and in some of his later writings, most notably his autobiography, Steiner articulates his foundational epistemological understanding in a somewhat more open and complex way, which seems to be informed by the more complete and sophisticated esoteric spiritual vision that he elaborated during the interim. This basic vision can be understood in a way that takes into account most of the criticisms and qualifications that were discussed in the previous section. As a basic overview, it provides both a general epistemological stance and prepares the way for the more nuanced epistemological vision that emerges from his more explicitly esoteric writings. Conceived in more dynamic and less absolute terms, this early vision is fully compatible with his later conceptions, and provides an epistemological perspective that is coherent with or without a

worldview that is informed by the type of extrasensory perception that Steiner later advocates and describes.

According to this view, reality consists in a dynamic creative process of which only certain elements and aspects are accessible through the ordinary bodily senses and the cognitive capacities that are employed for the interpretation and arrangement of their data. Not only do sense impressions provide an incomplete picture without a perception of their conceptual interrelationships, but a worldview which does not take account of the larger spiritual processes of which these sense data are limited manifestations is missing a fundamental dimension of reality. Such a worldview and mode of perception despiritualizes reality and deprives it of its interiority, value and meaning. As Steiner writes:

The world has an inner living reality, but human beings do not immediately reach that living reality, remaining closed to it. Because they have not yet faced the world with their own being they form a picture of the world without being. The world image they form is, in fact, an illusion. When we perceive the world with our senses, we see an illusion. But when we add thinking that is free of the senses—from our own inner being—to sense perception, illusion is permeated with reality and ceases to be illusion. The human spirit then experiences itself within us and meets the spirit in the world, which is no longer hidden *behind the physical world, but weaves and lives within it.* (*Auto*, 85)

The picture of the world that we form when we exclude the interior spiritual dimension is an illusion because it is an artificial abstraction deprived of the living spirit that gives it a context of meaning. Thus as Steiner explains, "the sensory world is not really illusory, but the human being makes it so" (*Auto*, 86). In order to interpret sensory experience in a way that situates it within its true living context, perception of the interior spiritual dimension is also necessary. In his early writings, Steiner sometimes uses the term intuition to refer to this

perception of the spiritual dimension of existence: "Just as we call the revelation of physical things 'sensation,' we will call the revelation of spiritual things 'intuition'" (*Theos*, 51, ¶ 33).

For Steiner, the experience of thinking is among the most direct ways of apprehending this deeper spiritual reality. When one does not merely apply thought to outer sensations, but enters with full awareness into the present experience of thinking itself, one enters with one's consciousness into the spiritual content of the world. As Steiner explains:

By increasingly penetrating the experience of thought, one discovers that spiritual reality comes to meet us within this life in thought. One follows the soul's path into the spirit. But the spiritual reality one meets along this inner soul path is rediscovered as the inner reality of nature. (*Auto*, 35)

The reality that one thus encounters is not merely a formal conceptual structure, accessible through thought, but a living spiritual reality and dynamic creative process, in which the intuitive thinker participates. As Steiner says, "in the act of knowing one is within the being of things" (*Auto*, 85). As indicated in the earlier section, this mode of intuitive apprehension opens us to a deeper dimension of our own being, and through this deeper soul being within us we open into the universal soul and spirit of existence, in which the individual soul participates. In this sense, intuitive thinking is itself a suprasensory activity and mode of perception, and is both perceptive and creative: "In itself, pure thinking is already a supersensible activity" (*Outline*, 124, ¶ 8). As noted before, this would also mean that such intuitive thinking is co-creative, as we experience our own consciousness creatively participating in a larger creative process and field of consciousness.

This epistemological perspective need not imply that any given perceptual experience is absolutely complete, accurate, or certain in its apprehension of the larger reality in which it is embedded, but rather points toward a holistic mode of perception and understanding through which a more complete, accurate, meaningful, and spiritually illuminating understanding of existence can be attained. As Steiner explains:

I illustrated how we apprehend the physical aspect of reality from outside through sensory perception, and how through spiritual perception we take hold of the spiritual aspect from within. Therefore, human experiences taken as a totality are a unity, wherein the physical mirrors the spirit, and the spirit reveals itself creating in the physical. (*Auto*, 112)

It can be argued that this is how human beings naturally evolved, and that it is only a function of modern scientific abstraction that many of us tend to experience a world of dead objects devoid of meaning. Even in modern society, most of the time we experience a world of living meaning, even if our conscious thinking tends to implicitly deprive the objects in our experience of interiority and deeper spiritual significance. However, our tendency to view the larger world as lacking in interiority and spiritual significance *does* lessen our experience of meaning, and it also distorts our understanding of the larger spiritual creative process in which we are embedded, as well as our relationship to its specific beings and elements.

In this context, it is significant that Steiner advocates not only a different way of thinking conceptually, but also a different phenomenological relationship to the experience of thinking itself. For in ordinary thinking we are not consciously inhabiting the process of thinking itself, but use thinking as a more or

less mechanical and habitual way of processing information in relation to our sensory and individually subjective environment. Even when we turn our thoughts to higher matters, we seldom participate fully and consciously in the process of thinking itself. For this reason, as Steiner points out, we tend to experience only the outlines and shadows of our thoughts, just as we tend to experience only our surface representations of the world we experience through our senses. As Steiner explains:

Yet this is only the sharply contoured shadow of the reality of thinking—a reality interwoven with light, dipping down warmly into the phenomena of the world. This dipping down occurs with a power that flows forth in the activity of thinking itself—the power of love in spiritual form. One should not object that to speak of love in active thinking is to displace a feeling, love, into thinking. This objection is actually a confirmation of what is being said here. For whoever turns toward *essential* thinking finds within it both feeling and will, and both of these in the depths of their reality. (*IT*, 133, Addendum)

In this later formulation, Steiner emphasizes the fundamental interpenetration of thinking, feeling, and willing, especially in the higher mode of intuitive apprehension he is describing. He also again emphasizes the role of love in this deeper intuitive thinking process. Thus, because it is informed by a living experience of spirit and meaning, such intuitive thinking is inherently ethical in its content, and all ethical thought and consciousness is inherently informed and motivated by love, which is the essential feeling and orientation of spirit that is conscious of itself.

In his later formulations, Steiner also seems to recognize that the conscious experience of intuitive thinking does not necessarily encompass or comprise the entirety of the intuitive thinking process. While the direct experience

of intuitive thinking is often crucial to a full conscious creative participation in the dynamic process that intuitive thinking shapes and reflects, it is also true that this process extends beyond consciousness, and takes places in moments when this consciousness is not present. As Steiner reflects, "the experience emphasized here finds *in consciousness* the intuitive thinking that also has reality beyond consciousness" (*IT*, 240, ¶ 1 Addendum). This is an important recognition, for it allows us to acknowledge the fundamental mystery of all experience, including highly conscious intuitive thinking, and also allows us to recognize the potential for influences and hidden connections that we do not understand. While it does not provide a basis for claims to complete and certain understanding, it does open us to dimensions of creativity and wisdom that lie beyond our conscious experience and comprehension. It is this openness that fundamentally allows us to live in an honoring relationship with these higher forces of creativity and wisdom, as many of Steiner's later writings will emphasize.

Basic Philosophical Worldview of Later Esoteric Writings

Over the course of his life and writings, Steiner articulated a complex and encompassing philosophical and spiritual worldview, which like almost all such broad worldviews, evolved over time and had many permutations. The explication of the entirety of this worldview, even in a single simplified rendering, is far beyond the scope of this paper, but a broad sketch of certain essential features of his vision is essential for exploring the gradual evolution of his mature epistemological perspectives. Ultimately, as this paper will argue, an epistemology is inseparable from the worldview and creative life process in which

it is embedded, so that despite its many complexities, the set of epistemological perspectives explored in this paper cannot but be sketches and abstracted simplifications themselves. Nonetheless, certain broad principles can be apprehended that may allow us to engage our unique evolving vantage points and existential contexts in a more coherent and harmonious manner. Thus, in the spirit of Steiner's comment at the beginning of his foundational epistemological work, the aim of this essay is not to establish a fixed set of ideas and perspectives, but to awaken an evolving reflective awareness that might be illuminating on many occasions and from many vantage points.

One of the central insights of Steiner's worldview is that existence is fundamentally spiritual in nature, meaning that it is characterized by an essential and irreducible sentience, dynamism and creative impulse. Everything that exists is an expression of spirit, and this spiritual reality is in a constant process of transformation and evolution. The world that we know through our ordinary bodily senses is an expression of this spiritual reality, and as such is itself essentially spiritual in character, although only a limited dimension of even this limited portion of reality is disclosed through our bodily senses and sense based cognitive perceptions. Steiner uses the metaphor of ice and water to express his conception of the special character of the sense-perceptible world in relation to the larger spiritual reality of which it is a limited expression.

This makes it clear that the sense-perceptible world is only part of what surrounds us. It is distinct from, and to a certain extent independent of, our overall surroundings simply because it can be perceived with senses that disregard the soul and spiritual aspects of these surroundings. It is like a piece of ice floating on water—the ice consists of the same substance as the surrounding water but stands out because of certain qualities it

possesses. In the same way, sense-perceptible things are of the same substance as the soul and spirit worlds surrounding them, but they stand out because of certain characteristics that make them perceptible to our senses. To put it somewhat figuratively, they are condensed spirit and soul formations, and the condensation makes it possible for our senses to acquire knowledge about them. Ice is just one of the manifestations of water, and sense-perceptible things are just one form in which soul and spirit beings exist. Having grasped this, we can also understand that the spirit world can change into the soul world and the soul world into the sensory world, just as water can turn to ice. (*Theos*, 148, ¶ 52)

The word spiritual must thus be understood in several overlapping ways in this context. On the broadest level, all reality and all experience are spiritual, since reality is fundamentally spiritual in nature. However, in accordance with everyday modes of perception and experience, Steiner often speaks about the spiritual dimension of existence as distinct from the material world that is experienced through our senses, though again in the broader sense this material reality is itself spiritual in nature. In this context the seemingly external and objective material world is contrasted with the spiritual, and the sensory and cognitive experience of that material world would itself be considered as a spiritual process. In other contexts, Steiner contrasts the material and sensory mode of perception and experience with perception and experience of spiritual realities that transcend the material and sensory realms. These modes of perception that apprehend transcendent spiritual realities are referred to as spiritual, and these realms are in turn referred to as spiritual realms, and the beings who dwell there as spiritual beings, though again in the broadest sense all realms and all beings are spiritual. Finally, the notion of the spiritual can also be used by Steiner to designate a kind of higher ideal and value toward which beings may strive, and which may be recognized as an attribute of certain realms, beings, and modes of existence. Thus

the notion of the spiritual is complex, multivalent, and paradoxical, as at its broadest it is all encompassing, while it can also be used to designate specific contrasts and gradations of spiritual expression, and even a kind of ideal value to be sought by all spiritual beings. The specific meaning of the term must be recognized based on the context of the discussion in which it is used, although it is helpful to keep in mind the full range of meanings that appertain to it.

In keeping with the previous discussion, Steiner identifies a number of basic realms of existence, starting with the material or mineral realm, and ascending in spiritual complexity to spiritual realms that transcend ordinary human consciousness. The basic realms, or planes, that he identifies in relationship to ordinary human existence and perception are: the mineral, material, or physical plane; the vital, etheric, or life plane; the astral plane; and the mental and spiritual planes. These realms correspond in some sense to the kingdoms of nature, and also to elements within the human being. The physical plane corresponds to all nonliving physical objects, substances and processes in our environment, and to the portion of the human being that remains as a corpse after the other components of our being have left the physical body. The etheric plane corresponds to the realm that all living beings inhabit by virtue of being alive, which is best characterized by the plant world, and which finds its expression in the human being in the elusive vitality that makes us alive as opposed to dead. The astral plane corresponds to the realm of basic sensation, feeling, and emotion, and includes the entire animal world, including that portion of the human being that perceives and feels in accordance with our animal nature,

but does not include higher mental and spiritual processes of cognition. Finally, Steiner describes a series of ascending spiritual planes, the lowest of which correspond to our ordinary mental life, and the highest of which are inhabited by exalted spiritual beings that shape the formation and evolution of the cosmos, but which are generally inaccessible to ordinary human consciousness at the current state of our evolutionary development. According to Steiner, there are beings and processes that exist on each of these planes that are not accessible to our ordinary senses and modes of cognition, but which can be perceived if higher modes of perception are developed.

Steiner uses a number of different terms to refer to these planes and to the corresponding elements of our human makeup, which can make some of his discussions somewhat confusing. He also uses different interrelated schema to describe the components of the human being, variously describing three, four, seven, or nine essential components of the human being in different contexts. Perhaps the most frequently used in-depth schema identifies seven distinctive elements of the human makeup. There are four elements that are highly developed in the human being, and three more that are in the process of formation, though all elements are in a constant process of evolution over time. The four basic elements are the physical, etheric, and astral bodies, and what he refers to as the human 'I,' which is the center of human consciousness. The three higher elements, which are currently in the process of formation, are the spirit self, which is a transformed version of the astral body; the life spirit, which is the transformed etheric body; and the spirit body, which is a spiritualized expression of the physical body. The

three "lower" bodies correspond to the earthly world that is partially accessible through the senses, the three highest bodies correspond to higher modes of spiritual perception that are still in the process of being developed in the human being, and the 'I' is the center of consciousness that mediates all of these bodies and their corresponding realms and activities, including everyday thought and consciousness, and grants us our individual awareness, freedom and enduring identity.

For Steiner, the entire physical universe, including its more complex living manifestations, is the expression of the creative work and manifestation of higher spiritual beings, and ultimately of the unitive spirit that permeates all existence. As this universe evolves, it expresses more and more completely the vision and spiritual character of the spiritual beings and forces that form it and evolve within it, constituting a kind of creative return and evolving spiritual self-expression.

Thus Steiner observes:

Ascending in our observations from plant nature to the various animal forms, organic, creative forces can be seen as progressively more similar to the spirit. In the organic form of the human being, spiritual formative forces are active that bring the animal form to its highest metamorphosis. These forces are active in the manifestation and growing of the human organism, and are finally expressed as human spirit after they have shaped a vessel in a natural foundation in which they can live free of nature.
(*Auto*, 57)

This notion of being "free of nature" means that human spiritual consciousness is no longer bound by the apparent laws and tendencies that characterize physical existence, and even the etheric and astral domains inhabited by plants and animals, and is able to attain self-awareness and relatively free creative self-direction. Thus Steiner writes of this process that, "in the human being, this is

transformed to the degree that spirit not only manifests itself as creative, but also as self-experiencing" (*Auto*, 57). While it may be argued that in a sense all experience is the self-experience of spirit, Steiner seems to be referring to a heightened mode of self-reflective awareness through which the spirit consciously recognizes its own nature and shapes its own self-expression from within. Thus Steiner writes, "the God who dwells within the human being begins to speak when the soul recognizes itself as an I" (*Outline*, 46, ¶ 15). The term 'soul' is also used by Steiner in a number of different ways, which can be quite confusing. In the context of this essay, the soul will be used to designate the spiritual individuality that is constellated around the human 'I,' which gives meaning and coherence to all levels of existence and experience. The self-experience of the soul in its multi-dimensional fullness may be more or less complete depending on the character of its development and momentary awareness. Thus, not only does the individual soul become conscious of itself through the 'I', but the soul also becomes aware of itself as an expression of universal spirit, and the universal spirit recognizes its self-expression as an individual soul. Steiner explains that "what makes its way like a drop into the consciousness soul is called the spirit by esoteric science. In this way the consciousness soul is united with the spirit, which is the hidden element in everything manifest" (*Outline*, 49, ¶ 19), and that "in what fills the consciousness soul, this hidden element steps unveiled into the innermost temple of the soul where it appears as only a drop in the sea of all-pervading spirituality" (*Outline*, 49, ¶ 18). Thus while all elements of experience are manifestations of spirit, the droplet of spirit that Steiner describes is

characterized by a luminous transparency of consciousness that allows for the immediate recognition by the spirit of its own nature manifesting itself within the individual soul. However, as Steiner also explains: "Of course, the 'divine self' is contained in every man. It is in every created being. In stone, plant, and animal, the 'divine self' is also contained and active" (*Stages*, 24). It seems to be a special characteristic of human consciousness among embodied beings to be able to consciously recognize this divine self. However, as noted earlier, every manifestation is a self-manifestation of spirit, and every sensation and experience is a self-experience of spirit, with its own unique form, quality, and degree of consciousness. Thus as Steiner writes: "To supersensible perception, there is no such thing as 'unconsciousness,' only various degrees of consciousness. Everything in the world is conscious" (*Outline*, 153, ¶ 30). I think it is also important to emphasize the irreducible uniqueness and qualitative dimension of every expression of consciousness, thereby counterbalancing a tendency in Steiner, and in the Western tradition more broadly, to describe spiritual expressions in a hierarchical and anthropocentric manner.

According to Steiner's observations, the higher portions of the human soul, excluding the physical, etheric and astral bodies, reincarnate, and though they continually transform, are essentially immortal. Through successive physical incarnations, the soul evolves and acquires higher spiritual capacities, as well as a condensed store of memory and wisdom. As Steiner expresses it, "as the keeper of the past, the soul is continually collecting treasures for the spirit" (*Theos*, 68, ¶ 6), and "the fruits of learning are the abilities we acquire, and in this way, the fruits

of our transitory life are imprinted on our immortal spirit" (*Theos*, 80, ¶ 17). Each human life and incarnation is largely determined by the karma that has been accrued in previous lifetimes, as this affects not only the circumstances in which we find ourselves, but also the soul capacities and cognitive and behavioral tendencies that guide the unfolding of our present life. Steiner describes the elusive process through which karma develops and operates in terms of our continuously evolving relationship with the spiritual world of which we are a part. Thus he asserts that, "I am a different person in my relationship to the world once I have made an impression on my environment" (*Theos*, 66, ¶ 4). Similarly, he questions, "could it be that the results of our actions, whose character has been impressed on them by the 'I,' have a tendency to come back to the "I" in the same way that an impression preserved in memory comes to life again when an outer circumstance evokes it?" (*Theos*, 66, ¶ 4). This can be understood in a way that is similar to the way our thoughts affect our own minds and subsequent thought patterns, forming a network of evolving relationships and associations. In some sense, we as individual souls participate in a larger web of evolving spiritual consciousness, and our actions shift the spiritual web of relationships that shape and constitute our lives. Recognizing this, we take greater responsibility for our lives and actions, and are able to consciously shape and relate to our destinies, as well as to consciously participate in the evolution of all humanity and all spiritual life and consciousness. Steiner envisages a great process of spiritual evolution, in which every being is involved and has a special role to play. Once we recognize

this, we awaken to the true meaning of our existence and to our true gifts and capacities as spiritual beings.

Steiner's Emerging Epistemology of Spiritual Perception

Steiner's philosophical and spiritual worldview has many epistemological implications. Some of these are implicit in the broad ideas already discussed, while others emerge more specifically in relation to his conception of the nature of the soul and spiritual realms, and of the spiritual faculties through which their inner nature can be revealed. In addition to a general epistemology of perception, Steiner also develops a more specific epistemology of higher spiritual perception, which depends more particularly on his own extrasensory and intuitive observations. Interestingly, the spiritual factors that seem to be most essential in this more specialized epistemology of spiritual perception also suggest a more encompassing principle that might serve as a valuable guide for a more generalized spiritual epistemology—and if one accepts Steiner's central insight that all reality is spiritual, then the notion of a spiritual epistemology need not exclude any form of perception, but would signify the inclusion of the true spiritual element in the consideration of all real knowledge.

As just stated, one obvious implication of Steiner's worldview is that all knowledge is fundamentally knowledge of spirit by spirit, and that knowing itself is a spiritual process. Steiner reasons that if all knowledge is of spirit by spirit, then in principle there should be nothing that lies outside the realm of the knowable. As he states in his autobiography:

To me it made no sense to speak about limits of knowledge; to *know* was to rediscover the spiritual meaning experienced through the soul in the

perceived world. Speaking of any limit to knowledge seemed to me a confession that true reality is not experienced spiritually in the soul and, consequently, is unavailable to being rediscovered in the world experienced externally. (*Auto*, 83)

However, though it may be possible in principle to have some kind of knowledge of any element of existence, to what extent and in what way such knowledge is accessible from a particular vantage point, and what degree of certainty, clarity, or completeness of understanding may be achieved remain open questions, to which we will return in the next session. Nonetheless, it does make sense that if existence is fundamentally spiritual, the true reality of existence need not remain inescapably hidden behind physical or subjective appearances.

In fact, for Steiner there is a reversal of the usual picture, in which one discovers the true physical reality behind sensory appearances, and he suggests rather that one must look within and behind such perceptible physical realities to discover the true spiritual life that surrounds, permeates, and constitutes them. Thus he asserts that "one will not find reality *in* the results of scientific research but *through them in the world of spirit*" (*Auto*, 133). Speaking of perception from an opposite vantage point, that of suprasensory perception of the spiritual realms, Steiner explains that, "of that world that the spiritual observer penetrates in this way, the physical is a manifestation. Whatever of the physical world is accessible to the senses and the sense bound intellect is only the outer side" (*Stages*, 53). And again, when viewing the material world from a suprasensory perspective, "supersensible consciousness sees manifestations of the hidden spiritual element in all of physical existence" (*Outline*, 99, ¶ 21). Steiner thus asserts that, "the goal of cognition, or knowing, is to consciously *experience* the spiritual realm in the

visible presence of which everything ultimately dissolves into spirit" (*Auto*, 126). He also repeatedly emphasizes that "we come to understand our visible life on the basis of its invisible causes," and that "only through insight into the supersensible worlds do we realize the value of the sense-perceptible world" (*HW*, 196, ¶ 1). Thus for Steiner, understanding of the trans-sensory dimensions of existence provides the missing context and interiority of the world observable through the senses, and in so doing it not only reveals hidden connections, but it supplies the essential element of spiritual meaning that tends to be abstracted from sensory observation and associated cognitive analysis.

Steiner also points out that much of our ordinary perception already involves and depends upon suprasensory perception, whether we are aware of this or not. He explains that even "perception of our ordinary sense-perceptible surroundings already requires a degree of clairvoyance" (*HW*, 173, ¶ 2). Similarly, our everyday internal experiences involve suprasensory realities that are not bound to the material dimension of existence: "The soul lives and acts uninterruptedly in the higher worlds" (*HW*, 173, ¶ 3). Even our basic experience of selfhood, which for Steiner is based on the experience of the 'I', is based on higher spiritual intuition. He therefore writes that "knowledge of the inner being within us can also come only from intuition" (*Outline*, 339, ¶ 41). Thus for Steiner, perception of any kind is a spiritual process, on both a broad philosophical and a subtle experiential and practical level.

As described before, Steiner sees the direct experience of thinking as an important entryway into knowledge of the spiritual worlds. He thus asserts that,

"through directly experienced ideas, one comprehends not the sense world but the spiritual world adjoining the sense world" (*Auto*, 167). He also explains how thoughts about material reality mirror the archetypal thoughts in the spiritual world that give rise to them, so that by tracing these observable relationships it is possible to enter through thought into an apprehension of their higher spiritual counterparts and causes:

In the process of having thoughts about how mineral objects influence each other in a regular and lawful manner, our isolated thoughts expand into a thought image of the whole mineral world. This thought image is a reflection of the archetype of the entire mineral sense-perceptible world, and can be found as a whole in the spiritual world. (*Theos*, 150, ¶ 54)

According to Steiner, at a higher level of spiritual perception, one has direct access to the spiritual thought forms that shape and inform the material dimension of existence, as well as the other emerging realms of higher complexity. He thus describes such an archetypal spiritual experience, in which: "Thinking, having become independent, stimulates . . . a direct influx of thought-like currents into the human being. The entire cosmos then appears as a thought structure that confronts us just as the world of plants or animals confronts us in the physical domain of the senses" (*Outline*, 354, ¶ 49).

For Steiner, however, thinking is a spiritual activity even for those who do not have direct access to higher modes of cognitive perception. Just as the material world is seen by Steiner to be shaped and formed out of the activity of spiritual beings, our own thoughts can likewise be shaped and influenced by the activity of spiritual beings on the spiritual planes, with or without our conscious awareness. In fact, for Steiner, the perception that we have an entirely enclosed

private inner world is an illusion. Just as we have a physical body that interacts with and belongs to a physical world, so too do our thoughts interact with other mental and spiritual beings, and belong to spiritual worlds. In fact, for Steiner, the living activity of spiritual beings lies behind all observable phenomena, apparently external or internal. Thus he explains that, "from the point of view of the spiritual world, we face only beings. These beings are the true reality" (*Threshold*, 119), and that "in the spiritual world thoughts are completely independent living beings." (*Threshold*, 126). Thinking can therefore be understood as a formative creative activity in which we participate directly in higher spiritual realities, and which may often involve a significant co-creative dimension. Without higher awareness, this spiritual co-creative participation and spiritual influence remains primarily unconscious. However, even without having cultivated the higher cognitive faculties that Steiner describes, it is possible to bring consciousness and direct awareness to our thinking life, and thus sense and consciously guide the complex spiritual creative process that is involved in thinking.

For Steiner, there are modes of perception that correspond to every mode of existence. Thus, just as we have evolved senses to perceive the physical world, we have the capacity to sense the etheric world directly through our etheric body, as well as through other higher cognitive faculties that can be awakened. This type of awareness allows us to feel connected to all other living beings, and to experience ourselves as part of a living ocean of energy that includes all life. As Steiner writes, "through the subtle, or etheric, body in the elemental environment,

human beings recognize themselves as members of the earth's living body" (*Threshold*, 130–131). Such experiences are very significant for human life, for they give us a different sense of identity, belonging, and meaning, and extend our sense of care for other beings, and even for the earth itself. In a similar way, we experience the astral world, both indirectly through our feelings, emotions, and dream residues, and more directly through certain types of dreams and higher modes of spiritual perception. Thus all of the levels of the human makeup that Steiner describes correspond to various modes of perception and spiritual participation on corresponding planes, and an integral experience must synthesize all of these different modes of perception and spiritual participation.

Steiner's more specific epistemology of spiritual perception depends largely upon the development of higher spiritual faculties and senses that he believes are latent in every human being. In the process of development that Steiner describes, the development of these faculties is inextricably connected to the revelation of deeper spiritual realities, so that what serves spiritual development also serves the acquisition of knowledge. Thus Steiner explains:

For all human beings, in addition to what we may call the ordinary, everyday self, also bear within themselves a higher self or higher human being. This higher human being remains concealed until it is awakened. And it can be awakened only as each of us, individually, awakens it within ourselves. Until then, the higher faculties that are latent within each one of us and that lead to supersensible knowledge remain hidden. (*HW*, 28–29, ¶ 22)

For Steiner, these latent faculties of perception are connected to a higher spiritual dimension of the human individuality, and therefore the process of developing them depends upon a more encompassing process of spiritual growth and

awakening. This process of spiritual development, growth, and awakening involves a maturation of the human soul, which includes both the expansion of consciousness and a process of moral development. Thus for Steiner, the acquisition of spiritual knowledge has a fundamentally moral component. If you wish to gain access to the deepest spiritual mysteries of existence, you must learn "how to prepare a proper welcome for this secret in your soul" (*HW*, 16, ¶ 3). This process therefore involves a high degree of introspection and self-knowledge: "It cannot be emphasized often enough that the sure path to higher worlds leads through careful self-knowledge and the self-assessment of our own nature" (*HW*, 144, ¶ 35). This self-knowledge is not only critical for the process of spiritual development through which these faculties are awakened, but is also essential to the process of perceiving through these awakened faculties.

For Steiner, the human being is a living instrument of perception that must be developed and understood if true knowledge and understanding are to be attained. Over millions of years our physical body and its sensory apparatuses have been developed to meet the perceptual needs arising out of the environments in which they evolved, and for most of us these faculties are available for use without the need to engage in a conscious process of development. Nonetheless, we do in fact learn how to use these senses over time, and develop them in relationship to our cognitive faculties of perception, memory, feeling and thought. If we are to assess and contextualize our sensory perceptions as sources of knowledge, we must also have some understanding of how they operate under different conditions, how they interact with our cognitive faculties and

environment, and what the parameters are for each mode of sensory perception. Similarly, Steiner asserts that we have also developed spiritual faculties over a long process of spiritual evolution, and that these faculties exist for most people in a latent state, which requires that they be awakened and developed. However, because most people have not learned to develop these faculties during their childhoods, these faculties must also go through a corresponding process of further development once they are awakened, and people must then learn how use them in conjunction with our other senses, cognitive faculties, and sources of spiritual knowledge.

This is especially true if these faculties are to be used in the pursuit of higher knowledge in accordance with what Steiner refers to as esoteric science. As Steiner puts it: "Supersensible cognition also makes use of a tool—the human being—that must also first be made suitable for higher research" (*Outline*, 29, ¶ 25). An essential aspect of 'making suitable' the human spiritual instrument of perception is a process of moral and spiritual development. As Steiner explains, "just as natural forces equip the physical body with organs fashioned from unstructured living matter, so the care and cultivation of our lives of feeling and thinking endow our soul and spiritual bodies with higher senses and organs of activity" (*HW*, 39, ¶ 3). While this may be an unfamiliar idea for those accustomed to think of sensory perception primarily in terms of physiology, we can see from our own experience that certain types of emotional and spiritual insight involve developing certain psychological or spiritual qualities and capacities. If we are to understand another person's pain and emotional

experience, we must develop a capacity to empathize with others, and to some extent sympathetically experience their emotions within ourselves. While we would generally understand this as a general ability or capacity that does not depend upon particular spiritual organs, we do know that these and other cognitive capacities correspond broadly to the formation of certain neuronal structures and connections, and Steiner similarly describes a process in which spiritual organs are developed through the development of corresponding soul qualities and capacities.

One of the qualities that Steiner emphasizes most strongly is that of reverence and devotion. He declares that "every feeling of true devotion unfolded in the soul produces an inner strength or force that sooner or later leads to knowledge" (*HW*, 18, ¶ 7). He also explains that an attitude of contemptuous judgment and disrespect towards others has the opposite effect, and harms our spiritual development. As a general rule, compassionate, positive, and loving thoughts and attitudes strengthen and develop the soul, while negative, judgmental and hateful ones harm it and retard its development. He thus explains:

If we wish to become esoteric students, we must train ourselves vigorously in the mood of devotion. We must seek—in all things around us, in all our experiences—for what can arouse our admiration and respect. If I meet other people and criticize their weaknesses, I rob myself of higher cognitive power. But if I try to enter deeply and lovingly into another person's good qualities, I gather in that force. (*HW*, 19, ¶ 9)

Steiner places a special emphasis on the importance of appreciation, as opposed to criticism. When we appreciate another person, we support and strengthen what is positive in them, and thus also in ourselves. When we approach them in a way that denies their good qualities and diminishes their worth in our eyes, we actually

diminish the positive elements in us that correspond to an appreciation of their virtues. While Steiner observes this process on an esoteric level, it can also be felt inwardly as a subtle soul process.

Steiner warns modern readers that the process of spiritual development he describes is difficult to cultivate in modern society, which does not tend to inculcate a powerful sense of spiritual reverence in its members.

Nevertheless, we must be clear about one thing. Those completely immersed in the superficial civilization of our day will find it particularly difficult to work their way to cognition of the higher worlds. To do so, they will have to work energetically upon themselves. In times when the material conditions of life were still simple, spiritual progress was easier. What was revered and held sacred stood out more clearly from the rest of the world. In an age of criticism, on the other hand, ideals are degraded. Reverence, awe, adoration, and wonder are replaced by other feelings—they are pushed more and more into the background. As a result, everyday life offers very few opportunities for their development. Anyone seeking higher knowledge must create these feelings inwardly, instilling them in the soul. This cannot be done by studying. It can be done only by living. (*HW*, 19, ¶ 9)

This process involves the development of spiritual values, habits, and attitudes that may not be powerfully reflected in one's surrounding environment. Through relating to other beings and the world around us in the way that he describes, we develop a set of relationships and a new spiritual environment in which our own spiritual development can take place. As Steiner describes: "Reverence awakens a power of sympathy in the soul. This draws toward us qualities in the beings around us that would otherwise remain hidden" (*HW*, 22, ¶ 12). Living in relationship to these positive soul qualities in others actually creates a living network of positive spiritual associations and a beneficial spiritual environment, which awakens and supports the corresponding qualities in ourselves—both those

that we directly appreciate and those that support and are strengthened by such appreciation.

Although the cultivation of these qualities is a pervasive life practice that must find its way into every aspect of our lives, Steiner also describes meditation practices through which such capacities, attitudes, and tendencies can be developed and cultivated. As Steiner expresses it:

The work of this kind of meditation is to bring the soul to a state that opens a doorway into the spiritual world. That doorway will remain closed, no matter how ingenious the thinking or how fully scientific the approach, unless the soul prepares to advance to meet the approaching spiritual experiences. (*Threshold*, 69)

As he describes it, the capacities cultivated through such practices will aid us in every aspect of our lives, both allowing access to hitherto hidden spiritual realities, and allowing us to appreciate and honor the spiritual beauty of the world around us. As he says, "inner experience is the only key to the beauties of the outer world" (*HW*, 22, ¶ 13). Although there are many such meditation and awareness practices, the most basic of these involve creating moments of withdrawal into inner silence and solitude, leaving behind the preoccupations of our daily lives. As Steiner describes it, "in such moments, we should allow what we have experienced—what the outer world has told us—to linger on in utter stillness. In these quiet moments, every flower, every animal, and every action will disclose mysteries undreamed of" (*HW*, 23, ¶ 13). Though Steiner repeatedly emphasizes the need for patience, he also promises that: "For each of us who does this, a day will come when all around will become bright with spirit. Then, to eyes we did not know we had, a whole new world will be revealed" (*HW*, 29, ¶ 23).

In addition to the specific meditation practices he describes, Steiner also outlines a set of soul qualities and capacities that must be cultivated as a preparation for higher knowledge. While these are variously described and numbered in his different works, they include: control of our thought life, control of our will impulses and actions, equilibrium and composure in the face of joy and sorrow, positivity in our stance toward the world, endurance, fearlessness, and receptivity in our attitude toward life. These qualities and capacities are discussed at some length in *How to Know Higher Worlds*, and are also described in *An Outline of Esoteric Science* and *Stages of Higher Knowledge*. In this context it should be enough to mention them, and to note the way that they combine spiritual discipline with positivity and openness. Each of these qualities helps to open up a space within our experience in which spiritual realities can be manifested, and also allows us to enter into modes of relationship with other beings and our environment that potentiate a kind of mutual spiritual disclosure. Steiner also describes a series of stages through which a spiritual student passes in the acquisition of higher knowledge. He describes the first three, and most accessible of these as preparation, illumination and initiation. Again, I will not describe these here, but they are described in detail in the works just mentioned. Taken all together, the acquisition of the soul qualities and the passage through the stages of spiritual development that Steiner describes represents a coherent process of spiritual development in which specific soul qualities combine to potentiate specific types of noetic experiences. Not only do these qualities prepare

one to have these experiences, but they are also active during these experiences themselves, shaping the quality of perception that arises.

Steiner describes three basic modes of extrasensory perception that can be cultivated. Although he generally describes them as a series of ascending modes of spiritual perception that develop in a rough general sequence, he also emphasizes that they can develop and operate simultaneously, and can function in a complimentary manner.

Students of the spirit rise to this level of knowledge step by step. Imagination brings us to the point where we no longer feel that perceptions are external qualities of beings; instead, we recognize in them the emanations of something that is soul-spiritual in character. Inspiration leads us still further into the inner nature of beings and teaches us to understand what these beings are for each other. In intuition, we penetrate into the beings themselves. (*Outline*, 338, ¶ 41)

Each of these modes of perception involves direct participation in spiritual realms that transcend ordinary material and sensory reality. For Steiner, these realms consist entirely of the presence and activity of spiritual beings, with whom the spiritual perceiver joins his own spiritual presence and activity. Steiner describes these beings as expressing themselves as dynamic spiritual thought forms: "To live in beings that do not merely express themselves in thoughts but are present in them with their own being: that is what it means for your soul to live in the spiritual world" (*Threshold*, 118). In such realms, "thoughts that are beings speak with other thoughts that are also beings" (*Threshold*, 119). Steiner also explains that we may access such modes of cognition to some degree in unconscious ways before we attain the full awakening of our higher spiritual faculties. Thus, though he uses the three terms, imagination, inspiration and intuition, in quite specific

ways to designate distinctive modes of extrasensory perception, these terms also have some connection to their more familiar usages and meanings.

The first of these modes of higher spiritual perception that is usually developed and activated is imagination. Imagination is connected to the faculty of forming spiritual images, which corresponds loosely to the formation of visual images in the sensory sphere. In dreams, the latent faculty of imagination functions in an unconscious manner, especially when it produces images that correspond to trans-sensory spiritual phenomena experienced during the dream state. However, as Steiner emphasizes, the cultivation of conscious, lucid, voluntary waking imagination as a mode of spiritual perception represents a far more developed and accurate mode of spiritual cognition than that which usually takes place during dreams: "In waking imagination, consciousness is raised as far above ordinary consciousness as it sinks below it in dreams" (*Auto*, 111). However, the faculty of imagination, like the other two faculties, can also be developed partially during the sleep state, and conscious development of the faculty of imagination will transform the dream life. Imagination also functions both consciously and unconsciously in the formation of artistic productions and in the guidance of culturally significant creative projects. As Steiner notes, "imagination is a doorway through which spiritual beings creatively influence cultural development indirectly through the human being" (*Auto*, 111). The realm of spiritual perception that Steiner describes as being accessed through the faculty of imagination involves the dynamic expressive movement of spiritual beings, whose creative activity is ceaseless: "In lightings-up and dimmings-down, in the

color metamorphosis of images are revealed harmonies and discords that unveil the feelings, representations, and thought life of soul and spirit beings" (*Stages*, 51–52). Steiner also emphasizes that imagination is not bound to the sphere of perception associated with vision, but can manifest itself in a multiplicity of psychic-sensory modalities: "If we would arrive at the truth about the imaginative world, we must not form too narrow a conception of spiritual sight, for in that world there are not mere light and color perceptions, comparable to the sight experiences of the physical world, but also impressions of heat and cold, of taste and smell, and still other experiences of the imaginative 'senses' for which the physical world offers no likeness" (*Stages*, 50–51). Of our ordinary physical senses, only the experience of hearing, which corresponds to the psychic-perceptual modality of inspiration, is absent in the imaginative sphere.

As with the other modes of spiritual perception, imagination involves the co-constitution of these dynamic perceptual patterns through the spiritual expression and activity of the spiritual beings being perceived and the spiritual activity of the imaginative perceiver. In a profound sense this is true of all perception within this worldview, including ordinary sensory perception, since perception itself is always a creative process, and what is perceived is simultaneously the manifestation of a spiritual creative process that rises to meet the perceiver. However, in the realms of perception here being described, the immediacy and importance of the co-creative dimension of perception is far greater, as the perceptions are of more immediate expressions of the creative activity of spiritual beings, and the process of perception involves a more direct

contact and receptive apprehension of a distinctive mode of communication, more akin to a conversation between embodied beings. Although human languages are standardized enough that some form of effective communication between individuals who speak the same language is usually possible, we also each develop our own unique language of expression, and we learn to understand and speak the language of another person. Similarly, through imaginative expression, we learn to attune to and comprehend the unique spiritual expression of distinctive spiritual beings, both learning to understand their languages, and forming our own languages of perception to correspond to them. This co-creative element and intimacy of creative exchange is present at all levels of spiritual perception.

The next mode of spiritual perception that Steiner describes, that of inspiration, represents a deepening in the intimacy and immediacy of spiritual contact and exchange. To the extent that imagination corresponds broadly to the realm of visual perception, inspiration corresponds to the realm of hearing.

If anything at all in the realm of sense can be compared with this world of Inspiration, it is the world of tone opened up to us by the sense of hearing. But now not the tones of earthly music are concerned, but purely “spiritual tones.” One begins to “hear” what is going on at the heart of things. The stone, the plant, and so forth, become “spiritual words.” The world begins to express its true nature to the soul. (*Stages*, 8)

As with imagination, it is the direct expression of the life and activity of spiritual beings that one experiences in inspiration, only with greater intimacy and immediacy. In perceiving the inner life of objects of everyday experience, as Steiner describes, one experiences the creative life of spiritual beings expressing themselves in and through those sense-perceptible realities. He describes a kind of

primordial language of creation that becomes perceptible through inspiration, so that one perceives the inner word and language of creation. In so doing, one recognizes the hidden element in everything visible through the senses, and the world becomes comprehensible on a much deeper level: "The inspired man is able to proclaim the inner nature of things; everything rises up before his soul, as though from the dead, in a new kind of way. He speaks a language that stems from another world, and that alone can make the everyday world comprehensible" (*Stages*, 8).

As with imagination, there are correlates to conscious inspiration in everyday experience, even prior to the development of these higher faculties of spiritual perception. Just as imagination is often present at more or less conscious levels in artistic creation, so too is inspiration. While imagination tends to inform the inner images which shape the creative process, inspiration often provides the rhythm and subtle music of creation, both directly in the case of musical creation, and slightly less obviously in the subtle rhythms and patterned cadences of linguistic expression, which are of special importance and prominence in poetry. Inspiration also tends to develop during the sleep state, where there is less outer stimulus to overwhelm the subtle sensory organs of perception that are forming. However, while imagination is most active during dreams, inspiration tends to form in the open and subtle space of deep sleep. And just as with imagination, yet to a greater degree, inspiration requires the development of a subtle language of perception, which in the case of inspiration is formed through a subtle, attuned "listening" to the unique language of expression of spiritual beings. In the case of

inspiration, the contact is more intimate and subtle, and the creative activity that is required on the part of the perceiver is greater. Thus a greater discipline of attuned perception, a greater selflessness, and a more active creative capacity are required to attain a full and accurate inspirational perception. This also corresponds to a more rich and intimate experience of the spiritual object of one's perceptions, which in this case is both object and actively present subject.

The last and highest of the modes of spiritual cognition that Steiner describes is intuition. Intuition is both the deepest and the most intimate form of spiritual perception, for in it one enters into and blends with the inner self of another being. As Steiner describes it, "the actual living of things within the soul is Intuition" (*Stages*, 9). While there are also correspondences between this special notion of intuition and elements of everyday perception and experience, Steiner is careful to distinguish this conception of intuition from others that involve a kind of vague, hazy, or unconscious mode of perception. As Steiner emphasizes, "intuition is not a mode of cognition which with regard to clarity lags behind intellectual knowledge, but one that far surpasses it" (*Stages*, 56). Or as he states it elsewhere, "the term intuition is used to designate a cognitive process of the highest degree of light-filled clarity" (*Outline*, 337–338, ¶ 41). The most direct experience of intuition in everyday existence is our own inner experience of selfhood. Steiner refers to this inner experience of self in terms of the ego: "In ordinary life man has only one 'intuition' — namely, of the ego itself, for the ego can in no way be perceived from without; it can only be experienced in the inner life" (*Stages*, 9). This use of the term ego differs somewhat from other specialized

conceptions of the ego in depth psychology, and is here used primarily to designate the center of the personality and the direct inner experience of selfhood, as well as the activity of that self in configuring individual experience. The term 'I' is generally interchangeable with the term 'ego' in Steiner's writings. This direct experience of the self is a doorway into understanding all other form of intuitive perception, for as Steiner says, "the perception of the ego is the prototype of all intuitive cognition" (*Stages*, 10). Steiner thus also explores and emphasizes the importance of the ego even in ordinary perception.

According to Steiner, for human beings, the ego is the organizing center of all perception. Without the ego conscious experience as we know it would not be possible, and this includes not only a distinctive sense of selfhood and a capacity for self-reflective awareness, but also a continuity of awareness and experience. In fact, for Steiner, the ego is necessary for the experience of an inner life as we know it, for both memory and thinking require the centering and organizing function of the ego. As he explains:

The ego stores up the image in memory. Otherwise no continuing inner life would be possible. The images of things would remain only so long as the things themselves affected the soul. But the inner life depends upon the linking of one perception with another . . . In relation to concepts also, the ego forms the unity. It combines its concepts and so makes a survey, calls forth an understanding of the world. (*Stages*, 5)

Thus for Steiner, the ego includes not only the conscious momentary experience of the self, but also the ongoing activity that links experiences and gives them coherency and meaning. The ego is thus central to ordinary perception, linking all sensory perceptions with thinking, feeling, and willing into a coherent stream of experience and ongoing sense of selfhood. It is similarly essential in the higher

modes of spiritual perception, where it functions most directly and observably in the form of intuition.

Intuition requires the capacity to open and extend one's experience of selfhood to other beings. Thus ironically, intuition requires both a highly developed sense of self and a capacity for "selflessness," just as one must transcend one's limited senses of self to awaken to and consciously inhabit one's deeper and wider spiritual selfhood. Thus as Steiner explains, "to enter into all things, one must first step outside oneself. One must become 'selfless' in order to become blended with the 'self,' the 'ego' of another being" (*Stages*, 10). This "stepping outside" is also a form of transcendence, in which one enters through the depths of one's own being into the selfhood that is shared by all existence, and thereby also potentially into the unique selfhood of other specific beings. Thus intuitive perception can function on many levels, awakening one through direct participation to universal processes, and also allowing one to enter directly into the intimate selfhood of other spiritual beings. Steiner describes the shift in perception that takes through intuition regarding one's role in larger world processes: "The ego stirred to motion is recognized to be bound up with the world's creative forces. The laws of the world are no longer something that the ego perceives outwardly, but a truly miraculous fabric that it is helping to weave" (*Stages*, 52). Thus intuition functions at all levels to bring one into direct spiritual participation in the creative spiritual life of existence.

Because of the special role of the experience of self in intuition, intuition not only widens and deepens one's cognitive sphere of perception, but it also

possesses an inherent moral and spiritual quality, which deepens and transforms, as well as widens and extends one's sense of selfhood. As such it is a fundamental and powerful source of compassion. As Steiner explains: "Something has been grasped intuitively only if the feeling has arisen with regard to it that in it there is expressing itself a being of the self-same nature and inner content as one's own ego" (*Stages*, 57). This perceived "sameness" allows for limitless diversity in the nature and character of the individualized self, while allowing one to recognize a fundamental spiritual selfhood and subjectivity to be honored in other beings just as one learns to honor one's own unique spiritual selfhood. As Steiner further emphasizes, "to have knowledge of a spiritual being through intuition means having become completely at one with it, having united with its inner nature" (*Outline*, 338, ¶ 41). Such an experience of unity may be difficult to grasp or attain in ordinary experience, although it may be present in powerful experiences of loving intimacy and mystical experiences of divine union. The natural response to such a union with another being is love and compassion. Thus Steiner asserts that, "in the higher world, love is the only motivation for action" (*HW*, 102, ¶ 8). To enter thus into the selfhood of another being without permanently losing one's individual sense of self requires a depth and maturity of selfhood, and is thus the culmination of a long evolutionary spiritual creative process. One must be able to put aside one's individual sense of self to enter into another and perceive clearly and compassionately, but one must also be able to use one's individual self to perceive thus and to integrate this experience into one's personal sense of selfhood. All of this requires spiritual openness and a highly developed spiritual

individuality. And, as noted before, this mode of intuitive perception is compatible with all other modes of spiritual perception, and at its highest is capable of encompassing them.

Analysis and Qualification of Mature Epistemology

Steiner's emerging spiritual epistemology has some distinctive features, which while potentially deepening our understanding and depth of participation in spiritual perception, also impose further limitations on claims to clear, certain, and complete knowledge. Among the most obvious of these is that substantial and reliable spiritual knowledge depends on the possession and proper functioning of the requisite spiritual faculties. As Steiner states it, "whether or not we can persuade ourselves of the reality of any being or thing depends on our having an organ of perception, a sense, for it" (*Theos*, 93, ¶ 1). However, most people have not fully developed such spiritual senses, and how many senses there are to be developed, and to what extent they are ever fully developed must remain open questions. As Steiner observes, "the force that creates an organ lies hidden within what that organ perceives" (*Outline*, 95, ¶ 19). This process of developing a proper and adequate organ for perceiving an element in our environment may take a great deal of time, as the evolution of our bodily senses suggests, so that at any given time we may lack the ability to perceive fundamental aspects of our environment. It may also be that as reality evolves, the senses through which it can be apprehended evolve, and this may be an endless process, in which the evolving senses also transform the reality they observe. Whatever we are capable of observing through our developed senses at any given moment may be

incomplete, both due to the limitations of the specific senses we possess and to the limitations in their functioning and development. As Steiner clearly discerns, "we can fully experience only as much of the mysteries of existence as the level of our maturity allows" (*HW*, 69, ¶ 3). This maturity includes the development of our soul capacities for perception, so that at any given point we can only experience a picture of reality that corresponds to our current faculties and stage of development.

Similarly, full and accurate perception depends upon the proper functioning of the spiritual organs of perception we do possess. For not only may our senses be incomplete in their development, but they may also be faulty in their functioning. As Steiner himself notes,

It is easy to see that, just as our physical senses are useful for the accurate observation of the world only if they are properly developed and structured, so this higher capacity of perception can benefit us only if the soul's newly opened organs of perception are in good order.
(*HW*, 167, ¶ 6)

Thus it is always possible that our organs of spiritual perception function imperfectly at any stage in their development, and that this distorts the perceptions we form through them. This can be observed in our ordinary perception in everyday life, not only in relation to our physical senses, but also in our emotional and mental stance toward the world of our perceptions. As Steiner notes, "even in ordinary life, fear of a thing prevents us from seeing it properly" (*HW*, 89, ¶ 9). Steiner warns that this potential for distorted perception is manifoldly greater in higher spiritual realms, where the contribution of the spiritual perceiver is proportionally greater. Regarding each of the higher spiritual

modes of perception that Steiner describes, he repeatedly warns of the possibility of distortion and error. Thus in relation to imaginative perceptions he warns that: "One must be fully prepared to expect the nasty tricks that illusion plays upon one. Everywhere lurks the possibility that images will emerge that result from delusions of the outer senses, or of abnormal life" (*Stages*, 7). Similarly, in describing inspirational perception, Steiner cautions that, "as certainly as inspirations that originate in healthy feeling and willing can be revelations from a higher world, so certainly do errors, delusions and fantastic notions concerning a higher world spring from confused feeling and willing" (*Stages*, 36). However, can feeling and willing, and mental and spiritual life more broadly, ever be entirely free of distortion and confusion, and could we ever be sure that they are so? Steiner goes on to say regarding such potential for error and confusion that "all such possibility must first be done away with." However, is this really possible? How can we ever be certain that we have done so? It seems rather that all spiritual perception is liable to error, and since in the context of the vision we are exploring all perception is ultimately spiritual, all perception is liable to error. It would seem, therefore, that we must exercise humility and caution in our claims to spiritual knowledge, and that this awareness might inform and give perspective and context to our perceptions. However the increased subjective factor in higher spiritual perception, while it may deepen the character of knowledge and spiritual relationship, and even constitute a "higher" form of knowing, also increases the uncertainty regarding the accuracy and validity of such perceptions. This may certainly, as Steiner repeatedly asserts, be improved by growth and clarity in the

spiritual character and consciousness of the perceiver, but the potential for error, distortion, and limitation can never in principle be removed.

The importance of spiritual development and self-knowledge are thus central to this epistemological outlook. Accurate perception requires not only well developed, well functioning spiritual senses, but also the capacity to discern and distinguish one's own contribution in what is perceived of other beings and realities. As Steiner observes:

To advance beyond this level of development, we must learn to distinguish between ourselves and the spiritual outer world. We must learn to exclude all the effects of the individual self on the world of soul and spirit around us. The only way we can do this is by knowing about what we ourselves bring into this new world. The important thing, therefore, is that we must first have a true and thorough knowledge of ourselves so that we can perceive the surrounding world of soul and spirit in a pure way. (*Outline*, 354–356, ¶ 50)

This is certainly a complex and demanding task, and perhaps one that is impossible to achieve in a complete way. For is complete self-knowledge ever possible, either in a lifetime, or in a moment? If nearly complete self-knowledge is necessary to guarantee clarity of perception in spiritual realms, such clarity would seem to be eternally elusive. At best, one might attain relative clarity, with the provision that the extent of one's relative clarity and confusion could never be completely or certainly ascertained. This implies that the attainment of higher knowledge requires a lifelong process of development and introspection that is never fully completed, and which never renders certain and complete knowledge, but only deeper and more accurate perception, along with increased awareness about the limitations and unique character of one's perceptions. As Steiner observes: "The capacity to decide what is 'real' and what is 'illusory' in these

higher regions can come only from experience, and this experience must be made one's own in a quiet, patient inner life" (*Stages*, 7); "Only the inner voice of the soul, as it honestly strives for higher knowledge, can confirm our truths" (*HW*, 101, ¶ 7). This is a lifelong process, and for humankind, and perhaps for all spiritual beings, an ongoing one, with no final end, but only deepening of spiritual knowledge and relationship.

Steiner's spiritual epistemology has another central feature that is essential for the attainment and assessment of spiritual knowledge. This is the relational character of spiritual perception, which depends not only on the constitution and activity of the perceiver, but also on the expression and disclosure of the spiritual being that is being perceived. As Steiner expresses it:

Spiritual researchers' work on their own souls gives them the capacity for spiritual vision; that is the point of their efforts. But whether they are then able to perceive something in the spiritual world in any given instance, and exactly what they perceive, does not depend on them but comes to meet them as a gift from the spiritual world. (*Theos*, 172, Addendum)

Thus spiritual knowledge can never be guaranteed by the activity of the perceiver alone, but depends on the willing disclosure of the spiritual beings being perceived, and this willingness in turn depends on a quality of relationship. This is another reason that the moral and spiritual maturity and disposition of the spiritual perceiver is important. To perceive fully and accurately, as much as the limitations of our situation and perceptual apparatuses allow, we must cultivate trusting and collaborative relationship with the beings that inhabit and constitute our spiritual environment. While this element of reciprocity in perception may

provide a beautiful dimension to spiritual knowledge, it also makes it more delicate and dependant on the quality of our living spiritual relationships.

According to this relational understanding of spiritual perception, not only does our spiritual perception depend on the willing disclosure of other spiritual beings, but the actual perception we form is creatively co-constituted by their spiritual expression and our spiritual perception. As Steiner phrases it, "the beings whose spiritual truth I seek to behold must conjure their own truth" (*HW*, 61, ¶ 28). This means that the content and quality of spiritual perceptions and knowledge depends upon the expressive character and capacity of the beings we perceive. This would seem to suggest that limitations in the accuracy, completeness, and character of their expression would limit our capacity to accurately and completely perceive them, and also that the character of our perceptions would always be in a sense the result of a unique creative collaboration. Not only would such perceptions depend on both the expresser and the perceiver, but they would depend on the quality of the relationship between them. While this presents beautiful possibilities for creative relationship and collaboration, it also provides potential limitations and challenges. The cultivation of both honoring and creative collaborative relationships becomes essential to profound spiritual knowledge. It also seems clear from this that the quality of these relationships would transform the emergent knowledge, which would in turn constitute a newly emerging and transformative reality. Thus not only knowledge, but reality itself is shaped through such collaborative spiritual relationships.

Despite these complexities, Steiner still asserts that a single objective truth exists and can be attained. As he expresses it, "in reality, of course, there is only one view of higher truths" (*HW*, 106, ¶ 14). However, this view seems to overlook the profoundly relational character of the world vision that is presumed in this epistemology. These "truths" would seem to be aspects of a complex and dynamic spiritual reality, which is always experienced from a unique and situated perspective within the spiritual fabric of creation. These truths would not only appear differently from a different perspective, but would be different, for the truths are themselves constituted by the patterns of living spiritual relationship which they reflect. The idea that there is a single objective view implies that it is possible to perceive and experience outside of a relational context, but according to all that we have been exploring, this does not seem possible. Not only would the character and relationship between spiritual beings determine the unique character of a perception, they would also shape the reality in which that perception lives, is constituted, and has its meaning. The whole of reality would be different from each living perspective, and would in turn be transformed by that perspective. Thus truth and reality would be creatively co-constituted in every moment, in every living spiritual relationship. There is a dynamism and beauty in this vision of spiritual reality and knowledge, but it means that the subjective and relational characters of knowledge and creation are never absent. To know is to live and create in spiritual relationship, and every deed of knowing and creating transforms the whole of existence, of which every creative participant is a unique

and irreducible part and which lives differently in relationship to each participant and each ongoing act of creative perception.

Another challenge presented by this spiritual epistemology, already to some extent implicit in the relational communication that is integral to it, is that of translation between different languages of expression, perception, and communication. According to this understanding, spiritual beings must express themselves according to their own language of expression, the spiritual perceiver must interpret this language and express her understanding in her own unique language of perception in order to consciously reflect upon it, and this understanding must perhaps be translated yet again to be communicated to others. As Steiner explains, "the supersensible realm speaks to the soul, which must then translate what it has heard into symbolic signs in order to survey it in full consciousness" (*HW*, 213, Epilogue). Although the first stage is not made explicit in this statement, there would seem to be an initial process of perceptual interpretation, followed by another interpretive translation into a conceptual sign language that allows for conscious reflection and analysis. In order to translate these perceptions into the language of everyday thought and discourse, yet another creative interpretation is necessary. As Steiner frequently notes when attempting to convey the observations of esoteric science:

Indeed, the things and beings of the higher and material worlds are sufficiently related so that—with a little good will—we can obtain a conception of the higher worlds through words intended for the material world. But we must always be conscious of the fact that a great part of such descriptions of the supersensible worlds must inevitably consist of analogies and symbols. (*HW*, 164–165, ¶ 2)

This presents challenges not only for conveying spiritual insights to others, but also for translating different modes of perception within a single consciousness. Thus the process of creative interpretation and translation is layered through the processes of spiritual perception, reflection, integration of knowledge, and expression. Wherever there is interpretation there is ambiguity, uncertainty, and an element of creative configuration that transforms the reality being apprehended and conveyed.

In his later writings, Steiner adds some further qualifications regarding the potential for immediate conscious comprehension of spiritual phenomena. In his description of his own process of perceiving and understanding spiritual phenomena, Steiner acknowledges the limitations of the conscious mind in immediately apprehending deeper spiritual realities:

Initially, the perception is experienced in dim, undefined contours. It must be allowed to sink back into the depths of the soul to mature. Consciousness has not progressed far enough to comprehend the spirit in what one perceives. The deeper area of the soul must join this content, undisturbed by consciousness, in the spirit world. (*Auto*, 236)

This description implies that a deeper and wider process of apprehension must take place than can be encompassed by the conscious mind. It also implies an organic process that must take place over time, and cannot be rushed or controlled by the conscious personality. This definitely seems to contradict the claims Steiner makes in *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path* regarding the completeness, clarity, and certainty of immediate spiritual perception, even in the realm of intuitive spiritual thinking. The deeper and wider content of a spiritual perception always lies beyond the limitations of conscious perception, and

intuition itself transcends the limitations of conscious perception. As Steiner notes, this is also true in relationship to perception of our own souls and higher selves, which are in turn connected to the cosmic soul processes and selves of all existence: "Regardless of what level we have reached on the path to supersensible worlds, there are always still higher levels where we will perceive ever more of the higher self, which can therefore reveal itself only partially at any given level" (*Outline*, 368, ¶ 55). Thus spiritual knowledge would appear to be eternally incomplete and growing, ever-deepening into new realms of relationship and creative manifestation.

Freedom and Morality Revisited

At this point it may be helpful to revisit the notion of human freedom and the associated conceptions of moral responsibility in the context of Steiner's more mature epistemological and spiritual vision. In his later writings, and especially in his *Autobiography*, Steiner revisits many of the themes and ideas that he treats in *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path*, but with greater subtlety and sophistication. From these reflections, in association with our foregoing reflections and qualifications, a more coherent and paradoxical conception of freedom can be glimpsed and elaborated. The insight into human freedom that Steiner later describes is based on the kind of immediate living vision that he advocates as the only source of real knowledge and understanding. As he recounts it: "I saw in the human personality the center where the human being *unites* with the utmost primordial being of the world. From that center springs the will, and when the clear light of spirit is active in that center, the will is free" (*Auto*, 71–72). This

understanding of human freedom does not require absolute or complete knowledge, either of oneself, of one's immediate thoughts, or of the world surrounding and extending beyond one's individual self. This freedom is a paradoxical freedom, since the individual personality is paradoxically individual and united with the primordial being of the world, and it is this participation in the unbounded being and self-hood of existence that grants the individual his measure of creative freedom. However, just as every individual self is relatively individualized and relatively united with the open and unbounded being of existence, so too must one's freedom be relative. For all beings share in this single greater selfhood, and all beings must simultaneously work with the parameters and limitations of their individual constitution and relational participatory context, while at the same time collectively shaping the shared reality to which they all belong. Similarly, the capacity of any being to transcend his or her personal limitations and rise into a wider and freer sphere of consciousness must also be relative, rather than absolute. Thus it seems more coherent to treat human freedom as relative, rather than absolute, and to envision the possibility of a greater and greater ascent into higher, wider, and freer forms of creative participation in the divine mystery of existence.

For Steiner, the direct experience of intuitive thinking that transcends sensory reality is essential to awakening to higher modes of human freedom and creative participation in wider spheres of spiritual existence. As Steiner describes it, "while living in that sense-free thinking, human beings in fact find themselves consciously within the spiritual foundations of existence" (*Auto*, 83). Whether or

not such thinking is ever completely free of indirect influence from sensory experience and associated modes of cognition, which is certainly questionable, the essential characteristic of Steiner's vision can still be embraced: direct and immediate conscious participation in a more open and transcendent field of self-formative existence. In such a visionary thinking process, the individual consciously shapes his or her own participation in a wider sphere of creative activity, co-creatively participating in the unfolding and realization of higher spiritual creative vision. While such an experience may take place at times with a heightened effulgence and concentration of consciousness, it is also possible to see such experiences as potentiating a more pervasively free mode of creative participation at a multiplicity of transconscious levels. Thus while freedom is often increased through an intense heightening of conscious creative participation, such awareness and freedom can also expand and extend in a more diffuse form throughout human life.

Steiner finds the source of all morality in this transcendent dimension of human spiritual creativity and freedom. As he explains, "human moral nature must be sought through an entirely individual conscious union with the ethical impulses of the spirit world" (*Auto*, 128). Through this union an individual chooses how to participate in this larger relational field of spiritual activity, realizing creative potentials that are aligned with one's own individuality in relation to the larger spiritual vision in which one participates. As Steiner puts it, "your spirit acts once you find an impulse to action that is a moral intuition in the realm of sense-free thinking" (*Auto*, 86). Thus for Steiner, all relatively free

actions are made based on intuitions regarding the moral and spiritual value and consequences of one's actions. There are no actions that do not have moral consequences and implications. The moral and spiritual dimensions of creative existence become more manifest the deeper one penetrates into higher spiritual realities. As Steiner observes, "the more spiritual the worlds that you enter, the more the moral and the 'natural' laws of those worlds coincide" (*S-K*, 49). However, it is a central insight of Steiner's philosophy that such moral dimensions are present at all levels of existence, and that it is a goal of human life to bring the moral and the practical into more perfect integration and alignment.

For Steiner, the conscious experience of one's own relatedness to the entire world process has profound moral implications. Not only does every creative act have moral consequences, but through our actions we jointly shape the reality in which all beings participate, suffer, and experience happiness and meaning. Thus we all share in the universal creative process, and we all share moral responsibility for all that transpires in the world, and for all the beings in it. As Steiner observes, "it is then but a small step to the insight that, as a member or organ of humanity as a whole, I am jointly responsible, with all human beings, for everything that happens" (*HW*, 99, ¶ 5). Not only does this mean that we must look beyond our individual selves in making decisions and forging a life of spiritual beauty and meaning, but it also means that our own development and action is profoundly bound up with the development and action of other beings. Thus our own moral and spiritual development benefits humanity and the whole world process, and the reverse is also true. As Steiner notes, "this brings us once

more to the insight that anything we do for our own improvement benefits not just ourselves but also the world" (*HW*, 100, ¶ 6).

Steiner refers to spiritual rather than material improvement, for it is the spiritual benefit to humanity that he has in mind, and the spiritual improvement of any being benefits all, while this is not necessarily true on a material level. For Steiner, the material has its value in the service of the spiritual, and this stands true as well for sensual pleasures derived from sensory experiences of the material world. As Steiner explains:

Even as a spiritual being, the I must have sensory pleasures as long as it lives in a body. The spirit manifests in sense-perceptible things, and the I is enjoying nothing other than the spirit when it gives itself up to sense-perceptible things through which the light of the spirit shines. The I will continue to enjoy this light even when sensuality is no longer the medium for the rays of the spirit. (*Outline*, 81, ¶ 13)

However, Steiner warns that enjoyment of sensual pleasures that are not in alignment with the greater spiritual life harm the soul, and should be avoided: "If sensory enjoyment as an expression of the spirit signifies an elevation and development of the I, then enjoyment that is not such an expression signifies impoverishment and desolation" (*Outline*, 83, ¶ 13). Thus in all situations it is the higher spiritual vision that should guide and inform action.

For Steiner, spiritual reality is benefitted not only by outward actions, but also by our thoughts and feelings, and the subtle movement of our consciousness. As he repeatedly asserts, "the world benefits as much from pure feelings and thoughts as from good deeds," (*HW*, 100, ¶ 6) and "we must know that what we feel has as much impact upon the world as the work done by our hands" (*HW*, 100, ¶ 6). Thus we are morally and spiritually shaping the world at every moment.

This does not mean, however, that morally and spiritually informed action is not essential for human life. A clear moral intuition tells one when to act and when to reflect, what can be accomplished through contemplation and inner work, and what must be accomplished through outward action on behalf of others and the world. For Steiner, such intuitive moral judgments become more and more natural the more we cultivate a life of spiritual freedom:

Once this love of freedom has become a soul habit, we ourselves become free of all that is connected only with capacities of an individual, personal nature. We cease to look at things from our own separate, particular point of view. The boundaries set by the narrow self, which chain us to this perspective, vanish. And the mysteries of the spiritual world may enter our inner life. (*HW*, 139, ¶ 27)

As this passage suggest, not only do we transcend the narrow desires and modes of identification that correspond to a spiritually limited sense of individual selfhood and open to embrace the well-being and concerns of the wider world, but we also open ourselves to the higher spiritual realities that permeate our lives and experience. Through cultivating an attitude of intuitive spiritual openness, we learn to be responsive to all the sources of wisdom, guidance and beauty that permeate our lives, and become responsive not only to other living beings and their concerns, but to the moral and spiritual impulses that surround us.

As human beings, however, our task is to bring higher, spiritual realities into relationship with the physical world. Humanity, indeed, is the means by which the spirit penetrates the physical realm. And the heart organ is precisely what the higher I uses to make the sensory self its instrument so that it can use it. (*HW*, 156–157, ¶ 6)

Here Steiner calls special attention to the role of the heart as a center of spiritual intuition and compassion. Through the heart we are united in our love and concern for all beings and all existence. And as Steiner also points out, "each

expansion of our horizon also extends the sphere of our responsibility" (*HW*, 191, ¶ 13). Thus with awareness comes a sense of both concern and responsibility for the welfare of all beings. Every individual, therefore, is challenged to shape the whole of existence from her own unique perspective, and to take what she can intuit about the welfare of all beings into this consideration. As Steiner clearly states it, "in all feelings and actions, the value of any single thing must be held before the eyes in the context of the whole" (*Stages*, 16). Though this knowledge of the whole is limited from any single vantage point, the collaboration of all beings from all of their interrelated vantage points shapes the world, and this highest collaboration requires loving openness and free creative spiritual exchange.

Broad Implications of This Emerging Worldview

We live in a time in which much of human life is estranged from the deeper spiritual reality that surrounds and pervades us. This is a source of tremendous alienation, suffering and crisis. In this context, we are challenged to awaken and develop ourselves spiritually, both as individuals and as collaborative participants in a collective evolutionary process. Because our societies are not pervasively structured and informed by spiritual awareness and intention, this presents many challenges in modern life. We are challenged to reorient ourselves spiritually, discovering and forging a life enhancing spiritual environment within which our development can progress. As Steiner observes:

In ancient, prehistoric times, the temples of the spirit were outwardly visible, but today, when our life has become so unspiritual, they no longer exist where we can see them with our physical eyes. Yet spiritually they

are still present everywhere, and whoever seeks can find them. (*HW*, 16, ¶ 4)

This means both discovering and creating spiritually enhancing spaces within our social and natural environments, and also cultivating a relationship with the spiritual dimensions of our existence that pervade and transcend the material and sensory realms we inhabit. While these two elements must work and develop together, developing a center of spiritual clarity and focus within us is central to both aspects of this integrative process. As Steiner writes:

The “higher self” within us evolves continuously. Only such inner calm and certainty as has been described can ensure that its evolution unfolds organically. If we are not masters of our own lives but are ruled by life, then the waves of outer life press in upon our inner self from all sides, and we are like a plant trying to grow in the cleft of a rock. Unless it is given more space, the plant will be stunted. Outer forces cannot create the space our inner being needs to grow. Only the inner calm we create in the soul can do so. Outer circumstances can change only our outer life situation—they can never awaken the “spiritual person” within. As esoteric students, we ourselves must give birth to a new, higher being within us. (*HW*, 31, ¶ 26)

Thus through creating inner clarity, focus and calm, we create the inner space within ourselves and the world in which this deeper spiritual development can take place. Through doing so we also create a space of openness and receptivity to other beings, so that a higher spiritual meeting and collaboration can take place.

The creation and maintenance of this open space of meeting and collaboration requires humility, reverence, self-reflective awareness and sensitivity to the spiritual lives of other beings. In this space of meeting both true knowledge of the inner being and spirit of the world and a relationship of loving collaboration arise simultaneously. And conversely: "If we are not capable of reverence, we will never advance very far in our knowledge. If we do not want to

acknowledge the worth of anything in the world, the essence of things will remain closed to us" (*Outline*, 345, ¶ 42). Thus a kind of loving and reverent spiritual openness emerges as a guiding principle for all knowledge and all relationship. Through this stance toward existence we open to the deeper spiritual meanings and potentials that are woven throughout the evolving world process, giving our life a new depth and spiritual direction:

This path teaches us that the most trivial tasks we have to carry out and the most trivial experiences that come our way are woven together with great cosmic beings and world events. Once this interconnection becomes clear to us in our moments of contemplation, we will enter our daily round of activities with new and increased strength, because now we know that all our work and all our suffering are work and suffering for the sake of a great, spiritual, cosmic interrelationship. (*HW*, 35, ¶ 31)

We thus move through existence as a kind of continual creative exchange, learning from every process and every element in our environment, and bestowing knowledge and creative energy in return. To do this, we "must always be ready to receive a new revelation from each and every being and thing" (*HW*, 81, ¶ 21). Through inner receptivity we experience the inner spiritual life that pervades the sensory world around us, and allow each being and element in our environment to communicate in its own unique way. In doing so, we learn to be gentle and compassionate, toward other beings, and toward ourselves, accepting and nurturing the development of spiritual life with our presence. For as Steiner repeatedly observes: "Gentleness removes obstacles, opening our soul and spirit organs. But harshness—callousness—frightens away the soul forms that should awaken the eyes of the soul" (*HW*, 90, ¶ 10). Not only does harshness alienate us from the beings around us, but it also stunts our own spiritual development,

alienating us from our own sensitivity and higher spiritual nature. Thus through openness and loving kindness we both grow spiritually and deepen our communion and creative collaboration with other beings.

This stance of spiritual openness, reverence and compassion changes our relationship to the entire world process. In addition to love and care for other beings, we also experience a sense of wonder and gratitude for existence itself. As Steiner observes, we come to "know that our very existence is a gift from the whole universe" (*HW*, 102, ¶ 9). This openness greatly extends our sense of self, since we recognize that we share our deepest selfhood with all beings, and with existence itself. The desire for truth and knowledge become inextricably linked with pursuit of the welfare of all beings. As Steiner conceives it, "to believe in and love humanity is the basis of all striving for the truth," (*HW*, 103, ¶ 12) "and this love for humanity must gradually expand into love for all beings, and indeed for all existence" (*HW*, 104, ¶ 12). This love naturally promotes an attitude of care and constructiveness toward all that we encounter, which we experience as an extension of our own experience of spiritual selfhood. And conversely, we also naturally avoid actions that are destructive and detrimental to life, seeking always to transform what is destructive and problematic into something that is spiritually beautiful and life enhancing. As Steiner describes:

If we are successful in this, we shall have a deep love for all that is constructive and creative. Our natural inclination will be to avoid all destructiveness. As esoteric students, we must never destroy for the sake of destroying— neither in deeds nor in thoughts, words, or feelings. Growth and development must be our joy. We should lend our hand to destruction only if we are able to bring new life out of what we destroy. This does not mean that we should stand idly by while wickedness prevails. On the contrary, in every evil we must seek out the elements that

allow us to transform it into good. We will then see more and more clearly that the best way to combat wickedness and imperfection is to create what is good and whole. (*HW*, 104, ¶ 12)

From this perspective all of life is a dynamic collaborative creative process, guided always by the ideals of love and spiritual beauty. In every aspect and movement of our lives we are creators, and we create always in relationship to other beings and a larger spiritual world process.

This understanding suggests a more integral and nuanced approach to human knowledge. For we know and experience the world on many levels simultaneously, and all of these levels of experience, knowledge and relationship must be integrated into a single seamless creative process. As Steiner frequently explains, the knowledge that we can attain of the spiritual worlds requires a higher degree of spiritual development, self-awareness and spacious subtle apprehension, as well as spiritually honoring receptivity:

The more levels of cognition we attain, the more we need to be able to listen attentively, calmly, and reverently. For the work of cognizing the truth—indeed, all activity and life in the world of the spirit—is infinitely more subtle and delicate than what we do in the course of our ordinary life and thinking in the physical world. The further our horizon expands, the subtler the work we must perform. (*HW* 105–106, ¶ 14)

This requires a kind of spaciousness that hurried modern urban society rarely offers us. It also requires a tremendous extension beyond the dissociative cognitive paradigm of learning and understanding that dominates modern academic and theoretical discourse. The cultivation of some form of meditative practice and awareness seems essential to this process.

According to Steiner, the awakening and development of our subtle spiritual senses is also necessary, for the full and harmonious realization of the

world's creative potentials requires the guidance and integration of wisdom and creative vision from the spiritual worlds. As Steiner expresses it:

In other words, we must transform the earth by implanting in it what we discover of the spiritual realm. Our task is the transformation of the earth. Therein lies the only reason for seeking higher knowledge. The earth as we know it with our senses depends on the spiritual world, and this means that we can truly work on the earth only if we share in those worlds where creative forces are concealed. (*HW*, 175–176, ¶ 4)

If this guidance and participatory knowledge is necessary to understand our world and guide its development, it makes sense that its absence would lead to grave errors and destruction, as can certainly be observed in the environmental crisis and the pervasive suffering in the world around us. Thus Steiner observes that, "we come to the insight that we are causing damage to the whole world and all the beings in it when we do not develop our own forces in the right way" (*Outline*, 24, ¶ 19), and that "similarly, a worldview not fructified by a knowledge of the hidden element inevitably leads to desolation" (*Outline*, 60–61, ¶ 1). Through opening to the deeper spiritual worlds within and around us, not only do we expand our awareness and creative participation in existence, but we transform the familiar and beloved world to which we belong, coming to know and inhabit it more deeply, and helping to realize its creative potentials through our presence and devotion. As Steiner observes:

We can say that, with suprasensory consciousness, the human soul awakens in the spiritual world. But we must also say that, *through love, the spirit awakens in the sensory world*. Wherever love and compassion are active in life, we can perceive the magic breath of the spirit blowing through the sensory world. (*Threshold*, 105–106)

Thus the hidden spiritual and manifest creative worlds are simultaneously fulfilled in mutual growth and integrated wholeness, and through this process we too find

the deeper fulfillment of our spiritual natures. Through our striving, the manifest world becomes the fulfillment and living symbol of the spiritual life and creative impulse within it, discernible everywhere in the presence of love and spiritual beauty.

Conclusion

Through his teachings and writings, Rudolf Steiner offers a more spiritually sensitive way of perceiving and relating to the world around us than is offered by modern materialistic society and the scientific materialist worldview. The epistemology that is central to his philosophical and spiritual vision also offers a radically different conception of knowledge, in which the moral and spiritual dimensions of existence are never ultimately separate from the noetic. According to this conception, every act and way of knowing is also a spiritual creative process, and the relational character of noetic acts determine both their larger meaning and the character of the knowledge that emerges from them. This insight emerges from a basic apprehension of the interconnectedness of all existence within a relational creative field that includes all consciousness and meaning. Even without entering into Steiner's more encompassing metaphysical worldview, a recognition of this interconnection allows us to recognize that every act, including the act of knowing and directing our awareness, takes place within a network of dynamic relationships within a relational creative field, and has consequences that ripple through this entire field, determining as well the character of the knowledge that emerges from each participatory action. This insight is strengthened and magnified if one enters into a shared perception with

Steiner that all existence is spiritual in nature, and that even material processes are aspects and expressions of a larger spiritual creative process. The possibilities of direct trans-sensory spiritual knowledge that Steiner describes further deepen and expand this relational perspective, and the specific character of the faculties and noetic processes he describes further emphasize and qualify this relational understanding. However, regardless of one's metaphysical perspective, a recognition of the fundamental interconnectedness of all existence and of the relational participatory character of all knowledge should allow one to perceive that no act of knowing is free of moral and spiritual implications, or of the formative character of the relationships and processes in which it is embedded. This insight alone suggests a great need for transformation in the way we pursue knowledge, make decisions, and shape the world through our creative activity. In every act and every moment of existence we shape ourselves and the world, and we must awaken and take responsibility for ourselves as world creators. In every act and in every moment we shape the world together in relationship, and we must awaken to honor and inhabit these living creative connections and the spiritual possibilities they offer for intimacy, mutual belonging and creative beauty.

In the true spirit of creative inquiry, Steiner offers his epistemological perspective as a living insight to be explored, extended and transformed according to the authentic experiences of the inquirer. His philosophy can be taken as an invitation to awaken through contemplation to our own deeper natures, each of us guiding our own path of inquiry, with the understanding that, "even though there is no all-encompassing, final answer to our questions, the answers we find

through the soul's inner journey go far beyond what our senses, and the reason that is bound to them, can give us" (*S-K*, 6). He does not ask that we accept his claims on the basis of faith, but he does offer with sincerity and love the results of a lifetime of devoted spiritual inquiry and self-development. Perhaps his most essential message is that we have immediately before, within and around us deeper resources for understanding the world and ourselves that transcend the limits set by materialist philosophies and modes of perception. As Steiner poetically observes, "man's soul life has always a certain treasure of feeling over and above those stimulated by sense perceptions" (*Stages*, 39). This inner life of the soul, however conceived, is something that is available to every human being, and shapes and informs every aspect of our lives and our relationship to the world, whether we are conscious of this or not. At the very least, we can all deepen our relationship to our interior lives and inner experience of existence, and can seek to honor and relate to the interior lives of other beings, bringing this depth of feeling, awareness, and knowledge to our actions in the world.

However, Steiner does also make stronger appeals based on his own spiritual observations. He assures us repeatedly from his own experience that we each have the capacity to awaken higher faculties of spiritual perception, and he exhorts us to awaken and develop our spiritual potentials, and grow and transform ourselves as spiritual beings. As he reports: "True observation of human life shows that, starting in our time, human souls have entered a condition in which they *cannot* enter into the necessary relationship to life without understanding the supersensory worlds" (*S-K*, 54). And for Steiner, this awakening to supersensory

realities is also an awakening to self-awareness of our own spiritual natures. As he powerfully expresses it: "Clearly recognizing these higher regions of existence and penetrating what goes on in them with understanding is the only path that can really ground us and lead us toward our true calling as human beings" (*Theos*, 159, ¶ 57). To this end, he offers methods by which we can develop our spiritual capacities and higher selves. For as he explains: "Esoteric methods shorten the path. They allow us to reach the point where we can collaborate in the worlds where spiritual work advances the human evolution and salvation" (*HW*, 106, ¶ 14). However, his specific perspective and approach need not be adopted, as there are many ways of pursuing spiritual growth and development. What is more crucial is the invitation to introspection and spiritual transformation, as well as an approach to existence that is honoring of its spiritual depth, mystery and sacredness. Steiner assures us that we have within us the capacity to deepen our relationship to this divine living mystery, and to enter honoringly into relationship with other beings, forces and creative processes. From this perspective, "even the smallest acts and the least chores have a significance in the great household of the cosmos" (*HW*, 139, ¶ 27). Through opening to the interiority of existence, we open to the meaning and spiritual richness that is excluded if we only relate to the outer appearances and surfaces of things. He thus encourages us that "we must achieve and be blessed by the spirit so that we can introduce its revelations into the sense-perceptible world" (*HW*, 175, ¶ 4). And for Steiner, this awakening to spiritual creative relationship always means an awakening to love as a primary

spiritual creative impulse and compassionate response to the selfhood of other beings, with whom in the highest sense we share a single selfhood. Thus he states:

This is the mystery of all future evolution: that our knowledge and everything we do out of a true understanding of evolution sow seeds that must ripen into love. The greater the power of the love that comes into being, the more we will be able to accomplish creatively on behalf of the future. The strongest forces working toward the end result of spiritualization lie in what will come from love. The more spiritual knowledge flows into the evolution of humanity and the Earth, the greater the number of viable seeds will there be for the future. Through its very nature, spiritual knowledge transforms itself into love. (*Outline*, 396–397, ¶ 11)

In the broadest sense, Steiner invites us to awaken to the mystery of our spiritual natures, to recognize our interconnectedness, both with other living beings, and with other spiritual creative forces in the cosmos, and to recognize that we share with each other a single yet paradoxically manifold spiritual selfhood and creative existence, which we have the power to shape and enjoy together in love and beauty at every moment.

PREFACE TO CHAPTER FIVE

When that rock is lifted, the earth is lighter; the hand that bears it heavier. When it is thrown, the circuits of the stars respond, and where it strikes or falls, the universe is changed. On every act the balance of the whole depends.

—Le Guin⁹⁷

It is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world are eternally justified.

—Nietzsche⁹⁸

Eternity with its worlds—the past and future—is in ourselves or nowhere.

—Novalis⁹⁹

In this final essay, I explore the integration of the philosophies of all three thinkers, and the integrative vision that emerges out of the creative synthesis of each of the visions articulated in the previous essays. In the first part of the essay I explore the commonality and complementarity of the three thinkers, and how the differences in their backgrounds, experiences, and approaches helps them to jointly offer a rich, complex, and multi-dimensional understanding of existence. In the second part I explore and elaborate the vision that emerges out of the interaction of the earlier re-envisagements, this time integrating my exploration of Steiner's worldview and epistemology from the fourth essay with the synthesis of Jung and Whitehead in the third. According to this more comprehensive integrative vision, all of existence can be understood as a multi-dimensional and paradoxical process of relational creative participation, involving multiple interrelated levels of selfhood, relationship, and creativity. Again, this vision is offered as just one way in which these rich philosophical worldviews might be

related and integrated, reflecting their relationship with my own evolving vision and creative process. And once again this is offered in the spirit of open exploration, with the hope that it might have some value for the continuously evolving collective visioning process, and the ways of living and relating that it informs.

CHAPTER FIVE: PSYCHOLOGY, COSMOLOGY, AND SPIRITUAL
EVOLUTION: A VISION OF RELATIONAL CREATIVE PROCESS
EMERGING THROUGH ENGAGEMENT WITH THE THOUGHT OF JUNG,
WHITEHEAD, AND STEINER

The degeneracy of mankind is distinguished from its uprise by the dominance of
chill abstractions, divorced from aesthetic content.

—Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 123

Since the stars have fallen from heaven and our highest symbols have paled, a
secret life holds sway in the unconscious.

—Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*, 23

I saw an abyss in modern thinking between natural phenomena and spiritual and
morally universal meaning.

—Steiner, *Autobiography*, 123

Even though there is no all-encompassing, final answer to our questions, the
answers we find through the soul's inner journey go far beyond what our senses,
and the reason that is bound to them, can give us.

—Steiner, *A Way of Self-Knowledge*, 6

The aim at philosophic understanding is the aim at piercing the blindness of
activity in respect to its transcendent functions.

—Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 169

They are genuine symbols precisely because they are ambiguous, full of half-
glimpsed meanings, and in the last resort inexhaustible.

—Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*, 38

Introduction

Our time is, of necessity, a time of integration and convergence. We must recognize and embrace our role as participants in a sacred ecology, or else perish and destroy much beauty with us. During this time we must draw on the wisdom we inherit from the past and cultivate the living vision that guides our collaborative shaping of the future. Carl Gustav Jung, Alfred North Whitehead, and Rudolf Steiner all sought to meet this challenge in their own respective times and contexts, integrating contemporary scientific knowledge and ancient introspective wisdom, motivated by their love for humanity and the world, and by their concern for the wellbeing and future of the evolving world process. Drawing on individual engagement and creative re-envisagement of the philosophies of each thinker,¹⁰⁰ this essay explores the convergence and integration of these emergent visions, suggesting a direction of re-orientation and a set of emerging values that might help us to meet the challenges we now face as a species and conscientiously embrace our role as interdependent centers of awareness and creative participation within an evolving spiritual ecology.

In the first part of this essay I explore the convergence and complementarity of these thinkers and their respective visions, and in the second I explore the vision that emerges out of their integration—specifically, I elaborate the vision that arises from the integration of my creative re-envisagements of each of their philosophies. The treatment that follows is by no means exhaustive of their respective philosophies and their creative potentials, but is one attempt in my own evolving context to engage and elaborate something of the wisdom and

creative vision that they severally and together have to bestow upon the challenges and potentials of our living moment. It is offered in the spirit of openness and invitation to further engagement and elaboration.

Commonality and Complementarity of Approach

Theoretical Orientations and Approaches to Knowledge

Jung, Whitehead, and Steiner approach their thinking and investigations from different disciplines, with significantly different backgrounds of experience, and with differing aims and orientations. However, these differences often contribute to the complementary nature of their ideas and philosophies, and there is a surprising degree of convergence between the insights and visions to which their respective intellectual and spiritual journeys give rise.¹⁰¹ Whitehead approaches his later investigations into the broad nature of reality from the perspective of speculative philosophy, drawing on his background as a mathematician, logician, and physicist. His orientation is broadly speculative and phenomenological, and he draws primarily on scientific theories and discoveries, the recorded history of human thought, and his own introspective phenomenological observations.¹⁰² Jung approaches his later investigations into the psyche and the broader world in which it is situated as a clinical psychiatrist, psychological empiricist, and sensitive spiritual inquirer, and also draws on introspective observations of his own developmental process. Like Whitehead, Jung read widely throughout his life, drawing on contemporary scientific knowledge, philosophy, world religions, and his intensive studies of alchemy and mythology in formulating his central ideas and theories. He also made use of his

own phenomenological investigations, including analysis of his dreams, detailed accounts of his own individuation process, and a multitude of synchronistic and paranormal experiences, as well as his observation of his patients and their dreams and developmental processes.¹⁰³ Rudolf Steiner, though formally trained as an engineer, was a polymath who made significant contributions to a multitude of fields¹⁰⁴—including education, architecture, mathematics, medicine, and agriculture—and approached his mature philosophical and spiritual investigations as a philosopher, esotericist, and spiritual scientist. He describes himself as having had the precursors of his later clairvoyant¹⁰⁵ perceptions from the time of his earliest childhood memories,¹⁰⁶ and he drew on these developing experiences and observations, as well as his extensive reading and broad education, in formulating his philosophical and esoteric insights and perspectives. Thus each thinker elaborates a vision of reality based on his own orientation, focus, and range of experiences, and this allows for a high degree of complementarity between their visions.

Whitehead explains his objective in preparing and presenting the Gifford Lectures, which were the basis for his magnum opus, *Process and Reality*, as follows:

The lectures are intended to state a condensed scheme of cosmological ideas, to develop their meaning by confrontation with the various topics of experience, and finally to elaborate an adequate cosmology in terms of which all particular topics find their interconnections. (*PR*, xii)

He goes on to explain one of the central ways he conceives the purpose and task of speculative philosophy. For Whitehead, it is the task of philosophy to mediate between science, art, and religion, and to examine the fundamental

presuppositions that lie behind the operative modes of thinking and interpretation that inform both scientific discourse and everyday experience. His approach is largely constructive and systematic, aiming toward a completeness and consistency of philosophical outlook that he knows in advance to be in principle unattainable, for as he states, "Rationalism is an adventure in the clarification of thought, progressive and never final" (*PR*, 9).

Whitehead explains the basic aim of speculative philosophy in the following manner:

Speculative Philosophy is the endeavor to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted. By this notion of 'interpretation' I mean that everything of which we are conscious, as enjoyed, perceived, willed, or thought, shall have the character of a particular instance of the general scheme. Thus the philosophical scheme should be coherent, logical, and, in respect to its interpretation, applicable and adequate. Here 'applicable' means that some items of experience are thus interpretable, and 'adequate' means that there are no items incapable of such interpretation. (*PR*, 3)

Thus for Whitehead, an ideal philosophy can provide a meaningful account of all experiences upon which it is possible to consciously reflect, is exemplified by all of our experiences, and is capable of coordinating all such experiences and their interpretations in a logical and coherent manner. Whitehead then goes on to explain that coherency involves seeing the various elements in our experience in terms of their complex relations with each other in the context of the whole process of existence:

In other words, it is presupposed that no entity can be conceived in complete abstraction from the system of the universe, and that it is the business of speculative philosophy to exhibit this truth. This character is its coherence. (*PR*, 3)

According to this understanding, the full complex web of relationships that situates and constitutes any element of existence can never be fully comprehended or articulated, and any conceptual representation of reality must inherently be a simplification and a generalization, useful as a functional abstraction, but delusive and misleading if taken as literally or exhaustively true. Nonetheless, Whitehead sees the attempt to elaborate a complete and consistent account of reality to be a worthy endeavor, provided that one does not mistake one's attempts for final, complete, or certain knowledge.¹⁰⁷

Jung repeatedly described himself as a scientist and empirical investigator, and he therefore sought to limit his claims and methods to what he saw as the legitimate field of scientific investigation. He tended to situate his theorizing and interpretation within a Kantian epistemological framework in which only the immediate phenomenal contents of experiences are directly observable and knowable. He thus followed Kant in assuming that there was an in principle unknowable reality behind these phenomenal appearances, and that speculations concerning its deeper nature extended beyond the legitimate field of empirical observation and knowledge.¹⁰⁸ However, despite the many disclaimers that appear throughout his writings, Jung also explored and speculated upon many psychological, philosophical, and spiritual dimensions of experience in ways that transcend the strict limits set by scientific empiricism.¹⁰⁹ Many of the central concepts in Jung's psychology refer to theoretically posited dimensions of existence that he saw as inaccessible to direct observation and knowledge, such as the personal unconscious and its prominent figures—the shadow, anima, and

animus—the collective unconscious, and the archetypes. This speculative dimension was especially prominent in his private writings, including his letters and autobiography, and increasingly prominent in the formal writings that he published during the last decade or more of his life. In his preface to his pioneering monograph on synchronicity, *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle*, Jung describes his approach as follows:

There can be no question of a complete description and explanation of these complicated phenomena, but only an attempt to broach the problem in such a way as to reveal some of its manifold aspects and connections, and to open up a very obscure field which is philosophically of the greatest importance. (*Synchronicity*, 420, ¶ 816)

Jung is aware that he is entering into a field that lies beyond the ordinary bounds of scientific investigation, and that here he must employ both empirical observation and philosophical speculation in order to formulate a meaningful theory and treatment of his subject. Arguably, this is true of much of Jung's investigation and theorizing, as throughout his life he struggled to integrate his desire for scientific legitimacy with his curiosity and speculative nature.

In the beginning of his exposition in the same work, Jung describes the limitations of the scientific mode of investigation, which he feels he must transgress in order to conduct his inquiry into the elusive phenomenon of synchronicity:

The experimental method of inquiry aims at establishing regular events that can be repeated. Consequently, unique or rare events are ruled out of account. Moreover, the experiment imposes limiting conditions on nature, for its aim is to force her to give answers to questions devised by man. Every answer of nature is therefore influenced by the kind of questions asked, and the result is always a hybrid product. The so-called 'scientific view of the world' based on this can hardly be anything more than a

psychologically biased partial view which misses out all those by no means unimportant aspects that cannot be grasped statistically. (*Synchronicity*, 422, ¶ 821)

Here Jung expresses a critique of dogmatic scientific empiricism that is implicit in many of his more speculative writings.¹¹⁰ As he argues, the modern scientist tends to approach the world with certain assumptions as to its nature, and the methodological approach, the data gathered, and the interpretation of this data all reflect this pre-existent bias. Also, there are dimensions of existence that do not lend themselves to systematic, repeatable, and objectifying forms of empirical investigation, and prominent among these are realms in which there is the possibility of interacting responsively with beings or fields of dynamic sensitivity and intelligence that are not responsive to more reductive and impersonal approaches. This insight was especially important in his investigations of the unconscious and the archetypes, which he eventually came to associate with the phenomenon of synchronicity.¹¹¹ His introspective and responsive methods of psychological inquiry, and the philosophical and spiritual vision that emerges out of his more speculative observations and reflections, offer an approach that is compensatory to the scientific one, opening up new possibilities for knowledge, relationship, and wisdom.¹¹²

Jung also emphasizes, especially in his work on psychological types, the multiple ways in which we as human beings take in and organize information.¹¹³ In his personality typology, he identifies four main modalities of perception—thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition—all of which offer valuable information about the world and must be integrated in order to both

achieve psychological wholeness and provide a relatively complete picture of reality.¹¹⁴ As he observes, most people have a primary orientation, which configures their respective personalities and perceptions in certain ways, and which plays a large role in determining the pictures they form of reality. Every human being has a unique orientation and combines these modalities in a unique manner, and this orientation and shifting balance of perceptual orientations can shift and evolve over the course of a lifetime. Similarly, Jung describes both introverted and extroverted attitudes toward existence, which lend a direction and tendency to the modalities of perception and the modes of engagement that follow from them.¹¹⁵ All of these factors are essential to understanding how we engage and make sense of the world, and the picture of the world that we form. This understanding informs Jung's more subtle relational epistemology, allowing him to value and follow intuitions, and to integrate sensations, feelings, and inner imaginings into the conceptual vision he forms of the psyche and the world. These insights and conceptual models provide a foundational background for a more subtle and integral participatory epistemology, which honors and seeks to integrate multiple interrelated ways of knowing and interacting with the world.¹¹⁶ It also provides a basis for deepening mutual understanding and appreciation for diversity between individuals, who experience the world in different but often complementary and compensatory ways. Realizing that there are different legitimate, valuable, and mutually compensatory orientations allows one to enter with greater empathy and openness into the experiences of others and have greater

circumspective awareness about the limitations and biases of one's own perspective.

Like Jung, Steiner was influenced by the scientific thinking of his age and wished to conduct his investigations into the nature of reality and the spiritual worlds he observed with scientific rigor and clarity. Because of this he describes his own approach to spiritual investigation in many places as "esoteric science." However, from the beginning he approached the domain of his spiritual scientific research with perceptions as to its fundamental character that differed significantly from those that underlie conventional scientific research and was forced to adapt his methods accordingly.¹¹⁷ Living as he did with conscious perceptions of spiritual realities that were not shared by the majority of his contemporaries, Steiner could not escape the observation that the picture one forms of reality depends upon one's state of consciousness and perceptual faculties. Thus Steiner writes that, "One must begin by investigating the state of consciousness through which a person enters a relation to the world that allows things and facts to reveal their real nature" (*Auto*, 34–35). Because he could see things that others could not, he was acutely aware of the role of the subject in perception, and of the co-creative character of all perception and experience. It thus became a primary concern for him how one can develop the cognitive faculties, states of consciousness, and modes of relationship through which certain types of extrasensory observation and spiritual knowledge become accessible.

Steiner also emphasized the importance of living perceptions and thoughts over fixed beliefs and static constructs. Like both Whitehead and Jung, he realized

that our perception of the world must be continually informed by new experiences, and that no theoretical orientation can be final or complete. Thus, in the beginning of his primary epistemological work, *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path*, he writes:

But no theoretical answer is given that, once acquired, is simply carried as a conviction preserved by memory. Such an answer would have to be an illusion, according to the style of thought underlying this book. Therefore no such finished, closed-off answer is provided here; rather, reference is made to a region of soul experience in which, through the soul's inner activity, the question answers itself in a living way, always anew, whenever a human being needs it. (*IT*, 2, ¶2)

This is an essential aspect of Steiner's philosophy, and it is reinforced by his perception of thoughts as living beings,¹¹⁸ who are participants in a reality constituted by an ecology of ever changing relationships. Thus for Steiner, not only is it important that our view of the world always be informed by fresh experiences and new information, but it is also essential that our experiences be based on attuned relationships to the living sources of our understanding.

Like Whitehead, Steiner also recognizes that our perceptions are always simplifications and abstractions from the full complexity of the world, and reflect the limits of our subjective vantage point and organization.

To *explain* a thing, to *make it comprehensible*, means nothing other than to place it into the context from which it has been torn by the arrangement of our organization, described above. There is no such thing as an object cut off from the world-as-a-whole. All separation has merely a subjective validity for us, for the way we are organized. For us, the world-whole splits into above and below, before and after, cause and effect, object and mental picture, matter and force, object and subject, and so forth. What meets us in observation as separate details is linked, item by item, through the coherent, unitary world of our intuitions. Through thinking we join together into one everything that we separated through perceiving. (*IT*, 89, ¶26)

Though he recognized it as the role of thinking and intuition to perceive the disparate elements of our experience in terms of their relationship to the living whole, he also recognized, especially in his later epistemological reflections,¹¹⁹ that our ability to do this is always limited, and that our picture of the world must always be subject to continual revision based on new experiences and understandings.

All three thinkers grappled with the limitations of language, and of linguistically configured thought and experience, in representing the deeper insights and patterns of interconnection they intuited. Whitehead frequently commented on this challenge and the importance of relating to language and thought in a way that takes account both of its limitations and of the creative role the reader or interlocutor must play in entering into the field of and experience to which the linguistic expression points. As he expresses it:

Philosophers can never hope finally to formulate these metaphysical first principles. Weakness of insight and deficiencies of language stand in the way inexorably. Words and phrases must be stretched towards a generality foreign to their ordinary usage; and however such elements of language be stabilized as technicalities, they remain metaphors mutely appealing for an imaginative leap. (*PR*, 4)

However, though philosophers cannot finally formulate the most fundamental principles underlying existence, they can point to and illuminate aspects of their nature in a meaningful way, deepening the process of our engagement with them. And the difficulty of arriving at adequate verbal expressions does not only arise in relationship to philosophical principles, but is a general character of language in all situations, as Whitehead makes clear when states that "no language can be

anything but elliptical, requiring a leap of the imagination to understand its meaning in its relevance to immediate experience" (*PR*, 13). This insight points not only to the limitations of language, but also to the situatedness of all experience, and to the interpretive role of intuition and imagination in all perception and experience.

Jung too is sensitive to the limitations of language and thought for comprehending and adequately representing the more pervasive and elusive dimensions of our world and experience. In discussing the nature of the archetypes, Jung famously pronounces: "for what we can establish as the one thing consistent with their nature is their *manifold meaning*, their almost limitless wealth of reference, which makes any unilateral formulation impossible" ("Archetypes," 38, ¶ 80). This is especially true of archetypes, whose manifold character eludes definition, but again it is also true in a more subtle sense of all elements of our experience, which are themselves archetypally configured and inseparable from the full living complexity of the world process. For this reason Jung frequently emphasizes the importance of symbols as reflective and creative signs pointing to both familiar and mysterious dimensions of our world and experience:

By a symbol I do not mean an allegory or a sign, but an image that describes in the best possible way the dimly discerned nature of the spirit. A symbol does not define or explain; it points beyond itself to a meaning that is darkly divined yet still beyond our grasp, and cannot be adequately expressed in the familiar words of our language. (*Spirit and Life*, 336 ¶ 644)

Jung frequently encountered symbols in his explorations of the deeper psyche, including the realms of dreams and visions, and the analogous processes of

collective visioning and dreaming embodied in the world's mythological traditions.¹²⁰ Yet again, it is possible to recognize the symbolic character in all the elements of our experience. Every manifestation of existence reflects and points back to the whole living reality of which it is a part, and therefore expresses both discernible and mysterious meanings. Reality and experience are themselves inherently symbolic.

This recognition of the symbolic character of experience is shared by all three thinkers, who also share a recognition that our conscious experience in everyday life is only a small portion of our total being and experience. As we shall see, each of these thinkers approaches and conceives this insight in a somewhat different way, but they converge in a recognition that what we immediately and consciously experience must always be brought into relationship with and be compensated by otherwise hidden dimensions of our being, experience and selfhood. Whitehead reflects on this importance of mysterious symbolic expression in the realm of art:

The type of Truth which human art seeks lies in the eliciting of this background to haunt the object presented for clear consciousness . . . In this way the work of art is a message from the Unseen. It unlooses depths of feeling from behind the frontier where precision of consciousness fails. (*AI*, 270–271)

Here Whitehead emphasizes not only the noetic quality of art, but also its important role in evoking powerful feelings, which deepen and enrich the quality of experience. For all three thinkers, and especially for Whitehead,¹²¹ feeling is itself an essential part of the noetic process, shaping and giving rise to our conscious experience of thought.

Steiner also recognizes the important role that imagination and symbolic representation play in furthering human spiritual development. However, for Steiner, imagination is not merely an individual human capacity, but a means through which higher spiritual beings weave their wisdom and creative impulses into human life. As he expresses it, "imagination is a doorway through which spiritual beings creatively influence cultural development indirectly through the human being" (*Auto*, 111). This influence can take place through a relatively unconscious co-creative imaginative process, but the human collaborative element in the imaginative and inspirational process is generally enhanced by conscious awareness and participation.

Steiner also struggles in a special way with the limitations of language and the importance of symbols in comprehending, reflecting on, and discussing the content and character of what he refers to as 'suprasensory' experience. As he explains:

Indeed, the things and beings of the higher and material worlds are sufficiently related so that—with a little good will—we can obtain a conception of the higher worlds through words intended for the material world. But we must always be conscious of the fact that a great part of such descriptions of the supersensible worlds must inevitably consist of analogies and symbols. (*HW*, 164–165, ¶ 2)

As will be evident in examining his epistemological perspective more closely, this difficulty resides not only in the reporting of such experiences, but also in the perceptions themselves, which depend on the emergence and understanding of a living language of pictorial, multi-sensory, and spiritual symbols.¹²²

Steiner shares Jung's and Whitehead's recognition of the limitations of sensory empirical scientific investigation to produce an adequate account of

reality without the compensatory correction of speculative philosophy and introspective vision. For Steiner, such scientific observation only reveals the outsides of things, failing to penetrate into the interiority of their spiritual nature. Thus Steiner argues that "one will not find reality *in* the results of scientific research but *through them in the world of spirit*" (*Auto*, 133). Similarly, Jung reflects on the importance of myth in conveying the deeper living realities of our experience. In his autobiography, he says that he can only tell the story of his life as a myth, for:

What we are to our inward vision, and what man appears to be *sub specie aeternitatis*, can only be expressed by way of myth. Myth is more individual and expresses life more precisely than does science. Science works with concepts of averages that are far too general to do justice to the subjective variety of an individual life. (*MDR*, 3)

Though he approaches it in a different way, Jung is again pointing to the realm of living interiority and the unique mode of individual and relational expression that characterizes the true life of a being, as opposed to its mere outward appearances. This observation, shared and differently conceived by all three thinkers, informs the fundamental aims that underlie their intellectual and spiritual endeavors.

Goals and Concerns

Whitehead, Jung, and Steiner all developed visions that encompass individual, collective, and cosmic processes of transformation. However, their relationship to these processes varied considerably. Though a socially engaged and conscientious person, , Whitehead was the least concerned of the three thinkers with the need for individual and collective transformation, and he is the only one that did not develop specific practices to facilitate psychological and

spiritual development. His philosophy provides a general metaphysical scheme in which creative process is primary, but he does not stress the need to create specific types of change, nor does he spend much time exploring the specific nature of human psychological growth and transformation. Nonetheless, his philosophy of creative process has both moral and aesthetic dimensions that are of central importance, and he shows special concern as a philosopher with the role that thinking plays in the shaping of human life and society.

As mentioned earlier, Whitehead sees it as among the essential roles of philosophy to integrate science, art, and religion, and thereby to coordinate the various fields of knowledge with the domains of values and aesthetics: "Also, it must be one of the motives of a complete cosmology to construct a system of ideas which brings the aesthetic, moral, and religious interests into relation with those concepts of the world which have their origin in natural science" (*PR*, xii). For Whitehead, thought should be creatively generative, contributing to the aesthetic enhancement of existence, rather than simply producing accurate information. In keeping with this, he observes that "in the real world it is more important that a proposition be interesting than that it be true" (*PR*, 259). He therefore emphasizes the importance of imagination in thought, explaining that "a passive knowledge of the past loses the whole value of its message" (*AI*, 279). Thus he decries thinking that is deficient in feeling, imagination, and aesthetic value, proclaiming in what serves as the opening epigraph of this essay that "the degeneracy of mankind is distinguished from its uprise by the dominance of chill abstractions, divorced from aesthetic content" (*MT*, 123) and that "the type of

Truth required for the final stretch of Beauty is a discovery and not a recapitulation" (*AI*, 266). Therefore the enlivening of human thought for the benefit of human social development is one of Whitehead's central concerns and aspirations, though his writings are generally optimistic in tone and do not generally express any specific need for change or exhort specific forms of transformation.

Jung, as a practicing clinical psychiatrist, was much more dismayed by what he observed both in his patients and in the prevailing political and social climate of his society.¹²³ And as a physician of the soul, he was much more apt to diagnose both individual and collective maladies, seeking a cure for the harmful tendencies he sensitively felt and observed. He shared Whitehead's insight that the way we think has a powerful role in shaping our individual and collective realities, and was especially concerned about the role that unconscious processes play in determining both our perceptions and our behavior. As Jung observed, such unconscious forces and processes have psychologically and philosophically significant influences on our perceptions, and through them on the way that we act and participate in the world, thus shaping our reality on multiple levels simultaneously. "With all the more urgency, then, we must emphasize that the smallest alteration in the psychic factor, if it be an alteration of principle, is of the utmost significance as regards our knowledge of the world and the picture we make of it" ("Nature of Psyche," 217 ¶ 423). While his early writings focused more on the internal psychological processes of individuals, in his later years Jung focused increasing attention on the role of the collective unconscious in shaping

broad social and historical patterns of development.¹²⁴ As Jung explained in his mature summative essay, *On the Nature of the Psyche*:

Incisive changes in history are generally attributed exclusively to external causes. It seems to me, however, that external circumstances often serve merely as occasions for a new attitude to life and the world, long prepared in the unconscious, to become manifest. Social, political, and religious conditions affect the unconscious in the sense that all those factors which are suppressed by the prevailing views or attitudes in the life of a society gradually accumulate in the collective unconscious and activate its contents. Certain individuals gifted with particularly strong intuition then become aware of the changes going on in it and translate these changes into communicable ideas. The new ideas spread rapidly because parallel changes have been taking place in the unconscious of other people. There is a general readiness to accept the new ideas, although on the other hand they often meet with violent resistance. New ideas are not just the enemies of the old; they also appear as a rule in an extremely unacceptable form. ("Structure of Psyche," 314, ¶ 594)

As such an intuitively gifted individual, Jung was sensitive to the resistance with which new and challenging ideas are often met by those who are invested in the status quo and established hierarchies and power structures. He also realized, especially following the phenomenon of Nazism, that such unconscious ideas and forces can be destructive rather than progressive, and can unleash irrational fanaticism as well as give rise to new and liberating visions.¹²⁵

For Jung, the decisive factor in determining both an individual and a society's relationship to these deeper collective unconscious forces is the interaction of these forces with reflective human consciousness. Every individual is challenged to undergo his or her own individuation process, through which a unique integrated personality and center of conscious awareness is formed, and this involves developing conscious collaborative relationships with the archetypes and other unconscious and trans-conscious forces, including the encompassing

anima mundi, or world soul.¹²⁶ And as Jung observed, an analogous process takes place at multiple levels of collective development, including the evolution and individuation of the anima mundi itself.¹²⁷ Such processes of individuation also inherently involve developing unique, meaningful, and creative relationships with other beings and elements of one's world, so that individuation is simultaneously the formation of a unique evolving pattern of interrelationship with one's environments and the beings that inhabit it.¹²⁸ Thus all individuation processes at all levels of inclusiveness and complexity are profoundly interrelated.

Jung observed a decided tendency towards collective conformity and the stifling of individual development and expression, and a corresponding tendency toward relapsing into unconscious modes of perception and relationship.¹²⁹ He also sensed the tremendously destructive tendencies that will inevitably be released on the world through humanity if our capacity to influence our environment is not guided by a commensurate psychological maturity and reflective spiritual awareness. As he prophetically wrote:

A mood of universal destruction and renewal . . . has set its mark on our age. This mood makes itself felt everywhere, politically, socially, and philosophically. We are living in what the Greeks called the *kairos*—the right moment—for a "metamorphosis of the Gods," of the fundamental principles and symbols. This peculiarity of our time, which is certainly not of our conscious choosing, is the expression of the unconscious man within us who is changing. Coming generations will have to take account of this momentous transformation if humanity is not to destroy itself through the might of its own technology and science. . . . So much is at stake and so much depends on the psychological constitution of modern man. . . . Does the individual know that *he* is the makeweight that tips the scales? (*Undiscovered Self*, 304 ¶ 585–586)

The alternative to the unconscious destructive behavior that Jung warns against is a conscious, sensitive, and reflective relationship to the complex spiritual ecology

in which our lives are interwoven. This includes the natural ecology of the earth and all its inhabitants, and with it the more subtle and elusive dimensions of the Anima Mundi, with its archetypal energies, beings, and forces. Thus the decisive factor in determining the direction of human, planetary, and perhaps even cosmic development is consciousness and the modes of relational creative participation it facilitates. We must awaken if we are not to destroy ourselves and the world.

As a clairvoyant observer of human and cosmic development, Steiner came to very similar conclusions regarding the need for conscious human spiritual development.¹³⁰ For Steiner, all beings in the entire cosmos are undergoing a continual process of spiritual development and evolution. Humans are no exception to this, and are in many ways a pivotal axis in the cosmic evolutionary process. In order to realize our highest spiritual potentials and evolve in a healthy and positive way, we need to both develop ourselves morally and awaken our subtle spiritual senses and deeper soul awareness—and for Steiner these dimensions of spiritual development are closely interwoven. Like Jung, Steiner observed that while our culture has advanced in its scientific knowledge and technological capacities, "the price of this gain in outer culture has been a corresponding loss in higher knowledge and spiritual life" (*HW*, 19, ¶ 8). He also observed that, "starting in our time, human souls have entered a condition in which they *cannot* enter into the necessary relationship to life without understanding the supersensory worlds" (*S-K*, 54). For Steiner, this involves developing our overall consciousness and thinking abilities, and also developing specific latent capacities for spiritual perception that lie dormant in most

individuals but are always present to be developed. Thus he famously proclaims that "every spiritual eye can be opened" (*Theos*, 16, ¶ 3) and that "humans remain in an incomplete state if they do not take in hand the transformative substance within themselves, and transform themselves through their own power" (*IT*, 159 ¶ 42). In most of his writings, Steiner seems to think, optimistically, that the spiritual development of humanity is inevitable but that failure to develop ourselves in a timely manner through conscious spiritual effort may result in a great magnification in human suffering and a slowing down and retarding of the inevitable evolutionary process.¹³¹ And he observes that, "Similarly, a worldview not fructified by a knowledge of the hidden element inevitably leads to desolation" (*Outline*, 60–61, ¶ 1). Thus his perspective is simultaneously diagnostic of much of the suffering and spiritual alienation of our age, and prescriptive of a possible path of spiritual evolution and awakening.

Different and Complementary Domains of Vision

Because of their different approaches and emphases, Whitehead, Jung, and Steiner develop different, overlapping, and complementary domains of vision. They are, of course, also attempting to make sense of quite different fields of experience, and the scope and character of their philosophies reflects these differences. Whitehead attempts to create an abstract cosmology that takes account of all the elements he recognizes in his own immediate experience through introspective and contemplative observations, and to integrate and coordinate these perceptions with the reflections of history, religion, and literature,¹³² and the discoveries and theories of mathematics and the natural

sciences. Thus his focus is on the character of both everyday perception and contemplative consciousness as they relate to the evolving universe as revealed by human cultural reflection and scientific exploration. He takes a sweeping view of human existence, examining basic elements of our experience, such as the nature of perception and the formation of abstract concepts, in order to see them in their complex interconnections with the whole cosmic process. In this way he is able to formulate fresh perspectives on the nature of space and time, the basic character of perception, the emergence of complex sensory modalities and consciousness, and the fundamentally sensitive, creative, and relational character of reality itself as a continually unfolding dynamic process.¹³³

Whitehead also in some measure accomplishes the ideal aim that he attributes to speculative philosophy of integrating science, art, and religion, or the realms of conceptual, aesthetic, and moral experience and endeavor.¹³⁴ He recognizes that not only is such an integration necessary, but an unconscious conflation of science and religion tends to take place in the absence of such a higher order contemplative integration. For as he observes, "Science suggests a cosmology; and whatever suggests a cosmology suggests a religion" (*RM*, 141). Thus in our contemporary society, there is often an unconscious and unreflective default into a quasi religious doctrine of scientific materialism, which is scientific rather than genuinely scientific insofar as it takes metaphysical postulates associated with the prevailing scientific world view and conflates them with the genuine scientific approach to investigating reality.¹³⁵ There is also a frequent corollary but by no means necessary assumption that scientific inquiry and the

type of knowledge it produces is the only valid form of inquiry and knowledge, and the resultant automatic dismissal or derogation of other ways of exploring and knowing reality. Not only does this lead to close-mindedness, reductionism, and dogmatism, but it also deprives human life of the deeper moral, aesthetic, and feeling elements that Whitehead recognizes as essential to human life and thought—or else marginalizes and compartmentalizes them so that they do not adequately inform the cosmology and worldview that shapes our most comprehensive feelings of meaning and belonging in the universe. Thus Whitehead's philosophy offers a cosmology that integrates scientific knowledge, culturally inherited wisdom, and immediate experience, and comprehends the larger cosmic processes in a way that allows us to experience the aesthetic and ethical dimension of universal creative process.

Jung's focus, as a psychologist, is primarily on exploring the inner domain of psychological experience, but he also attempts to situate this experience in its larger context within the world process and the cosmos as a whole. Jung drew on a depth of experience working with his patients over a lifetime as a psychiatrist, including work with dreams, psychosis, and altered states of consciousness, as well as on his own quite remarkable inward, introspective, and synchronistic experiences.¹³⁶ Thus Jung's psychology offers a wealth of observations of inner psychic life and processes, and covers domains of experience that are seldom observed with introspective and contemplative awareness. In this sense it adds a dimension of psychological depth to Whitehead's more wide-reaching and abstract conceptual generalizations. It also covers types of experiences that

Whitehead does not directly address, thus perhaps increasing its adequacy in relation to the full spectrum of human experience.

Like Whitehead, Jung also responds to the revolutions in the physics of his age, represented by the emergence of electromagnetism, relativity, and quantum theory. Jung attempts to relate his psychological observations and reflections to the worldview that these discoveries and theories suggest.¹³⁷ Thus he speculates on the relationship between the psychic and the physical, and contemplates a number of ways of understanding the more encompassing reality of which they are both expressions. Again, like Whitehead, Jung is not satisfied with a dualistic understanding of reality, and reasons that there must be a deeper unity underlying these apparently divergent dimensions of observation and experience. “The common background of microphysics and depth-psychology is as much physical as psychic and therefore neither, but rather a third thing, a neutral nature which can at most be grasped in hints, since in its nature it is transcendental” (*Mysterium*, 538, ¶ 769). In other instances and in a similar vein, Jung imagines the possibility that what we ordinarily perceive as physical may itself be characterized by a kind of interiority akin to our inner psychological experience: “Also, we do not know whether what we on the empirical plane regard as physical may not, in the Unknown beyond our experience, be identical with what on this side of the border we distinguish from the physical as psychic” (*Mysterium*, 537, ¶ 765). Regardless, he concludes, “this much we do know beyond all doubt, that empirical reality has a transcendental background” (*Mysterium*, 538, ¶ 768). By this he means that what we directly observe in our conscious experience is a

limited and emergent expression of a larger reality that includes and unites both the physical realities disclosed through physics and the full range of our human psychic activities and perceptions. In this way he reaches very similar conclusions to both Whitehead and Steiner, and is inspired to move beyond his limited position as a psychological empiricist into the domain of speculative philosophy and metaphysics.

In a similar way to Whitehead, Jung recognizes that whenever the deeper spiritual and experiential dimensions are excluded from our conceptualizations of reality, they tend to reassert themselves in an unconscious way, in the form of religious or quasi religious thinking. As he puts it, “Wherever the spirit of God is extruded from our human calculations, an unconscious substitute takes its place” (“Nature of Psyche,” 170, ¶ 359). This often leads people to conceive of ideas that serve as religious substitutes in absolutist and irrational ways, creating a corresponding unconscious faith that is not susceptible to open and honest critical examination. Thus Jung too recognizes the need to arrive at a view of the world that encompasses the full range of human experience and unites the domains of science and religion in a single inclusive vision. He sometimes refers to such a vision in psychological terms as a personal or containing myth,¹³⁸ though such a vision need not be static or containing in a pejorative sense, but rather serves to provide a coherent experience of reality that at its best is open-ended and continuously evolving. Jung's concept of synchronicity, his transgressive conception of the archetypes¹³⁹—as shaping both internal psychic life and the world around us—and his expanded understanding of the collective

unconscious—here understood in its broader character as the anima mundi and as encompassing physical as well as psychic reality—all allowed Jung to move towards such an encompassing vision, though he never clearly lays out a comprehensive metaphysical vision in the systematic and straightforward manner of Whitehead. For Jung, the deeper reality underlying the seemingly disparate realms of our experience is transcendental in the sense that it cannot be directly experienced through ordinary consciousness, though evidence of the unitive character of its existence breaks into our experience in the form of synchronistic and paranormal events, in the pervasive patterning of the dynamic archetypes—as evidenced by cross-cultural mythological motifs and symbols—and in the discernible patterns of interconnection that arise between physical and psychic domains.¹⁴⁰

As previously mentioned, Jung, Whitehead, and Steiner all converge in seeing the conscious portion of ordinary human experience as only a limited and rarefied expression of a much more complex and comprehensive underlying reality, and they all came to see this underlying reality as partaking of something of the sentience and creativity that characterizes our conscious experience. For Jung and Whitehead, the greater part of this reality is inherently inaccessible to direct conscious experience—except perhaps, for Jung, during extraordinary states—though its existence can be inferred and intuited based on its manifestations in our observable experience. However, all three thinkers were interested in how the limitations of conscious experience could be compensated and the missing elements of this larger reality be integrated into conscious

awareness. For Whitehead, the retrieval of the essential dimensions of these missing elements is among the fundamental tasks of philosophy.

Consciousness is only the last and greatest of such elements by which the selective character of the individual obscures the external totality from which it originates and which it embodies. An actual individual, of such higher grade, has truck with the totality of things by reason of its sheer actuality; but it has attained its individual depth of being by a selective emphasis limited to its own purposes. The task of philosophy is to recover the totality obscured by the selection. It replaces in rational experience what has been submerged in the higher sensitive experience and has been sunk yet deeper by the initial operations of consciousness itself. (*PR*, 15)

Thus Whitehead's philosophy is itself an attempt to remedy the deficiencies of our ordinary conscious perception through integrating more comprehensive concepts that allow us to both comprehend and feel the deeper processes that underlie our immediate experience. In this case we do not consciously feel these processes as they occur at their most basic level, but we feel them consciously in a new way through evolving more complex and comprehensive forms of thought and contemplative experience—and in so doing we simultaneously create new and more complexly layered and integrative experiential realities.

For Jung, this integration of unconscious contents and expansion of consciousness is an inherent part of the individuation process. It requires not only expanding our philosophical understanding but a continuous reorganization and growth of our personalities, at both conscious and unconscious—or perhaps “transconscious”¹⁴¹—levels. This in turn requires integration of disassociated or only partially integrated aspects of personality, often referred to as complexes.¹⁴² It also requires developing a conscious and collaborative relationship with the archetypes, which inform these complexes, and which as more or less

autonomous psychic or spiritual elements of the anima mundi shape our lives and experience from both within and all around us.¹⁴³ As a practicing psychiatrist Jung developed multiple methods for facilitating this type of transformation, many of which involve working with dreams and using the imagination to contact deeper levels of psychic process.¹⁴⁴

As already alluded to, Jung also had synchronistic and paranormal experiences throughout his life in which the deeper spiritual and archetypal reality of the anima mundi would seem to break into his conscious experience.¹⁴⁵ These were for him important compensations to the limitations of his ordinary conscious perspective, and powerfully informed his world view, especially as elaborated in a more personal way beyond the limits of his professional scientific empiricism. Yet a great portion of the realms that were manifested through these experiences remained largely a mystery to him, mostly inaccessible to conscious experience and understanding. Thus Jung wrote that, “What we know of the world, and what we are immediately aware of in ourselves, are conscious contents that flow from remote, obscure sources” (“Spirit and Life”, 327, ¶ 624). Similarly, in describing the world of dreams, he writes: “In the waking state the psyche is apparently under the control of the conscious will, but in the sleeping state it produces contents that are strange and incomprehensible, as though they came from another world” (“Psychological Foundations,” 306, ¶ 580). However, according to Jung, even in waking this appearance of control is largely illusory. Thus he writes that: “In our waking life, we imagine we make our own thoughts and can have them when we want them. We also think we know where they come from, and why and

to what end we have them” (“Psychological Foundations,” 306, ¶ 580), “But if we step through the door of the shadow we discover with terror that we are the objects of unseen factors” (“Archetypes,” 23, ¶ 49). Jung usually associates these unseen factors with unconscious complexes, and with the archetypes, and attempts to bring them into awareness and conscious relationship through more or less direct psychological means. While the nature of these unseen factors remains largely mysterious for Jung, notwithstanding his many insights into the archetypes and the deeper dimensions of psychic process, Steiner has a great deal to say about them and how they can be perceived and related to with consciousness.

According to Steiner, this underlying and encompassing reality that all three thinkers intuit is spiritual in nature and can be observed directly if one develops the necessary faculties of perception. Many people in the modern era do not perceive or believe in such a reality because they have not developed the necessary capacities. For as he writes, “Whether or not we can persuade ourselves of the reality of any being or thing depends on our having an organ of perception, a sense, for it” (*Theos*, 93, ¶ 1). For Steiner, perception of this deeper spiritual reality is a distinct and immediate experience. He follows a similar line of thought to Jung in penetrating to the spiritual reality that lies behind the seemingly disparate physical and psychic domains, but for him this spiritual reality is directly perceptible in its process of shaping and giving rise to these interpenetrating realms of expression. According to Steiner, entering directly into the experience of thinking brings us into this underlying realm of formative spiritual activity.

By increasingly penetrating the experience of thought, one discovers that spiritual reality comes to meet us within this life in thought. One follows the soul's path into the spirit. But the spiritual reality one meets along this inner soul path is rediscovered as the inner reality of nature. (*Auto*, 35)

Thus for Steiner, all of existence is permeated and formed by the activity of spirit, and the natural world disclosed through the senses is only a condensed portion of that spiritual reality revealed in those aspects that are accessible to sensory perception. As Steiner makes clear, this condensed portion of spirit that we know as matter is still guided and pervaded by an active spiritual principle. "However, we must not imagine that the spiritual element is ever totally transformed into matter; matter is always only a transformed portion of the original spiritual element, which remains the actual guiding principle even while matter is evolving" (*Outline*, 120 ¶ 6). Thus for Steiner, as for Whitehead, all of existence is spiritually creative, and all of existence partakes of some degree of consciousness and intentionality. As he states it: "To supersensible perception, there is no such thing as "unconsciousness," only various degrees of consciousness. Everything in the world is conscious" (*Outline*, 153 ¶ 30). In fact for Steiner, the entirety of existence consists of beings and the interrelationships between beings.

However, as stated before, for Steiner this is not merely a theory, but an immediate and continuous experience. In order to perceive this reality of the life of beings directly, one must penetrate behind the habitual appearances that conceal this underlying spiritual activity. He describes this once again in term of the life of thought, using Plato's familiar metaphor of shadows on the wall of a

cave to describe the contrast between our indirect experience of thought and the direct expression of the beings that are active within and behind our thoughts:

But thought as it appears in human beings is only a shadowy image or phantom of its real being. A thought appearing by means of a human brain corresponds to a being in the country of spirit beings as a shadow on the wall corresponds to the actual object casting the shadow. But when our spiritual senses are awakened, we actually perceive the thought being itself, just as our physical eyes perceive a table or a chair. We are surrounded and accompanied by thought beings. (*Theos*, 123, ¶ 35)

For Steiner, a similar contrast holds good for nearly all aspects of our experience, though it is easier to penetrate directly into the spiritual reality of thought than it is to penetrate behind the appearances of our material surroundings to the spiritual activity that constitutes them. Steiner offers a method of esoteric science through which this pervasive spiritual reality can be observed and creatively transformed, but this method requires developing the requisite faculties to enter into direct conscious participation in spiritual processes and activities.

It is notable that Jung intuits or experiences many of the spiritual phenomena that Steiner describes, though his perceptions tend to be more intermittent and fleeting. Steiner seems to offer a method whereby it is possible to directly and consistently explore these "transcendent" spiritual realities, and a vision based on such observation that provides detailed accounts and descriptions of phenomena that Jung more occasionally glimpses and intuits. In describing the transcendent realm of the archetypes, Jung seems to be describing an experience that Steiner would characterize as a direct perception of higher spiritual realms.

For what comes after the door is, surprisingly enough, a boundless expanse full of unprecedented uncertainty, with apparently no inside and no outside, no above and no below, no here and no there, no mine and no thine, no good and no bad. It is the world of water, where all life floats in

suspension; where the realm of the sympathetic system, the soul of everything living begins; where I am indivisibly this *and* that; where I experience the other in myself and the other-than-myself experiences me. ("Archetypes," 21–22, ¶ 45)

This is similar to many detailed descriptions that Steiner provides of various realms of spiritual being and activity. In relation to the archetypes, Steiner provides descriptions of several ascending levels of archetypal beings and activities, and the role that each of them play in shaping the familiar reality that we observe through our ordinary senses and consciousness.¹⁴⁶ In a more general way, Steiner describes the confusion that often meets human consciousness when it ascends for the first times into direct perception of these archetypal spiritual realms:

It is true that looking into this country of spirit beings for the first time is even more confusing than looking into the soul world, because archetypes in their true forms are very unlike their sense-perceptible copies, and they bear equally little resemblance to their “shadows,” our abstract thoughts. In the spiritual world, everything is in constant activity, constant motion, constant creation. “Resting” or “staying in one place” does not exist there as it does in the physical world, simply because the archetypes are creative beings, the master builders of everything that comes into existence in the physical and soul worlds. Their forms change quickly, and each archetype has the potential to assume countless specific forms. (*Theos*, 124–125, ¶ 36)

This description echoes both the disorientation that Jung describes in his experience of the archetypal world, and the elusive and multivalent character of the archetypes that Jung so clearly apprehended and expressed. Steiner explains that when one first penetrates into direct perception of spiritual realities, one tends to perceive a unitive realm of interflowing elements, similar to what Jung describes. It takes time to be able to differentiate and clearly perceive the specific beings whose activity constitutes these realms and processes. He also emphasizes

the essential character of direct spiritual experience that Jung expresses in the quote above when he says, "I experience the other in myself and the other-than-myself experiences me." This intimate mode of spiritual experience and communion is fundamental to the moral vision that Steiner's philosophy expresses, as reflected in his corresponding statement that, "Elemental devotion is based on the experience of oneself in another being or process; love is an experience of the other in one's own soul" (*Threshold*, 105). Through entering into a mode of participation in which we mutually share our lives and the inner lives of other beings, we experience our shared selfhood and can sensitively and compassionately engage the collaborative creative process that constitutes our shared reality.

As is evident in the foregoing reflections, Jung, Whitehead, and Steiner develop both convergent and mutually complementary spiritual approaches and visions. Whitehead provides philosophical breadth and conceptual clarity, Jung a wealth of introspective psychological insight and experience, and Steiner an esoteric vision based on suprasensory spiritual observations and insights not available to ordinary conscious perception. Not only their different approaches and orientations, but their widely different backgrounds of experience allow them to contribute different and mutually compensatory realms of insight, which lend themselves naturally to integration into a more comprehensive synthesis. The exploration of one such integrative vision, based on transmuted versions of each of their respective philosophies, is what follows.

An Integrative Vision

Eros, Self, and Creativity

Some conception of the Self stands at the heart of all three visions and of this integrative vision that unites them. For Jung,¹⁴⁷ the Self is the center of psychic individuality and also an encompassing archetypal presence and reality that unites all of existence. It is simultaneously the principle of unity and of individual distinctiveness. Thus he writes that: "What is meant by the self is not only in me but in all beings, like Atman, like Tao. It is psychic totality" ("Good and Evil," 463, ¶ 873). The Self constitutes the unifying inclusiveness of the *unus mundus*, the one world that paradoxically encompasses all opposites;¹⁴⁸ the unity of the *anima mundi*, or world soul, which unites all of existence in a developing pattern of relational selfhood and creative interfeeling; and the emergent individuality and self-formative existence of every being at every level of complexity and manifestation. The Self is thus a paradoxical concept, as it can refer to multiple levels of selfhood, experience, and creative agency. Jung therefore writes in his autobiography, "Like every other being, I am a splinter of the infinite deity" (*MDR*, 4). This splinter of individual selfhood is an expression of the Self, and so also is the infinite deity of which it is a splinter. All selves are united by their participation in the divine principle of the Self, and in that sense paradoxically share in a single manifold selfhood.

Steiner similarly recognizes this divine Self and its permeation of all existence and the entire cosmic creative process with all of the beings that integrally constitute it. Thus he writes that: "Of course, the 'divine self' is

contained in every man. It is in every created being. In stone, plant, and animal, the 'divine self' is also contained and active" (*Stages*, 24). This Self manifests itself in many ways and on many levels, and unites these diverse manifestations. The divine Self is inherently present in what Steiner refers to as spirit, which is the dynamic living principle that shapes and constitutes all of existence. As previously explained, matter for Steiner is just a particular manifestation of spirit, often experienced in its outward manifestations through sensory perception and associated modes of thinking in abstraction from its inward creative activity and experiential interiority. "Of that world that the spiritual observer penetrates in this way, the physical is a manifestation. Whatever of the physical world is accessible to the senses and the sense bound intellect is only the outer side" (*Stages*, 53). Thus spirit can experience itself directly, as a meeting and sharing of interior selfhoods, or indirectly, as a seemingly independent external manifestation in which the inward spiritual presence is hidden. Steiner therefore describes the way in which the spiritual beings and processes that are caught up in the evolution of the physical universe gradually evolve the forms and capacities through which they can consciously recognize their spiritual nature in its embodied physical context. As he explains, "What makes its way like a drop into the consciousness soul is called the spirit by esoteric science. In this way the consciousness soul is united with the spirit, which is the hidden element in everything manifest" (*Outline*, 49, ¶ 19). And as he describes it, "In what fills the consciousness soul, this hidden element steps unveiled into the innermost temple of the soul where it appears as only a drop in the sea of all-pervading spirituality." (*Outline*, 49, ¶ 18)

Thus the extent to which spirit is conscious of its own nature and selfhood depends on the context of its creative manifestations and interrelationships.

A dynamic conception of selfhood is also at the heart of Whitehead's metaphysical vision and of his understanding of the fundamental creative process of concrescence. For Whitehead, the basic elements of existence are self-formative processes, which he calls actual entities, or actual occasions, in which the complex plurality of existence is unified in a novel synthesis of feeling and creative self-formation. As Whitehead puts it, "The creative action is the universe always becoming one in a particular unity of experience, and thereby adding to the multiplicity which is the universe as many" (*PR*, 57). In the emergence of novel individualities, the Self and its evolving self-formative expressions play a primary role. Thus Whitehead writes that, "Actuality in its essence is aim at self-formation" (*MT*, 96).

In a sense each actual occasion can be seen as a locus through which the divine principle of the Self experiences its own existence in a novel, individual and creative way, uniting in a new way the plurality of the creative universe that is always simultaneously and paradoxically a unity. As Whitehead explains, "Each actual entity corresponds to a meaning of the 'actual world' peculiar to itself" (*PR*, 28). Thus the entire world process and evolving selfhood of existence assumes a new form in each actual occasion. "Each atom is a system of all things" (*PR*, 36). Thus every constellation of selfhood is an expression of the fundamental creative activity of the entire cosmos and process of existence, and therefore an expression of the fundamental metaphysical principle that Whitehead conceives

as Creativity. Creativity is akin to the notion of spirit in Steiner, in that is the most basic and pervasive metaphysical principle, of which every specific element is a manifestation.¹⁴⁹ In Whitehead's notions of concrescence and actual occasions, actual occasions are self-formative processes of Creativity, and concrescence is the way in which the manifold expressions of Creativity are gathered into a new unity. Therefore the principles of the Self and Creativity are distinct but inseparable.

Another principle that is implicit in the visions of all three thinkers, and central to this integrative vision, is that of Eros, or relationship.¹⁵⁰ Every manifestation of selfhood and Creativity is simultaneously a manifestation of Eros, or a pattern of dynamic interrelationship between relatively individualized creative elements. The principle of Eros governs all forms of relationship and their emergent archetypal principles and qualities, including sensitivity, attraction, love, intimacy, and beauty. All manifestations of selfhood and Creativity are both constituted by and participate in patterns of interrelationship governed by the principles of Eros.

The principle of Eros is inherent in Whitehead's notion of actual occasions as patterns of feeling in which the divine creative elements and expressions of selfhood that constitute the contemporary universe are united in a novel synthesis of feeling. As Whitehead explains: "Thus an actual entity combines self-identity with self-diversity" (*PR*, 25). In my creative revisioning of Whitehead's philosophy, I have emphasized that the individuality of the actual occasion is relative, rather than absolute, and that at no point is the actual occasion

completely separate from its relational environment and the selfhood of other beings. Whitehead reinforces the coherency of this interpretation when he explains, "Thus the determinateness and self-identity of one entity cannot be abstracted from the community of the diverse functioning of all entities" (*PR*, 25). The actual occasion is a pattern of emergent individuality within the relational creative fabric of existence, shaping and patterning that fabric, but never existing in separation or isolation from it.

Similarly, I have conceived the actual occasion as a dynamically open process, which never exists in a complete, static, or separate form, but opens into and through the processes of other occasions. Thus, as Whitehead emphasizes in *Modes of Thought*, "No actuality is a static fact" (*MT*, 90). All elements of existence are dynamically unfolding relational creative processes. Whitehead reinforces this interpretation later in the same book, when he states that, "In separation all meaning evaporates" (*MT*, 97). Every being is what it is by virtue of its complex relationship to every other being in the context of the whole creative process of existence. Thus no being is fundamentally separate from any other, or from the evolving totality of existence.

The interdependence of the principles of Self, Creativity, and Eros is also implicit in Jung's notion of individuation. In some sense individuation is a relatively macrocosmic expression of what Whitehead describes taking place on a microcosmic level in the concrescent processes of actual occasions. Every individuation process is an integration of diverse creative elements into a novel pattern of individuality, which simultaneously constitutes and is constituted by a

novel pattern of dynamic interrelationships. As Jung explains, “Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to oneself” (“Nature of Psyche,” 226 ¶ 432). Individuals are not separate from their environments, but are emergent patterns of individual selfhood within a relational creative matrix. From Whitehead's perspective, an individual human being is actually a society of occasions, enjoying a certain commonality and integration of form and purpose (*PR*, 90). In the context of this present vision, the principle of the self pervades all of existence but is more powerfully constellated around certain centers of individualized experience and creative manifestation. Thus the Self expresses itself in a microcosmic form through the concrescence of actual occasions, and in a more macrocosmic form through the formation of a partially unified and individualized psyche or conscious personality. In either case, the element of individualization is relative, rather than absolute, and there simultaneously exists an element of plurality and multiplicity within the emergent individuality. This is expressed in Jung's conceptions of psychic complexes, or relatively autonomous elements of the psyche that combine and interact to form the psychic totality. According to this understanding, even the ego is a centralized complex, powerfully constellated around the archetype of the Self.¹⁵¹ Similarly, even an actual occasion is here understood as containing partially autonomous relational creative elements that are part of its inward creative dynamism and paradoxical multiplicity.

This understanding of the interdependence of all three principles is also inherent in Steiner's spiritual vision. For Steiner, all of existence is spiritual, and

all spirit is permeated by the divine principle of the Self. All spirit is also creative, and therefore governed and permeated by the principle of Creativity. According to Steiner, the entire spiritual cosmos and all the beings in it are in a constant process of evolution (*HW*, 198–199, ¶ 3). Steiner also sees the entirety of existence as constituted by a pattern of spiritual interrelationships between beings. As Steiner expresses it, "From the point of view of the spiritual world, we face only beings. These beings are the true reality" (*Threshold*, 119). Thus the entire world process in which we participate is an evolving spiritual ecology constituted by the interrelationships between the experiences and creative processes of spiritual beings. Steiner describes this in the realm of thought, when he says that, "Thoughts that are beings speak with other thoughts that are also beings" (*Threshold*, 119). For Steiner, this reality becomes apparent whenever we penetrate into the deeper spiritual reality underlying our habituated sensory and cognitive perceptions of any domain of existence.

This understanding is coherent with Whitehead's vision, in which all of existence consists in the dynamic process of creative interfeeling within, between, and among beings.¹⁵² Given the permeation of all of existence by the Self, the strict distinction between actual occasions and groupings of occasions breaks down, and every individualized form participates in some degree of emergent selfhood. Selfhood can therefore be seen as emerging on a creative continuum of more or less powerfully centered, autonomous, and self-formative beings and processes. Whitehead also refers to the basic formative perceptions of other occasions by a concurring occasion as prehensions, and sees these as another

category of existence (*PR*, 18–20). However, again, given the permeation of all process by the principle of the Self as posited in this vision, even these basic perceptions of other occasions can be seen as having some degree of emergent selfhood, constituting in some sense a pluralistic dimension of the concreting occasion. Thus, in accordance with Steiner's vision, the whole process of existence can be seen as constituted by the formative processes of beings and their interactions, and the strict distinction between beings and the patterns formed by the interactions between beings also dissolves, leaving a more seamless creative relational fabric in which patterns of emergent individuality stand out with more or less distinctness. However, despite the breaking down of these strict distinctions, Whitehead's terms remain useful in describing dimensions of process in terms of their contextual and functional significance. Thus one can still describe the prehension of one being or occasion by another without depriving the prehension itself of some degree of potential creative autonomy and selfhood. Similarly, one can talk about groupings of occasions into a society of occasions without precluding the possibility that that society enjoys some significant degree of emergent selfhood.

Another element in Whitehead's vision that here undergoes a similar dissolving of strict categorical boundaries is the concept of eternal objects. While Whitehead conceives of eternal objects as pure potentials, existing in a fixed form in the primordial mind of God (*PR*, 13 and 31), potentialities are here conceived as inseparable changing elements of the entire relational flux, existing on a continuum of potentiality and actuality in which some degree of potentiality and

actuality are always present. Thus potentiality is also relative to perspective and context, so that what is highly actualized for one being may be a faint and distant potential for another, and vice versa. This understanding still allows for patterns and forms with a relative consistency and continuity through and across the relational flux of process, such as the formal numerical relations of mathematics and the shapes and proportions of geometry, though these are here understood as inseparable from their relational context and enjoying a different meaning and relational essence depending on their mode of mutually constitutive emergence and participation. These forms do not exist anywhere in a fixed unchanging form, but emerge and transform with the relational flux of process. Attempting to isolate them and remove them from their creative context as emergent patterns within larger emergent patterns would be an example of what Whitehead calls the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, or the treatment of an abstract concept as if it had a separate real existence (*SMW*, 51).

These patterns of relative formal coherency through and across the creative flux of process are here understood in Jungian terms as archetypes, and are seen as shaping the entire relational creative process, including the inhering continuum of potentiality and actuality. Thus archetypes are not fixed forms but transform and evolve continuously, and are inseparable from their various manifestations and modes of relational creative participation and emergence in the eternal procession of Creativity. Possibilities, like actualities, do not exist separately from their relational context, and can be more or less individually localized or archetypally pervasive. Thus, just as there is a continuum of actuality

and potentiality, so too is there a continuum between the uniquely individual and localized creative manifestations—whether more actual or potential from a given perspective—and the more pervasive archetypal patterns that have a vast multiplicity of specific embodiments and modes of creative participation. However, even when archetypes are broadly pervasive, their evolving patterned relational essence is still unique and irreducible, and in that sense paradoxically individual.

Just as Whitehead envisages the concreting occasion as synthesizing its prehensions of other occasions through ingression of eternal objects, the creative process can here be understood as involving the establishment of a unique mode of relational feeling to the entire relational creative flux, including both relatively actual and potential, and relatively individual and archetypal dimensions of that reality. Thus a concreting occasion of experience feels and relates to other relationally interdependent occasions of experience, and this includes both patterns of possibility and pervasive archetypal patterns, each of which possess some degree of creative individuality and autonomy. Again, for functional purposes, actualities can be distinguished from potentials and individual entities from archetypes, but it must be remembered that these are not absolute metaphysical distinctions but useful modes of designation and contextual conceptualization. The ways in which the phenomena on the poles of these continua manifest in actual life varies greatly, so that a possibility may perpetually haunt the imagination or escape conscious notice, and an archetype may be a relatively diffuse pattern, barely apprehended, or a powerful constellation of self-formative

creativity and awareness, emerging as a deity in human consciousness.¹⁵³

However, all of these manifestations are connected through their irreducible shared relational essence.

In the context of the vision I am here setting forth, every element of existence can also be seen as participating in both the *unus mundus* and *anima mundi*.¹⁵⁴ These are, in a sense, two faces of the same reality, designating respectively the paradoxical inclusiveness of seemingly opposed and disparate elements, and the emergent selfhood of the entire spiritual creative process. The *unus mundus* is the principle of paradoxical and inclusive openness, and is both self and no self, emptiness and fullness, being and non-being. These are also implicit elements of the *anima mundi*, but the *anima mundi* is characterized by its emergence as the most encompassing constellation of evolving selfhood. Because the *anima mundi*, as cosmic soul, is conceived as encompassing the full range of individual and relational creative manifestations in a paradoxically unified and pluralistic form, it also encompasses conflictual and not fully integrated elements. Thus relative imperfection and evil are elements of the *anima mundi* along with relative perfection and goodness.¹⁵⁵ The *anima mundi*, along with all of the beings in it, is continually struggling toward greater integration and harmonization of its internal elements. Thus, like every being, the *anima mundi* shapes itself across the continua of actuality and potentiality, and individuality and universality, and contains a dimension of ever changing and inseparable potential. I have designated this potential dimension of the *anima mundi*, the primordial ground, or

dynamic field of potential, with the understanding that it is inseparable from the more actualized dimension of its nature.

In order to distinguish a more archetypally perfected dimension of the *anima mundi*, I have also conceived, as a modification of Whitehead's conception of the dipolar nature of God,¹⁵⁶ what I designate as the divine nature, which is characterized by its more exclusive selection and harmonious integration of perceptual feelings and relational creative elements. The divine nature, like the *anima mundi*, is also paradoxically single and manifold, because it may consist in a plurality of simultaneous divine envisagements, each of which could be integrated into a larger whole with and from the perspective of the others, and yet would thereby lose something of its unique selective perfection. Similarly, though it is characterized by a more perfect integration and harmonization of its relational elements than is the more encompassing *anima mundi*, this integration and harmonization is never absolute, and there always remains a multiplicity of irreducible individual and relational elements both within the divine nature and in each of its most expansive self-formative envisagements. Like the *anima mundi*, of which it is itself a more perfected element, the divine nature can also be conceived as having a more potential dimension, though again this is conceived as ever changing and inseparable from the larger whole and its continuum of actuality and potentiality. I have designated the patterns of possibility that constitute this potential dimension as patterns of divine potential, or divine potentials. Like the divine nature of which they are elements, these patterns of

potential are paradoxically infinite and exclusive in their selective perfection, and are always changing and evolving.

All of these different, overlapping, and interpenetrating divine constellations of existence correspond broadly to different conceptions and experiences of divine reality.¹⁵⁷ The unus mundus corresponds to the more impersonal and paradoxical conception of the divine totality expressed in certain understandings of emptiness, or Shunyata, in Buddhism; the Way, or Tao, in Taoism; Ein Sof in Kabbalah; and nirguna Brahman in Hindu Vedanta. The anima mundi corresponds to a more personal but paradoxical conception of the divine nature, as is expressed in the notion of the Great Spirit in many Native American traditions, or in the conception of a paradoxical God who encompasses evil and imperfection in some of the Gnostic and other Christian mystical traditions.¹⁵⁸ The divine nature corresponds to more traditional monotheistic understandings of a single perfect divine God, though it is here divested of the absoluteness with which it is so often associated in respect to its unity, comprehensiveness of being, omnipotence, omniscience, and static perfection. This is a paradoxical conception of the divine nature as ever growing and transforming despite its relative divine perfection; infinitely loving and compassionate, yet always learning how to live and love more deeply in relationship; single yet manifold; eternal yet receptively sensitive and ever changing. Finally, the paradoxical unity and plurality of both the anima mundi and the divine nature, and the potential emergence of archetypes as highly autonomous divine beings and cosmic creative thought forms corresponds to the polytheistic spiritual traditions of the world, including those

traditions that are simultaneously polytheistic and monotheistic, as with some understandings of Hinduism and many indigenous spiritual traditions.¹⁵⁹ These are all conceived as interconnected and interpenetrating dimensions of a paradoxically single and manifold spiritual reality, which in its broadest and deepest nature is ineluctably mysterious and ineffable.

Freedom and Openness

One principle that is fundamental to this entire vision is openness. Being itself is posited, from our always provisional standpoint, as metaphysically open, and this openness is reinforced and reflected by the openness of the existential and phenomenological horizon of our experience. It is this openness that makes creative freedom and novelty possible, and it is through their participation in this openness of being and process that relatively individual beings enjoy both their self, relational, and creative unity with the whole process of existence, and their emergent distinctiveness and autonomy. Therefore, just as individuality, actuality, and unity are relative and paradoxical, manifesting on dynamic continuums and through multiple dimensions of existence and selfhood, so too must freedom be relative and paradoxical. Freedom is thus a subtle and elusive concept and phenomenon. Beings that are relatively distinctive and independent enjoy relative degrees of freedom in various creative and relational contexts. Thus freedom can be exercised and experienced, but like all of the great mysteries of existence, it cannot be completely defined or measured. Its nature and extent must largely be ascertained in relation to that which limits it, which can be conceived in terms of various forms of constraint, as well as in relation to that which makes it possible.

And as should now be clear, that which limits and that which constrains are aspects of a single reality, so that the very configurations of relational creative process that potentiate a certain emergence and experience of freedom also provide its relative and relational limitations. If reality itself is a relational creative process, then individual freedom always takes place in the context of relational collaboration with other beings, and the relative freedoms of beings in relationship can variously or simultaneously limit and inform each other. In this sense, freedom is also a quality that characterizes patterns of relationship and creative processes.

Therefore freedom always emerges in relationship both to other beings and to the creative context in which it is exercised and experienced. Jung observed this when exploring the interaction between individual human centers of consciousness and the archetypes that surround and pervade them. As Jung observes, "We find ourselves in best agreement with psychological experience if we concede to the archetype a definite measure of independence, and to consciousness a degree of creative freedom proportionate to its scope" ("Job," 470, ¶ 758). In such a situation, both the archetype and the individual human consciousness enjoy a certain degree of relative freedom, and this freedom is relative to the nature and extent of awareness of each entity, to their larger relational context, and to the character of their interaction. An attitude of mutual openness therefore enhances the creative freedom of each being, as well as the freedom of their collaborative relationship and the larger creative process in which they participate. Shared experience and mutual reflection serve to enhance

the relational field of awareness that they mutually constitute and in which they individually participate, while a collaborative approach allows them to work together toward the achievement of higher creative manifestations than might be possible in relative isolation—and to do so without the limitations imposed by discordant conflict and unnecessary mutual impediment. In such an interaction both beings are mutually transformed, and their interaction transforms the larger realities in which they participate. This paradigm of relational creative interaction between beings can be extended and modified in its specificity to describe the creative interrelationship between all types of beings in all types of creative contexts. The ethical and aesthetic dimensions and implications of this paradigm will be explored more deeply in a later section of this essay.

As Jung alluded to in the passage quoted above, freedom is relative to the scope and extent of consciousness—or awareness, conceived more broadly—as freedom involves creatively shaping one's self and world in a way that requires selectively feeling and weaving together various elements and patterns of potential in one's creative context. This is the creative process that Whitehead describes as concrescence.¹⁶⁰ The extent to which a being can creatively transform reality through introducing novel forms of feeling and interrelationship depends on the extent and nature of its organization and creative participation. As beings are not totally separate, they do not simply encompass awareness within themselves, but participate in a pattern of relational creative awareness. Thus a more sophisticated being is able to attune itself in a more complex and creative way to the patterns of creative interrelationship in which it participates, and is

able to give rise to and implement a novel creative vision, which depends both upon its unique center of awareness and its capacity to harmoniously participate in larger patterns of creative awareness. Therefore greater complexity of organization is ideally coupled with creative openness and the type of collaborative attunement it potentiates. Neither the creative act nor the exercising of freedom can be entirely localized. Freedom is a quality of participation in a dynamic, open relational creative process.

As just mentioned, the exercising of freedom in the conerescent process involves selectively feeling and weaving together elements and patterns of potential in one's inflowing creative environment. From the perspective of the concreting being, every element of its constitutive and inflowing environment is a potential for creative feeling and integration. In the context of this revised vision, each of these elements is not merely a potential object for prehension and creative synthesis, but a living and relatively autonomous reality with which the concreting being must collaboratively interact in the context of its own process of creative self-formation. Thus every process of self-formation is simultaneously a process of mutual formation, and the part that shapes the whole is also shaped by the whole and all its parts. In the process of selecting among creative potentials, all elements in a being's environment and all possible relationships to and between those elements emerge as creative potentials. Thus what is actual from one perspective is a potential from another. Jung describes an aspect of this reality when he states that, "The transcendental psychophysical background corresponds to a 'potential world' in so far as all those conditions which

determine the form of empirical phenomena are inherent in it" (*Mysterium*, 538, ¶ 769). This potential world corresponds to Steiner's notion of the spiritual world that underlies and gives rise to the physical, as well as to Whitehead's notion of the prehensive background of the emergent extensive material world (*SMW*, 148). However, just as for Steiner the spiritual not only underlies and constitutes but also permeates the physical world, and for Whitehead the entire reality is a relational creative process, so too is the psychophysical background that Jung describes inseparable from its more experientially polarized physical and psychic manifestations. Thus the entire relational creative process of existence is simultaneously a potential and a reality, differently configured depending on internal perspective and mode of participation, and is simultaneously the subject and the object of its own relational self-formative process.

Whitehead tends to describe the inflowing environment in terms of the past, which must be synthesized into a new creative feeling by the concreting entity. Thus he states: "The past is the reality at the base of each new actuality. The process is the absorption into a new unity with ideals and with anticipation, by operation of the creative Eros" (*AI*, 276). This understanding generally implies a relatively linear and unidirectional conception of time, although it could be modified so as to understand the inflowing reality as comprehending a multiplicity of complexly interrelated temporal processes and realities.¹⁶¹ If there are multiple dimensions and currents of creative process, with corresponding time currents and systems, past and future are relative to perspective, just as are actuality and potentiality, and all of these dimensions of creative process exist as

both relative potentials and actualities with which the concreting being must creatively interact in its concreting process. The creative Eros that Whitehead describes above can here be understood as corresponding both to the being and its relational context, which are inseparable, and thus to the creative process at all of its interwoven levels of selfhood and interrelationship. This includes the whole of existence, here conceived in terms of the *unus mundus* or *anima mundi*, and all of the other emergent levels of selfhood and interrelationship, including the divine nature and the archetypes. Therefore Whitehead asserts that "there always remains the final reaction of the self-creative unity of the universe" (*PR*, 47). Thus the creative process belongs simultaneously to the emerging individuality and to the whole and all of its parts, all of which are interdependent and inseparable. It is the openness of being that unites all of these beings and processes at the most fundamental level, but it is their mode of creative interrelationship that unites them in their unique living specificity. And it is the openness of the individual being that allows it to participate most fully in the freedom and creativity of the larger patterns of selfhood with whom its being is interwoven.

For Steiner, as for Whitehead, this capacity to openly participate in the creative freedom and process of more encompassing beings—here understood as including the *anima mundi* at the broadest level—is what grants the individual being its measure of creative freedom. As Steiner describes, "I saw in the human personality the center where the human being *unites* with the utmost primordial being of the world. From that center springs the will, and when the clear light of spirit is active in that center, the will is free" (*Auto*, 71–72). This description

seems to involve a paradox, for the individual being enjoys its creative freedom through participation in the freedom of the primordial being, and this requires both openness to that reality and some form of integration of that creative freedom into its own unique mode of creative participatory self-formation. In order for this participation to be free, it must involve a collaborative relationship to that encompassing being, and there must therefore be a mutual participation and collaboration that honors the irreducible yet interconnected selfhoods and freedoms of both participating beings. Thus freedom requires both distinctive individuality and irreducible openness, emergent autonomy and collaborative relational unity, always manifesting in transformative mutual participation.

The capacity to engage in this mode of open and honoring mutual participation requires a transcendence of the ordinary limitations of consciousness and the corresponding limited modes of conscious self-identification, and an expansion into higher, deeper, and broader modes of selfhood. Thus Steiner states, "In each of us there dwells a deeper being in whom the free human comes to expression (*IT*, 157, ¶ 38). Through opening to this deeper self within us, we simultaneously open into the deeper and broader selfhood of all existence. And through this opening we also come into deeper contact and creative communion with all of the other beings that participate within and constitute this larger reality. This process therefore requires and creates a vast extension of consciousness and self-identification, and releases us from the narrow bounds of our individual concerns and identifications.

Once this love of freedom has become a soul habit, we ourselves become free of all that is connected only with capacities of an individual, personal

nature. We cease to look at things from our own separate, particular point of view. The boundaries set by the narrow self, which chain us to this perspective, vanish. And the mysteries of the spiritual world may enter our inner life. (*HW*, 139, ¶ 27)

This process corresponds to an enlargement of vision and identity that both Jung and Whitehead describe in their respective works, as alluded to in section one of this essay. It is not that we cease to have individual perspectives but that these perspectives are no longer bound and limited by a sense of separateness and narrow identity; rather, they open into the living perspectives, experiences, and dimensions of selfhood that we share with other beings. However, as both Jung and Steiner describe, this process of expansion and enlargement of perspective has no final end, and our understanding, freedom, and creative influence are always shaped by our level of development and mode of evolving relational creative participation.¹⁶²

One limiting factor that Steiner describes in relation to human freedom has to do with the concept of karma. For Steiner, as in many spiritual traditions, our actions have effects which shape our relationship to the unfolding relational creative process. As he states, "I am a different person in my relationship to the world once I have made an impression on my environment" (*Theos*, 66, ¶ 4). In attempting to describe how this process works, he queries, "Could it be that the results of our actions, whose character has been impressed on them by the "I," have a tendency to come back to the "I" in the same way that an impression preserved in memory comes to life again when an outer circumstance evokes it?" (*Theos*, 66, ¶ 4). That is to say, our actions always take place in relationship and evoke responses from our relational community and environment. In this sense,

we are bound and limited by the types of relationship that we have created and the responses that we have evoked in our fellow beings and ecological communities. For Steiner, this pattern of relational associations and causal influences carries over from life to life through reincarnation, so that the reincarnating soul is shaped from the beginning by the karma that it has accumulated in successive incarnations. In the context of this integrative vision, we can see the potential interaction of many different strands and patterns of individual and relational karma, so that a more encompassing principle can be adduced. All that we do affects the whole and our unique selfhood and participation within the relational creative process that constitutes that whole, and therefore our freedom, integrity, and unfolding spiritual reality depend on how we live and relate at every moment. In this sense we are inseparable not only from our past selves but from all selves, and must take responsibility for multiple levels of interacting karma that correspond to multiple levels of interacting selves, relationships, and creative processes. The moral and aesthetic implications of this understanding are in one sense immediately apparent, but are also worthy of more sustained and in-depth consideration.

Epistemology and Creative Participation

As must now be clear, the integral shared identity and co-creative participation of all beings in the single, paradoxical relational creative process has important epistemological implications. All knowing must be understood as taking place in relationship and in the context of a mode of relational creative participation in the whole process of existence. Every way of being and unique

pattern of creative participation constitutes a different way of knowing and a different mode of experience, as well as a unique mode of relationship and creative activity.¹⁶³ Thus knowing is inseparable from its relational participatory context, and the act of knowing cannot be entirely localized, but belongs to beings in collaborative communities and ecological patterns of interrelationship, and at its broadest level to the entire relational process of existence. Another essential implication of this epistemological vision is that every participatory act of knowing is also an act of creation, which transforms the very reality that is being known and experienced. The act of knowing is inherently and inescapably a creative participatory act, which transforms the reality it comes to know through this act of creative participation. And given the interconnection and integral identity of all beings in the whole process of creation, every act of knowing transforms the whole of existence and every being within it. Also, because all creation is co-creation, every participatory process of knowing is also a process of co-creation, with specific beings and communities, and with the whole of existence. Thus the process of knowing has profound aesthetic and ethical dimensions. We are shaping the whole of existence together at every moment.

This epistemological understanding also has paradoxical implications with respect to the limits of knowledge, especially as regards any claims to certainty or exhaustive understanding. If existence is in a continual process of transformation, and all knowledge is bound and shaped by its relational participatory context, then certain and complete knowledge of the whole changing reality from a limited and situated vantage point does not appear to be possible. Correspondingly, if every

element of existence is what it is in its complex relationship to every other element in the whole process of existence, then no single element can be known in its full living complexity, and any interpretation of any element from a given participatory perspective must inherently be provisional and incomplete. Thus paradoxically, though all knowledge is ultimately shared by the integral participatory process of all beings in the whole process of creation, these processes of knowing are dynamic, interflowing, and irreducible, and complete and certain knowledge of the whole or its parts from a given vantage point is not attainable. However, as explicated before, every way of knowing is also a creative participatory act, so each act of knowing also enriches, transforms, and adds to the reality of what is known. Each act of knowing constitutes a novel creative relationship and a new reality. In this context it does not make sense to seek absolute, certain, and complete knowledge, for these attributes seem to be incompatible with the nature of existence and knowing themselves. Rather, it makes sense to seek ways of knowing that are attuned, creatively enhancing, and mutually honoring. Every act of knowing has the potential to bring us into deeper and more beautiful relationship to other beings, to our own unfolding selves and creative processes, and to the spiritual mystery of existence. Every participatory process of knowing has the potential to deepen the intimacy and beauty of existence itself.

The preceding discussion provides a broad ontological and epistemological overview, but many dimensions of this noetic process remain to be explored. The basic elements discussed in the preceding paragraphs can also be

illuminated in greater depth in the context of exploring the specific insights and perspectives offered by the thinkers upon whose integrative engagement this vision is based. Each of these thinkers became increasingly aware over the course of their lives of the inherent limitations that appertain to any claims to comprehensive knowledge, and of the corresponding need for openness and humility in the realm of inquiry and speculative thought. Thus Whitehead observed repeatedly that all knowledge is inherently incomplete and that "the closed system is the death of living understanding" (*MT*, 83). Similarly, Jung saw claims to absolute or certain knowledge regarding the deeper metaphysical character of existence as unfounded and delusional, based on possession by limited and distortive psychological complexes or archetypal forces. "If we are convinced that we know the ultimate truth concerning metaphysical things, this means nothing more than that archetypal images have taken possession of our powers of thought and feeling, so that these lose their quality as functions at our disposal" (*Mysterium*, 551–552. ¶ 787). For Jung, as for Whitehead, these epistemological limitations are connected to the limitations of the consciousness of the knower, as well as to the illimitable complexity of what is known.

This paradox becomes immediately intelligible when we realize that there is no conscious content which can with absolute certainty be said to be totally conscious, for that would necessitate an unimaginable totality of consciousness, and that in turn would presuppose an equally unimaginable wholeness and perfection of the human mind. So we come to the paradoxical conclusion that there is no conscious content which is not in some other respect unconscious. ("Nature of Psyche," 187–188, ¶ 385)

Because every element of existence is what it is in its complex relationship to every other element and the whole process of existence, no element can be

known in its totality, and every relatively clear and conscious perception is also inescapably linked to perceptions that are less conscious and clear. Thus the apparent clarity of consciousness is to some extent illusory and always takes place against a background of mystery and uncertainty. This mystery and uncertainty therefore pervades that which is most clearly perceived and known. Even the visible is mysterious in the light of the invisible. Whitehead makes a similar observation when he describes how, "Elements which shine with distinctiveness, in some circumstances, retire into penumbral shadow in other circumstances, and into black darkness on other occasions" (*PR*, 15). Not only is conscious perception limited, but it is never in a position to know just how limited it is. Mystery is the background and shadowed face of all knowledge.

While each of these thinkers perceives the limitations of conscious perception somewhat differently in the context of his respective philosophical vision, these perceptions can easily be united in the context of this integrative vision. Jung's concept of the unconscious—which can be extended to include the transconscious domain of the archetypes and anima mundi—corresponds to Whitehead's understanding of the prehensive background of all conscious perception, and to Steiner's understanding of the deeper encompassing spiritual reality within and behind all limited sensory, or even spiritual perceptions. Thus for each of them, what is consciously experienced at any given moment is only a limited manifestation of a vast and interconnected underlying and pervading reality. When Jung writes, "For, in the last analysis, psychic life is for the greater part an unconscious life that surrounds consciousness on all sides—a notion that

is sufficiently obvious when one considers how much unconscious preparation is needed, for instance, to register a sense-impression" ("Archetypes," 27, ¶ 57), this applies equally to the understandings of all three thinkers, as well as to this integrative vision. While this understanding provides limitations to claims to knowledge, it is also capable of extending the field of what it is possible to know, since knowledge is not limited to conscious perception, and consciousness has an illimitable field of interconnected experience on which to draw in the formation and informing of its perceptions.

This perception of the interconnectedness and inseparability of all phenomena is also common to all three thinkers. Thus Whitehead observed that "Any knowledge of the finite always involves a reference to infinitude" (*MT*, 44). Jung came to a very similar conclusion regarding the character of knowledge when he observed that:

The psychoid nature of the archetype contains very much more than can be included in a psychological explanation. It points to the sphere of the *unus mundus*, the unitary world, towards which the psychologist and the atomic physicist are converging along separate paths, producing independently of one another certain analogous auxiliary concepts. Although the first step in the cognitive process is to discriminate and divide, at the second step it will unite what has been divided, and an explanation will be satisfactory only when it achieves a synthesis. ("Conscience," 452, ¶ 852)

Thus all knowledge requires both discernment and discrimination on the one hand, and perception of the larger context and relation to the whole on the other. And, as already pointed out, neither of these processes can ever be completely certain or complete, as the full relationship of any element of experience both to other elements and to the whole is never knowable, and therefore the knowledge

of each element itself is also incomplete. This understanding therefore calls for a more holistic and provisional mode of interpretation in which perspectives are elaborated as meaningful and enhancing modes of creative interrelationship, rather than as claims to exhaustive knowledge.

This same limitation and realization applies to self-knowledge, both in respect to the more limited individual self and to the encompassing Self of all existence. Both Jung and Steiner frequently emphasize the importance of self-knowledge for human life. For Jung, self-reflection and self-knowledge are essential to the individuation process, and for Steiner they are essential to the process of higher spiritual development.¹⁶⁴ In order to enter with consciousness into higher realms of perception, one must cultivate a capacity for honest and lucid self-perception, and this includes eventually perceiving one's own soul directly on a spiritual level. As Steiner succinctly states, "In order to proceed further, it is essential to pass through the experience of spiritually seeing our own soul" (*HW*, 144, ¶ 34). However, the attainment of self-knowledge, on both a psychological and spiritual level, is a continuous process, without a final end.

Therefore Jung writes that:

There is little hope of our ever being able to reach even approximate consciousness of the self, since however much we may make conscious there will always exist an indeterminate and indeterminable amount of unconscious material which belongs to the totality of the self. Hence the self will always remain a supraordinate quantity. ("Relations," 177, ¶ 274)

Thus while self-reflection and self-awareness are crucial to human life, acknowledgement of the limitations of self-knowledge is also crucial to true self-awareness. Steiner reaches a similar conclusion in the context of spiritual

development when he observes, "Regardless of what level we have reached on the path to supersensible worlds, there are always still higher levels where we will perceive ever more of the higher self, which can therefore reveal itself only partially at any given level" (*Outline*, 368, ¶ 55). Thus the Self remains an infinite continuously unfolding mystery, even to itself. The process of attaining self-awareness is an eternal and ever deepening creative pursuit. As many sages have observed, the more we know, the more we realize that we do not know. However, this is not merely a limitation, but an opening to infinite discovery.

In respect to the actual limitations and potentials of human experience and perception, Jung, Whitehead, and Steiner all converge in the perspective that direct sensory perception represents only a limited dimension of human awareness and experience. For Jung, the existence of the archetypes, the collective unconscious, and the *unus mundus*, and the evidence of synchronicity and paranormal experience, suggest that an individual's immediate sensory and bodily awareness takes place against a background of deeper spiritual and archetypal influences and interconnections that are not limited by the laws and habits that ordinarily govern material processes and their concomitant sensory perceptions ("Nature of Psyche," 215–216, ¶ 418–420). If human life and experience take place within the spiritually animate world of the *anima mundi*, then the emergent laws, habits, and structures governing the intermediate manifestations of material reality act as a limited interference pattern for the deeper and more pervasive spiritual interconnections and creative impulses of the underlying spiritual world.¹⁶⁵ This underlying reality can erupt into physical manifestation in the form

of synchronicities and paranormal occurrences, and can be directly perceived psychically by psychologically sensitive and open individuals.

Whitehead's metaphysical philosophy and theory of perception also provides a way of understanding this broader reality and how it can manifest experientially in ways that transcend the ordinary emergent laws and habits that govern the observable material world. For Whitehead, the underlying reality is one of dynamic creativity and self-creative interfeeling. The material world as we know it is an emergent dimension of this deeper creative feeling process, including the correspondingly emergent space-time continua. Every concreting occasion prehends the entire inflowing creative process and all of its integral elements, and sensory perception and conscious awareness as we know them are only highly derivative modes of emergent experience and perception. In principle, all of the processes in the creative universe are accessible to direct perception, and are indeed perceived at highly subliminal prehensive levels. What is more rare in human life is that non-sensory or extrasensory perceptions of less environmentally immediate realities reach human awareness in a recognizable form.¹⁶⁶ Since the perceptual process inherent in concrecence involves many level of synthesis, selection, and refinement, it is unlikely that awareness of spatially, temporally, and experientially distant events will pass through the massive filter of emphasis on immediate sensory and psychic data. Synchronicities and paranormal events can be explained in a similar manner, as representing an emergence of underlying archetypal and spiritual processes of creative interfeeling into the dimension of relational creative process that constitutes the physical world. The "laws" of

physics are better understood as emergent tendencies and habits,¹⁶⁷ which are reinforced by continuous patterns of creativity and perception, but which can be shaped or altered by the emergence of underlying creative processes. Thus the emergence of a pattern of underlying perception can shape material process in a synchronistic manner that does not violate ordinary physical principles but is perceptible to consciousness, or on rare occasions, it can alter or interrupt the functioning of those principles. Though Whitehead himself does not devote much space to exploring such phenomena, they are easily explicable within his theory of perception.

For Steiner, the reality of processes and experiences that transcend the laws that ordinarily govern material processes and corresponding sensory perceptions and cognitive activities is central to his philosophical and spiritual vision. On a metaphysical level, such spiritually transcendent processes are the rule, and ordinary material reality and sensory perception of its elements are the derivative exception, which only appear as the necessary rule from a very limited vantage point. For Steiner, every human being has the potential to develop capacities for consciously experiencing spiritual realities that transcend the ordinary material realm.¹⁶⁸ However, to do so requires developing spiritual organs of perceptions that are analogous to our sensory ones.¹⁶⁹ Even ordinary sensory perception and consciousness, for Steiner, already employ and depend on a certain degree of direct spiritual and clairvoyant perception and development.¹⁷⁰ As he frequently emphasizes, our very experience of selfhood, of having what Steiner refers to as our sense of "I", depends upon a direct spiritual intuition.¹⁷¹

Similarly, sensory perceptions are spiritual perceptions, but of a limited type that we are accustomed to having. We do not recognize the deeper spiritual processes that are inherent in these perceptions, or that have shaped their spiritual development over time. Steiner makes a similar observation in relation to the process of thinking. He points out that we are already participating more directly in transcendent spiritual realities when we consciously inhabit the experience of thinking, and when we engage in a kind of intuitive and contemplative thinking that is less reliant on sensory perception.¹⁷² Through higher spiritual development, we can learn to perceive these underlying spiritual processes directly. Thus Steiner asserts, "Knowledge of the inner being within us can also come only from intuition" (*Outline*, 339, ¶ 41). In saying this, he is referring primarily to the deeper self-knowledge that arises through developing higher faculties of spiritual perception, but this also applies to the nature and degree of self-awareness and inner experience that we already enjoy.

Though Whitehead's descriptions of the creative process and its emergent universe of beings and their organically structured interrelationships are focused primarily on those aspects of that reality that are disclosed through ordinary sensory perception, inner observation, and contemplative thought, they can also be extended to encompass the types of extrasensory and paranormal experiences that were more formative for both Jung and Steiner. For Steiner, the complex spiritual cosmos consists of multiple dimensions and levels of existence, and of multiple corresponding processes and modes of being, including different dimensions or bodies of the human being. Thus for Steiner, there are physical,

etheric, astral, mental, and a series of ascending spiritual worlds, and elements of the human makeup that correspond to each of these levels, or to those levels of spiritual manifestation for which the human being has developed functioning bodies.¹⁷³ There are also specific beings, or aspects of spiritual beings, that correspond to each of these dimensions and interconnected worlds. The existence of trans-physical dimensions of reality is also implicit in Jung's transgressive vision of the archetypes, the collective unconscious, and the *unus mundus*—and here of the *anima mundi*—although he is much less specific in his description of those realities and how they are structured. Though Whitehead does not directly address such trans-physical realities, except on the most abstract level, his philosophy does not require the type of material universe that we observe around us, nor need it be limited to the type of material processes and beings we are used to perceiving within it (*PR*, 91). Thus it is easy within his process philosophy to conceive of etheric, astral, and spiritual dimensions of the relational creative process, and of archetypal and spiritual beings that do not manifest themselves on the emergent material plane. Perception of these beings, planes, and dimensions of reality on the most basic level would rest on the same type of prehensive process as ordinary conscious and sensory perception, and if these perceptions of alternate dimensions of creative process were differentiated into clear patterns of discrete quasi-sensory and conscious perception, they would require corresponding organs and modes of higher order derivative perception as Steiner suggests.¹⁷⁴ Thus, drawing on Whitehead's model of perception, it might be argued that we are already prehending all of these additional dimensions of

creative process but that we do not consciously perceive them both because we have not developed the requisite organs and modalities of higher order perception, and because we are used to selectively attending to the material and sensory sphere of our experience.

Steiner describes something very similar to this when he discusses the gradual formation of our faculties for higher spiritual perception, which often takes place subliminally and in the less encumbered spaces of our dreams and deep sleep. As these faculties are gradually developed, we realize that subtle spiritual processes and perceptions are taking place within us all the time. As he describes it,

In other words, we must realize that, in addition to our ordinary, conscious, daytime life, we also lead a second, unconscious life in this other dream world. We engrave or imprint everything we perceive or think onto this other world—but we can see these imprints only if our lotus flowers have been developed. These lotus flowers, of course, are always present in us, but only in a skeletal, undeveloped form. We cannot perceive anything with them in our waking state because the impressions made upon them in that state are very weak. The reason for this is similar to why we do not see the stars by day. Namely, their light is too weak when compared with the powerful light of the sun. In the same way, the weaker impressions of the spiritual world count for very little when compared to the powerful impressions of the physical senses. (*HW*, 153–154, ¶ 2)

We have evolved the senses and cognitive capacities to perceive and function in the material world around us, and must evolve further to consciously and sensitively experience the spiritual realities that pervade and surround these material processes and their associated modes of perception.

According to Steiner, these higher faculties of spiritual perception also correspond to more evolved and honoring modes of spiritual creative process. As

we develop these faculties, we evolve into deeper forms of intimacy and collaborative relationship. Steiner describes a series of ascending modes of perception that disclose deeper and more intimate spiritual realities and potentiate subtler and more intimate modes of relational creative participation and communion.

Students of the spirit rise to this level of knowledge step by step. Imagination brings us to the point where we no longer feel that perceptions are external qualities of beings; instead, we recognize in them the emanations of something that is soul-spiritual in character. Inspiration leads us still further into the inner nature of beings and teaches us to understand what these beings are for each other. In intuition, we penetrate into the beings themselves. (*Outline*, 338, ¶ 41)

Because of this increasing intimacy and sensitivity of creative communion, a corresponding degree of moral development is also necessary. As Steiner explains, "The more spiritual the worlds that you enter, the more the moral and the 'natural' laws of those worlds coincide" (*S-K*, 49). As our earlier epistemological explorations suggest, all perceptions and participatory acts have aesthetic and moral dimensions, but the more directly and intimately we communion with other spiritual beings, the more direct and apparent becomes the connection between the moral and the practical dimensions of our actions. Without the illusion of an entirely inanimate and impersonal material reality mediating our interactions, the moral implications of all that we do become both more apparent and more immediate. Also, as in human relationships, the greater the intimacy and interdependence, the more care, sensitivity, and responsibility is needed.

And as Steiner points out, this is true not only on a moral, but also on a functional and aesthetic level.

The more levels of cognition we attain, the more we need to be able to listen attentively, calmly, and reverently. For the work of cognizing the truth—indeed, all activity and life in the world of the spirit—is infinitely more subtle and delicate than what we do in the course of our ordinary life and thinking in the physical world. The further our horizon expands, the subtler the work we must perform. (*HW*, 105–106, ¶ 14)

Not only the practical and moral, but along with them the aesthetic dimensions of existence become more clearly and sensitively integrated. However, as Steiner repeatedly emphasizes, this care and attention is not only something that we bring to every moment and movement of spiritual creative relationship, but it is also something that must be cultivated over time. Thus he clearly states, "We come to the insight that we are causing damage to the whole world and all the beings in it when we do not develop our own forces in the right way" (*Outline*, 24, ¶ 19).

Similarly, Steiner explains that we will not be able to develop certain faculties and enter into conscious creative interrelationship with certain types of spiritual beings if we have not developed ourselves in the right way on a moral and spiritual level. Thus he describes the type of spiritual practice and development that is necessary to develop our character and abilities in the right way.

The work of this kind of meditation is to bring the soul to a state that opens a doorway into the spiritual world. That doorway will remain closed, no matter how ingenious the thinking or how fully scientific the approach, unless the soul prepares to advance to meet the approaching spiritual experiences. (*Threshold*, 69)

If we have not developed enough spiritually, we will be incapable both of entering into more subtle modes of spiritual perception and relationship, and of honoring the moral and aesthetic sensitivities of our collaborative interactions.¹⁷⁵

As was pointed out earlier, part of the sensitivity and spiritual maturity that we must bring to our participatory perceptions and interactions involves openness and humility. As Steiner expresses it, "Only a person who has passed through the gate of humility can ascend to the heights of the spirit" (*HW*, 17, ¶ 7). For with the greater subtlety of our perceptions comes greater potential for error, and with the greater intimacy of our creative interactions comes greater need for receptivity and sensitivity. This humility and openness includes our attitude of relative certainty regarding our interpretations and claims to knowledge. For as Jung observes, "That the world inside and outside ourselves rests on a transcendental background is as certain as our own existence, but it is equally certain that the direct perception of the archetypal world inside us is just as doubtfully correct as that of the physical world outside us" (*Mysterium*, 551, ¶ 787). What he says of the archetypal world corresponds almost entirely to what Steiner refers to as the spiritual world, and the principle of uncertainty and need for humility and openness extends to all perceptions at all levels of relational creative participation and existence. Indeed, the more intimate and subtle the mode of relational participation, the more important the subjective and interpretive dimension of our perceptions becomes, and the more we must be open to be continually corrected and informed by receptive and inter-reflective communication. And here, as elsewhere, we both discover and create reality through participatory interactions and perceptions, and this creative dimension of our actions inherently requires even more care and sensitivity than the perceptual dimension, from which it is metaphysically and functionally inseparable. The

more deeply we live, experience, and create together, the more openly and sensitively must we relate.

Another dimension of perception that is worth noting again here is its pervasively symbolic character. Because all beings and processes are interconnected, interdependent, and inseparable aspects of a single reality and relational creative process, every element reflects and flows into every other. In this sense all of reality is symbolic, manifesting a unique creativity and emerging individuality, and reflecting a world of creative interrelationships, each of which mirrors, informs, and transforms the others. Human language, thought, and experience are likewise pervaded by symbols and symbolic modes of experience and communication. Steiner also describes the need to develop specific symbolic languages in order to perceive and interact with specific spiritual beings and types of beings, just as Jung observed that deeper psychic and spiritual realities often manifest themselves through symbols. As Jung describes it:

But when the idea or principle involved is inscrutable, when its intentions are obscure in origin and in aim and yet enforce themselves, then the spirit is necessarily felt as an independent being, as a kind of higher consciousness, and its inscrutable, superior nature can no longer be expressed in the concepts of human reason. Our powers of expression then have recourse to other means; they create a *symbol*. ("Spirit and Life," 335–336, ¶ 643)

Jung seems to be describing a spontaneous process that corresponds closely to the formation and learning of symbolic languages that Steiner describes as a natural element in the course of learning to perceive and interact in higher dimensions of spiritual creative activity.

This occult script is inscribed forever in the spiritual world. Once the soul has attained spiritual perception, the script is revealed to it. But we do not

learn to read this occult alphabet in the same way that we learn to read an ordinary human alphabet. Rather, it is as if we grow toward clairvoyant knowing, and while we grow, there develops in us—as a soul faculty—a force impelling us to decipher, as if they were the characters of a script, the events and beings of the spiritual world present before us. (*HW*, 72, ¶ 9)

And as Whitehead points out, all such symbols are both expressive and creative.

"But the expressive sign is more than interpretable. It is creative. It elicits the intuition which interprets it" (*RM*, 132–133). Thus the creation and use of symbols is a fundamental aspect of the creative as well as the communicative process, and communication is itself a form of creation. And as Jung repeatedly observed, symbols are best understood as pointing both to what is visible and known in our experience, and to the ever present mystery of which the visible and known is a limited and mysterious expression. Every being and every aspect of our experience is a living mystery, regardless of the depth with which we come to know it. Thus, as Steiner observes, we "must always be ready to receive a new revelation from each and every being and thing" (*HW*, 81, ¶ 21). Every being and experience is a face of mystery and openness.

Good, Evil, and Beauty in Divine Evolution

Among the great challenges of existence is that of navigating the paradox of the unity and multiplicity of divine selfhood and identity. There is in a sense a single divine, manifold self-relational creative process, always shaping and discovering itself in new forms of identity and creative interrelationship.

However, this process can also be understood as an existential multiplicity, in which each emergent expression of selfhood, creativity, and relationship has an irreducible sanctity and uniqueness whose fullness and sensitivity cannot be

completely honored through subsuming it in a large whole of identity and creative process. Within this diversity of creative expressions and identities there are conflicting aims and desires, misunderstandings, mutual clashes and estrangements, feelings of fear, anger and alienation, and narrow and mutually exclusive modes of self-identification, leading to fragmentation and suffering on a cataclysmic level. It is therefore one of the great challenges of existence to navigate these paradoxes and complexities—of unity and multiplicity, shared identity and unique individuality, collaboration and relatively free and autonomous self-direction and expression. How can self-diversity and self-unity be honoringly harmonized, every unique and irreducible creative self-expression be brought into a higher harmony in the whole indivisible process of divine relational self-creation? This would seem to be an eternal and ongoing challenge, with no final static solution or ending point. It is in some sense the fundamental challenge of existence. However, there also seem to be creative living visions and modes of identification and relationship that can help make the more beautiful fulfillments of this challenge possible.

Another fundamental question that may be asked regarding existence is what its inherent aim and purpose is, whence it derives its essential meaning and value. In its unique and irreducible living specificity, the answer to this question seems to be an eternally open and ineluctable mystery, incapable of adequate conception or articulation, eternally unfolding and unbounded. Nonetheless, there again seem to be emerging principles and visions that can help guide the unfolding of this mysterious eternal process. In speaking thus of these broadest

principles, we hover at the threshold where all definitions dissolve into luminous living mystery. Therefore this type of contemplation must of necessity be a kind of poetic meditation, in which the deeper transcendent meanings are discerned and intuited, rather than grasped with narrow and literal conceptual interpretations. In the context of my own contemplation, beauty emerges as among the highest principles guiding and harmonizing the whole process of creation—beauty of divine selfhood, experience and expression; beauty of divine collaboration, Eros, and intimacy; and beauty of divine cosmic creative process, eternally creating new worlds of beauty and mystery for divine self discovery and communion. This broadest conception of beauty is, like all intuitions expressed in words—which ultimately point back to the ineffable mystery—in its fullest essence indefinable, but it is reflected in an elusive sense of beauty that pervades time and cultures in its many shades and variations, and in a mysterious harmony and mutual enhancement of interrelationships between the inseparable elements that constitute existence.

The recognition of beauty as among the highest principles guiding the whole process of creation is among the central insights of Whitehead's mature philosophical and spiritual vision. Thus he states unequivocally that "the teleology of the universe is directed to the production of Beauty" (*AI*, 265) and that "beauty is left as the one aim which by its very nature is self justifying" (*AI*, 266). He also recognizes that beauty is ultimately more important than truth, since a perception can be relatively true and yet not creative of a more beautiful reality, while the value of truth itself is that it leads to and reflects a more beautiful mode of

relationship and creative expression. Thus he asserts emphatically that "Truth matters because of Beauty" (*AI*, 267). Truth nonetheless retains an important secondary value as a means of connecting the relational elements of existence through mutual knowledge and experience in the service of intimacy and creative collaboration. Whitehead therefore poetically describes the power of truth to uncover and elicit deeper understanding and resources for creative engagement. "A grave defect in truth limits the extent to which any force of feeling can be summoned from the recesses of Reality. The falsehood thus lacks the magic by which a beauty beyond the power of speech to express can be called into being, as if by the wand of an enchanter" (*AI*, 283). Thus deeper truthfulness often corresponds and leads to deeper beauty, but where truth and beauty conflict, beauty is the higher divine guiding principle.

Beauty also emerges as the highest guide in the realm of morality and value, in some sense encompassing and subsuming the concept of the good. For what is good is so because it leads to greater spiritual beauty—of selfhood, of relationship, and of creation. As Whitehead explains it, "All order is therefore aesthetic order, and the moral order is merely certain aspects of the aesthetic order" (*RM*, 105). What is generally understood as morally good and right is that which leads to and reflects the most beautiful mode of spiritual relationship with other beings, honoring their sanctity, value, and sensitivity. This is beauty in the realm of relationship, and it is ultimately inseparable from beauty in the realms of selfhood and creativity, for what is most beautiful honors the selfhoods of all beings in their complex creative interrelationships, and the beauty of every being

and pattern of relationship depends upon its participation in the beauty of the whole process of creation. In each of these realms, and in their complex interconnection, what is good and right is what is most beautiful. Whitehead therefore states that "The real world is good when it is beautiful" (*AI*, 268). Thus beauty is a pervasive principle, and morality is an essential dimension of beauty. It could also be argued that all creative activity and all beauty are moral, as well as aesthetic, since all actions and modes of creative relationship have moral dimensions and consequences. In this sense the good and the beautiful, the moral and the aesthetic, are inseparable. Whitehead reflects a similar insight when states that: "Expression is the one fundamental sacrament. It is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace" (*RM*, 131). The creative beauty of existence has a divine moral value and is a sacred reflection of a divine mode of spiritual communion and interrelationship. For this reason, conversely, Steiner observes that "inner experience is the only key to the beauties of the outer world" (*HW*, 22, ¶ 13). All creation is a living symbol for the divine interior meeting that constitutes it and through which it is itself experienced.

Based on all that has been said thus far, the fundamental aim of existence would appear to be the eternal deepening of self-relational creative beauty. As Whitehead describes it, "The essence of power is the drive towards aesthetic worth for its own sake. . . It constitutes the drive of the universe. It is efficient cause, maintaining its power of survival. It is final cause, maintaining in the creature its appetite for creation" (*MT*, 119). However, the extent to which all of creation aligns itself with this higher aim is another issue, as is the challenge of

harmonizing the multitudinous creative impulses toward achievement of this divine aim. Also, what is habitual and practically functional on one level may inhibit creative innovation and the deepening of relational beauty and intimacy on another, while vision and creative activity that is out of harmony with the dynamic relational processes that underlie it may prove to be impractical and therefore destructive. Similarly, there are many possible obstacles that arise from distorted perceptions and mutually inhibiting and destructive modes of relationship. Thus we return to the moral, aesthetic, and practical challenge of harmonizing diverse selfhoods and creative impulses toward achievement of a higher beauty and wholeness.

As we have already seen, what is moral is what honors the relational dynamics, potentials, and sensitivities of each context of creative interaction, having reference to the multiple complex levels of selfhood, relationship, and creative participation being enacted. Thus both what is moral and what is aesthetic should ideally enhance the beauty of the creative participatory process on all of these levels. As Whitehead expresses it, "The selectiveness of individual experience is moral so far as it conforms to the balance of importance disclosed in the rational vision; and conversely the conversion of the intellectual insight into an emotional force corrects the sensitive experience in the direction of morality" (*PR*, 15). Morality has to do with value, and a moral action aims toward and achieves an enhancement of moral and aesthetic values in each situation. However, there can be a discrepancy between moral intentions and outcomes, as intentions may be based on faulty understandings, or they be rendered ineffectual

by circumstances beyond the control of the beings that are attempting to realize them. For this reason, while the achievement of perfect knowledge and skill adequate to all creative situations and challenges is an unattainable ideal, there would seem to be a moral imperative to develop attuned knowledge, awareness, and capacities for relational creative engagement that support and potentiate the formation and achievement of higher creative aims. Ignorance, obliviousness, incompetence, and insensitivity can be both the expressions and contributing causes of moral failures. Developing and implementing moral aims seems to be the primary foundation of moral behavior—along with a fundamental sense of compassion and attuned awareness—and this requires having a sense of importance and value that reflects the complex balance of creative and relational dynamics in a situation.

One way of understanding that which is bad or immoral in a situation, is that which sacrifices a greater good and beauty for a lesser one, thereby tending toward diminution of the total beauty of existence. As Whitehead expresses it, "Evil, triumphant in its enjoyment, is so far good in itself; but beyond itself it is evil in its character as a destructive agent among things greater than itself" (*RM*, 95). This is a very broad definition of evil, and lends itself to many shades and degrees. According to this understanding, good and evil would be relative, and that which is slightly less good and beautiful than a creative alternative would be rendered a relative evil. Again, this relative good and bad, moral and immoral, and good and evil could apply more to intentions or to outcomes, or to some combination of the two. I would argue that on the whole intentions are more

important than outcomes in evaluating the moral character of an action in relation to the agents that perpetrate it, while its moral, aesthetic, and creative value for the whole process of creation corresponds more to its outcome. In practice moral value is derived from the interaction of these two factors, and intention and outcome are at the deepest creative level fundamentally inseparable.

However, the word 'evil', though it can be used in many different ways in different contexts, is usefully distinguished from the broader meaning of the word 'bad' by designating an attitude or action that is characterized by a serious distortion and deficiency of moral sensibility and intention. If it is of the essence of all creative spirit that is awake to its own deepest nature and intentions to seek the highest relational creative beauty, then evil in the more extreme and virulent sense can only arise out of a serious distortion of this intention. Generally this involves a narrow and distorted mode of self-identification, and an embracing of values for the sake of furthering narrow and distorted ends that tends toward diminishing the moral and aesthetic worth of existence as a whole. Thus a deluded, contracted, angry, and paranoid being may come to value cruelty and domination of other beings as values in themselves, regarding love and compassion as weaknesses to be overcome, and may take a positive joy in suffering and destruction as manifestations of its own power over others. This is a more extreme and distorted expression of the broader conception of evil, which involves sacrificing the greater good for the lesser. Such a being would still be motivated at the deepest level by an underlying desire to experience and create beauty, but its perception of what is beautiful is so distorted and so limited that it

tends toward the perpetuation of nearly opposite values, and thereby the undermining of its own underlying and inherent aim. Thus while the most fundamental and underlying existential intention may always be positive, the more proximate goals, values, and intentions may be distorted and immoral. Evil actions flow naturally out of such evil intentions. An action whose aim is entirely positive, but which results in terrible destruction and suffering, cannot be considered evil in the same sense. Such an action is tragic and unfortunate, but not the result of an act of evil.

While most immoral behaviors are expressions of the lesser, rather than the more extreme form of evil, they tend to have in common a narrowness of self-identification and correspondingly limited experience of compassion toward other beings, resulting in a distortion of existential values. Conversely, moral development generally involves widening one's sense of self and identification with the welfare and interests of other beings, and developing values and ways of relating that reflect this wider sphere of care and concern. Jung, Whitehead, and Steiner all come to nearly identical conclusions in this respect.¹⁷⁶ As Whitehead puts it, "The antithesis between the general good and the individual interest can be abolished only when the individual is such that its interest is the general good, thus exemplifying the loss of the minor intensities in order to find them again with finer composition in a wider sweep of interest" (*PR*, 15). This is always a delicate balance, as the good of the whole and its constituent parts are interdependent, and every actual situation involves a complex interaction between multiple levels of selfhood, meaning, and value.

In some sense every being is a unique center of creation, and therefore enjoys a creative potential and moral responsibility that is relative to its own situated mode of relational creative participation. There is a moral value to honoring the authentic spiritual interests and creative potentials of one's own self, despite seemingly contrary teachings in many religions, for the moral value of all selves in their complex creative interrelationships within the whole process of existence is of the essence of morality. However, learning to value every being and dimension of existence in its due measure within a relational creative context is also essential to morality, and this process of evaluation is always relative to perspective. Moral development depends upon expanding and deepening one's perspective and sense of selfhood. Therefore, in order to overcome evil, we must generally help to release beings, including ourselves, from narrow and contracted modes of self-identification. This generally involves overcoming psychological defenses and releasing into deeper patterns of relational connection, based on compassion and shared value and understanding. Therefore it is largely through love and compassion that evil is overcome, and spiritual connection deepened. Steiner reflects this when he states, "In every evil we must seek out the elements that allow us to transform it into good. We will then see more and more clearly that the best way to combat wickedness and imperfection is to create what is good and whole" (*HW*, 104, ¶ 12). Similarly, as Whitehead observes, "The higher forms of love break down the narrow self-regarding motives" (*AI*, 288). Love, spiritual expansion, and moral development therefore tend to evolve together. As scientist and philosopher of evolution Teilhard de Chardin similarly observes, "Love alone

is capable of uniting living beings in such a way as to complete and fulfill them, for it alone takes them and joins them by what is deepest in themselves" (*The Phenomenon of Man*, 265).

As our sense of self expands and our identification with the life and welfare of other beings increases, both our sense of care and our sense of responsibility increase correspondingly. As Steiner notes, "It is then but a small step to the insight that, as a member or organ of humanity as a whole, I am jointly responsible, with all human beings, for everything that happens" (*HW*, 99, ¶ 5). Similarly, our sphere of identification, responsibility, and concern tends to expand in ever widening spheres, beginning with our most immediate experiences and desires in the moment, and expanding out over time to include our future selves, families, intimate communities, societies, humanity in its totality, the biosphere, and the ecology of the entire spiritual cosmos. As Steiner puts it, "This love for humanity must gradually expand into love for all beings, and indeed for all existence" (*HW*, 104, ¶ 12), and "each expansion of our horizon also extends the sphere of our responsibility" (*HW*, 191, ¶ 13). In this way we come to develop a profound living experience of our interconnectedness, and of how our actions and even the life and flow of our consciousness effects other beings and the whole of existence. As Steiner observes, "This brings us once more to the insight that anything we do for our own improvement benefits not just ourselves but also the world" (*HW*, 100, ¶ 6). However, conversely, the harm we do to ourselves and the failure to develop ourselves spiritually also harms the world and the other beings in it. And as just noted, this does not apply only to our gross outward actions, but

to the very inner life our thoughts, feelings, and awareness, which are also part of the shared inner life of all beings and the whole relational creative process of existence. Therefore, Steiner asserts that "the world benefits as much from pure feelings and thoughts as from good deeds" (*HW*, 100, ¶ 6), and that "we must know that what we feel has as much impact upon the world as the work done by our hands" (*HW*, 100, ¶ 6). We are connected to other beings and to the whole at every level of our existence, and all that we do, think, and feel at every moment shapes our shared reality. This is a great responsibility, but it also opens up a great sphere of creative potential, and it can help us to transcend our alienation and existential loneliness and open into a more dynamic and intimate world of spiritual connection and collaboration.

This experience of our interconnectedness and integral identity with the whole process of existence can also give us a sense of the divine mysterious whole, of the sacredness of existence itself, in whatever way we identify or experience it. This is a universal and yet diverse, unique, and ever changing experience, and is at the heart of nearly all spiritual and religious traditions. Whitehead expresses this eloquently in the context of his own experience and vision.

There is a unity in the universe, enjoying value and sharing value. For example, take the subtle beauty of a flower in some isolated glade of a primeval forest. No animal has ever had the subtlety of experience to enjoy its full beauty. And yet this beauty is a grand fact in the universe. When we survey nature and think however flitting and superficial has been the animal enjoyment of its wonders, and when we realize how incapable the separate cells and pulsations of the flower are of enjoying the total effect—then our sense of the value of the details for the totality dawns upon our consciousness. This is the intuition of holiness, the intuition of the sacred, which is at the foundation of all religion. In every

advancing civilization this sense of sacredness has found vigorous expression. It tends to retire into a recessive factor in experience, as each phase of civilization enters upon its decay. (*MT*, 119–120)

Here Whitehead draws on his experience of the beauty of the natural world as an expression of the divine beauty of existence, which is both created and experienced through the deepest living vision of the cosmos, informed by the divine nature. This experience of divine cosmic beauty and sense of the sacred interconnected whole of existence unites us in awe and wonder with all other beings and with existence itself. As all three thinkers observe, this experience and sensibility is fundamental to our spiritual growth and wellbeing, both as individuals, and as members of the earth and cosmic communities. Many of our modern societies and their members suffer deeply from the absence of a deep sense of sacredness and spiritual connectedness, leading to much of the alienation and destruction of the earth that have become characteristic expressions of modernity. To move forward in a positive way, it seems that all of humanity must somehow awaken to this sense of sacredness and interconnectedness, and do so in a way that allows for shared communion and collaboration rather than divisive conflict and enmity. This, it would seem, requires moving beyond dogma and embracing open-mindedness, open-heartedness, and open-spiritedness in a way that allows us to share in the living relational creative process in a conscious, loving, and collaborative manner. Traditional religions, though they have been the means of bringing people together, connecting them with the divine source, and uniting them in spiritual practice, have also tended to create unnecessary division, and distort, limit, and disempower our relationship to the spiritual mystery of

existence—as well as to ourselves and each other. Therefore we seem to be in need of a way of relating spiritually that is based on openness and lived experience, rather than dogma, rigid tradition, and exclusiveness. This need not involve rejection of all religious traditions, which are on the contrary potential sources of tremendous wisdom and beauty in human life, but it does seem to require rejection of the elements of dogmatism, prejudice, and close-mindedness that separate us from the living mystery and from each other.

One important dimension and implication of this vision, which has been central to our previous discussion, is that the divine whole of existence is evolving along with and through the interconnected creative processes of all the beings in it. Therefore, just as we must eventually assume joint responsibility with all other beings for the whole process of creation, so too must we take part in the development and evolution of the divine whole, in whatever way we experience and conceive it. This includes not only the divine totality, conceived here in terms of the divine spirit, *unus mundus*, or *anima mundi*, but also the potentially manifold dimensions of divine being that are integral to this totality, including what is here considered the divine nature, in its paradoxical unity and multiplicity, and the various archetypal beings and forces that permeate the divine creative cosmos. As Jung observes, “There are many spirits, both light and dark. We should therefore be prepared to accept the view that spirit is not absolute, but something relative that needs completing and perfecting through life” (“Spirit and Life,” 336, ¶ 645). Thus in the context of this vision, all beings and all dimensions of existence, regardless of their relative degree of spiritual development and

perfection, are in a constant process of evolution. And since the creative processes, selves, and experiences of all of these beings are relationally united, every being participates in the evolution of the divine totality and each of its integral elements. Therefore in every moment and movement of our being we are participating in the evolution of consciousness and existence as a whole.

In the context of Jung's psychology, and of the integrative vision I am offering here, this means that each individuation process is also part of the individuation process of the entire anima mundi, and that the challenges we face and the developments we achieve are also part of the developmental process of the anima mundi and all of its constituent members. Jung at times describes this incarnational and participatory process in the symbolic language of the Christian tradition, though he does so in the context of a paradoxical and evolutionary vision.

But God, who also does *not* hear our prayers, wants to become man, and for that purpose he has chosen, through the Holy Ghost, the creaturely man filled with darkness—the natural man who is tainted with original sin and who learnt the divine arts and sciences from the fallen angels. The guilty man is eminently suitable and is therefore chosen to be a vessel for the continuing incarnation, not the guiltless one who holds aloof from the world and refuses to pay his tribute to life, for in him the dark God would find no room. ("Job," 460, ¶ 746)

Though we often consider purity and harmony a spiritual ideal, the evolutionary process requires that we move through endless cycles of conflict and integration in the process of harmonizing and deepening the relational creative process of existence. In so doing, we serve not only our own individual developments, but the development of all beings and of the whole process of existence itself. Thus spiritual development requires the courage to move beyond accustomed ways of

being and relating, and evolving our values and behaviors to the constantly transforming needs of the evolutionary process. Rigid adherence to a limited conception of the good can be as morally and developmentally problematic as other forms of egoic contraction, and moving with courage and love into complex and unexplored domains of tension, conflict, and moral ambiguity can have a morally heroic quality. In order to evolve in relationship, our individual and shared values must also evolve together, and we must evolve through conflicts into new and deeper harmonies. This understanding of the integral evolution of all beings, and of the need to pass through conflicts in the course of deepening the developmental process and relational experience of all existence is shared by Jung, Whitehead, and Steiner, though each emphasizes it differently in their respective psychological, metaphysical, and esoteric spiritual domains.¹⁷⁷

The process of opening into deeper communion and collaboration with other beings and the whole creative process of existence also has the potential to bring with it a kind of transcendent peace, which releases one from the type of suffering that afflicts the more contracted modes of egoic identification.

Whitehead again expresses this insight in a way that reflects his personal philosophy and experience.

The Peace that is here meant is not the negative conception of anesthesia. It is a positive emotion which crowns the life and motion of the soul. It is hard to define and difficult to speak of. It is not a hope for the future, nor is it an interest in present details. It is a broadening of feeling due to the emergence of some deep metaphysical insight, un verbalized, and yet momentous in its coordination of values. Its first effect is the removal of the stress of acquisitive feeling arising from the soul's preoccupation with itself. Thus peace carries with it a surpassing of personality. There is an inversion of relative values. It is primarily a trust in the efficacy of Beauty. It is a sense that fineness of achievement is as it were a key unlocking

treasures that the narrow nature of things would keep remote. There is thus involved a grasp of infinitude, an appeal beyond boundaries. Its emotional effect is the subsidence of turbulence which inhibits. More accurately, it preserves the springs of energy, and at the same time masters them for the avoidance of paralyzing distractions. The trust in the self-justification of beauty introduces faith, where reason fails to reveal the details. (*AI*, 285)

In this eloquent passage, Whitehead describes a process and experience that corresponds to various conceptions of enlightenment in different religious and spiritual traditions. Such an experience of enlightenment, or peace, need not be conceived in absolute terms, and there may therefore be numerous ways in which such a peace and transcendent spiritual release may be experienced, and numerous relative developmental levels at which it may be attained. As Whitehead notes, in accordance with many corresponding accounts throughout the world's spiritual literature,¹⁷⁸ such experience move one into a realm that transcends ordinary language and capacities for adequate verbalization and conceptualization. However, as his description suggests, this experience of transcendent peace has a moral and aesthetic dimension. It involves "a quality of mind steady in its reliance that fine action is treasured in the nature of things" (*AI*, 274). Thus it is a kind of moral and aesthetic peace with existence, a relational harmony in which the soul can contentedly rest. Though this need not imply a cessation of movement, differentiation, and change, it opens one to a spiritual mystery and dynamic stillness at the heart of all creation. Steiner describes a similar experience of peace within movement taking place in transcendent spiritual dimensions in which the archetypal beings who shape the visible world are present and active.

In this world where "the archetypes are creative beings," although there is nothing that can be called "resting in one place," there is a peace of a spiritual kind that is totally compatible with active mobility. The spiritual

equivalent of “rest” is peaceful contentment and bliss manifesting in activity rather than inactivity. (*Theos*, 125, ¶ 36, [n])

This paradoxical interrelationship between dynamic creativity and spiritual peace, or movement and stillness, is connected to a similar paradoxical interrelationship between transience and eternity.

The Transient and the Eternal

Some contrast between the transience of the passing world and a sense of the transcendent and eternal lies at the heart of most spiritual and religious traditions—around the world and across time. This sense of a sacred eternal dimension of existence is based on deep spiritual insights, experiences, and intuitions. Jung exemplifies this when reflecting on his own spiritual intimations in his autobiography:

Life has always seemed to me like a plant that lives on its rhizome. Its true life is invisible, hidden in the rhizome. The part that lives above ground lasts only a single summer. Then it withers away—an ephemeral apparition . . . Yet I have never lost a sense of something that lives and endures underneath the eternal flux. What we see is the blossom which passes. The rhizome remains. (*MDR*, 4)

For Jung, as for many others, contact with this seemingly eternal and imperishable realm carried with it the deepest sense of sacredness and transcendent meaning. It was the source of his greatest creative inspirations, and that which stood out as of lasting importance when he looked back upon his life.

In the end the only events in my life worth telling are those when the imperishable world irrupted into this transitory one. That is why I speak chiefly of inner experiences, amongst which I include my dreams and visions. These form the *prima materia* of my scientific work. They were the fiery magma out of which the stone that had to be worked was crystallized. (*MDR*, 4)

However, when this contrast between the fleeting and eternal is literalized, it often leads to irreconcilable dualism and the many philosophical contradictions and difficulties that this entails. Like most of the great mysteries of existence, it seems best understood as a paradox, which must be experienced and intuited, but cannot be comprehended literally in reductive and static concepts. Each of the three central thinkers engaged in this essay addresses this mystery and paradox in the context of his own respective vision, and the emergent integrative vision here being elaborated offers some further speculative reflections in the spirit of openness and exploration.

If existence is itself a dynamic creative process—ever unfolding, never finally completed, never standing still—how can there be a lasting or imperishable dimension? If every element of existence is what it is in its complex relation to every other element, and the whole and all its parts are continually changing, how can any element be preserved from endless and continual change—how can any element be otherwise than ultimately fleeting and evanescent? How can there be any realm that transcends or stands above change and continuous movement? In the spirit of this dynamic perspective Whitehead writes: "One principle is that the very essence of real actuality—that is, of the completely real—is *process*. Thus each actual thing is only to be understood in terms of its becoming and perishing. There is no halt in which the actuality is just its static self" (*AI*, 274). One way of understanding the paradox to which these questions and the experiences that underlie them point is that there are elements of existence that eternally persist through change—not unchanging, but with a

self, relational, and creative continuity that eternally preserves and extends their essence, whose character is thus to be eternally evolved and so preserved. If change is of the essence of all existence, then it is of the essence of all that endures in a meaningful form to persist and evolve through change. Thus even what is preserved in a relatively unchanging form enjoys an eternally fresh and ever transforming existence through its continuous participation in the dynamically open relational creative process. Even what endures changes. Preservation is preservation in and through change. Thus Whitehead writes that "no static maintenance of perfection is possible" (*AI*, 274). This understanding is consistent with a mutually coherent interpretation of the reflections of each of these three thinkers.

This mysterious paradox of the fleeting and eternal is also connected to the mystery of time. Is time simply a human construct, or is it a fundamental dimension of existence? Is time a continuous progression in a single direction, or an emergent and relative dimension of creative processes and how they unfold in their complex relation to one another? Is there a single time, or are there many times? Is there a realm—or are there multiple realms—beyond time, or are there only realms that transcend the parameters of specific emergent time systems? The answers to all of these questions seem to depend on how time is conceived and defined, which opens us once again to the living mystery that underlies these conceptions and definitions. If time is an emergent dimension of the relationship between elements in creative processes, and all creative processes are elements in other creative processes, *ad infinitum*, then time would seem to be infinitely

variant and relative, yet also eternally pervasive and unfolding. There would be infinite different times from infinite different perspectives, and all of these times would be interrelated and belong in some sense to larger and larger time systems—disappearing into the infinitely textured openness of existence, which ripples with infinite time dimensions yet eternally transcends their internal limitations. In this context time can be conceived as a fundamental principle pervading existence, integral to process, and correspondingly varied in its manifestations. According to this understanding, processes would not take place outside of time, but they could transcend the limitations of localized emergent time systems, opening, like these interdependent time systems themselves, into every new temporal dimensions and manifestations.

In this sense time, though relative and infinitely varied, is integral to experience, existence and creativity itself. Thus Whitehead writes that "apart from time there is no meaning for purpose, hope, fear, energy" (*MT*, 101). Time is essential to how creative processes unfold, and generally has a direction—toward a relative future, or the birth of a novel creative reality and experience.

Correspondingly, there is generally a relative past on which creative beings in their relational creative processes draw in the formation of new realities and experiences. Thus Whitehead writes:

The individual, real facts of the past lie at the base of our immediate experience in the present. They are the reality from which the occasion springs, the reality from which it derives its source of emotion, from which it inherits its purposes, to which it directs its passions. (*AI*, 280)

However, if time is relative, and there are many different interconnected time systems emerging within the continuously unfolding creative process, which is

itself both single and manifold, then there is the potential to draw on a multiplicity of different temporal processes and realities in any given creative context, including what might be considered past and future realities from different relational creative vantage points. This is connected to the paradoxical interrelationship between potentiality and actuality. What is actual from one perspective is a creative potential from another, and these perspectives are interdependent and co-constitutive, emerging as relational dimensions of single inclusive relational creative process. In this sense there need not be a single present, but there might be an infinitude of different presents, each with its own unique relationship to the entire open process of existence and its infinite relational processes and time systems. From the context of a creative present, both relatively past and future creative processes emerge as relational fields of creative potential that exist on a continuum of actuality and potentiality. As such they are both resources for creation and creative fields that will inevitably be transformed by the activity of the present creative moment. Thus all creative processes, in all momentary presents, in all emergent time systems, continuously transform one another.

However, it is part of the paradox of time that influence, while multi-directional and mutual, need not be symmetrical. Thus the directionality of emergent time currents within creative processes creates directions and pathways of greater relative influence. In this context a distinction might be drawn between indirect systemic influence, wherein a reality is implicitly changed by a change in the relational field to which it belongs, and more direct interactive or formative

influence, although these distinctions would be relative and provisional rather than absolute. What we do now changes our relative past because the past is a dimension of an open relational reality continuously unfolding through time and process, in which any change in any dimension of that unfolding reality changes the whole and all its parts. In contrast, we change our relative future in a more immediate and direct way, though we also change it systemically, and it is also possible that we might have more direct and immediate influences on the past, as would be the case were time travel proved possible, either in our physical bodies, or in a more subtle psychic form. If it is possible to move fluidly between time systems, then the complexity of our interrelationship with relative pasts and relative futures becomes much greater. In this case, many different multi-directional time currents and systems could be woven into a single creative process, so that there would be layered interacting time currents and systems inherent in a single reality and experience. From this perspective it is tempting to speak of processes as transcending time, or being outside of time, although again it would be more accurate to say that processes transcend the internal limitations of relative emergent time systems. In reality, all such time systems would be interdependent relational dimensions of a more encompassing process, so that they would of necessity open into and pervade one another as internal and integral dimensions. The movement beyond a process or time system is a deepening and evolution of that very process and system. All times and all process are internally related. All times and all processes are eternally transcended and included in the procession of creativity. All dimensions of existence are eternally evolving.

Another paradoxical interrelationship that relates both to the mystery of time and the relationship between the transient and the eternal is that of stillness and change. Many religious and spiritual traditions posit a divine reality that is eternally still and unchanging, beyond the flux of time and motion. This intimation of a transcendent divine stillness at the heart of existence is again based on profound spiritual experiences and intuitions, and is again perhaps better understood as the reflection of paradoxical living mystery than as a literal metaphysical truth. In the context of this vision, I suggest that there is a vanishing point of stillness within all movement, in which there is a relative cessation of all distinction and differentiation, and a sense of boundless openness and bliss. This stillness is present everywhere, within all movement and dynamic process, and all movement and process paradoxically takes place within this stillness and openness. However, rather than being a realm of literal changelessness, apart from the dynamic realm of process, I would suggest that all change and process takes place within it, and that this stillness is a dimension of the relational process of existence, always rippling invisibly with inner activity, and like every element of existence, always different and fresh and unique depending on its relational context within the paradoxical whole of existence. All movement and process would arise from and sink back into this stillness, and would be invisible present within it, so that this stillness, though in a sense continuous and omnipresent, would also be different from every relative internal vantage point. Within this stillness, time, as it is generally conceived and experienced, would also reach a vanishing point into relative timelessness, and yet temporal processes would

continue to arise within the subtle and invisible ripples of process that open into, arise from, and pervade this stillness. Thus all time is pervaded by a dimension of relative timelessness, and timeless stillness by invisible ripples of time, and even the divine stillness of existence is eternally changing and ever new.

Dynamics that resembles this paradox seem to be occurring in the physical universe on multiple levels, which are perhaps manifestations of a single underlying principle. One of these is reflected in the concept of the quantum vacuum, which represents a vanishing point of material density and energetic process, which rather than being literally empty, contains a fluctuating field in which waves and particles apparently bubble in and out of existence like foam on invisible sea waves. (Dittrich & Gies, *Probing the Quantum Vacuum*). Another is the slowing down and virtual cessation of the passage of time as particles approach the speed of light (*Fabric*, 49). From the perspective of the particle travelling at the speed of light, it is theorized that the passage of time ceases, although that particle is still moving through a dynamic energetic field of interacting waves and particles that have their own space-time dimensionality and for whom time is continuously passing. From the perspective of the surrounding waves and particles time is still passing, and the movement of the light speed particle endures for a certain time duration. From the perspective of the light speed particle itself, processes in its environment will have taken place during the period of its light speed movement—time and its related processes of change will have elapsed for its relational environment. Thus there would be an internal vanishing point in which time and movement would theoretically cease, but this

internal stillness and timelessness would be relationally permeated by interacting temporal processes. Changes would be taking place and time would be invisibly elapsing within the field of relative stillness and timelessness.

It also appears that the entire universe is becoming increasingly less dense as it expands, so that if this process continues indefinitely it will eventually approach a vanishing point of density akin to a quantum vacuum. Thus Whitehead writes that:

The universe shows us two aspects: on the one side it is physically wasting, on the other side it is spiritually ascending. . . It is thus passing with a slowness, inconceivable in our measures of time, to new creative conditions, amid which the physical universe, as we at present know it, will be represented by a ripple barely to be distinguished from nonentity. (*RM*, 160)

Here Whitehead suggest that a kind of rarification is taking place, in which the material density of the universe is gradually disappearing into a more subtle spiritual condition.¹⁷⁹ This notion, derived both from theoretical physics and Whitehead's own philosophy, corresponds with Steiner's esoteric account of the evolution of the cosmos. According to Steiner, the entire spiritual cosmos is in a constant process of evolution, and the material conditions we now physically embody and witness in the universe represent a temporary stage in spiritual evolutionary development.¹⁸⁰ Matter is a phase in the development of spirit. For Steiner, this is true on both a microcosmic and macrocosmic level: individual beings undergo physical phases in their spiritual development, as is the case for embodied human beings during this cosmic epoch, and entire cosmic processes undergo physical phases in their development, as represented by the physical dimension of our current universe.¹⁸¹

This developmental process through and beyond physical states corresponds to the paradox of the transient and the eternal with which this section began. For Steiner, the physical body is ephemeral and soon perishes, along with its etheric and astral correlates, which last only a bit longer, but the soul that undergoes physical incarnation is immortal and imperishable, and continues to evolve through successive incarnations and spiritual conditions. The soul grows through each of its embodiments, retaining subtle traces and capacities from all of its incarnations, and the processes and experiences that are integral to them. Thus Steiner writes that "as the keeper of the past, the soul is continually collecting treasures for the spirit" (*Theos*, 68, ¶ 6), and that "the fruits of learning are the abilities we acquire, and in this way, the fruits of our transitory life are imprinted on our immortal spirit" (*Theos*, 80, ¶ 17). However, in speaking of the immortality of the spirit, he does not mean that the spirit does not change, but rather, as discussed before, that it persists and develops through change.

And this immortality can again be conceived on interrelated microcosmic and macrocosmic levels. Every soul is a spark of the divine, ultimately inseparable from the divine totality, yet paradoxically individual and undergoing its own unique process of spiritual evolution. Correspondingly, all souls are interconnected and integral dimensions of the divine totality, and as such their individual developmental processes are interwoven within a macrocosmic development of the spiritual entirety of existence. Therefore, during our physical incarnations we are undergoing both the evolution of our individual souls and participating in the evolution of the entire spiritual cosmos, which is undergoing a

physical phase in its development that will have corresponding spiritual results.

Thus Steiner writes:

Hence, as human beings, we have a double nature: mortal and immortal. Our mortal being is in its final stages, our immortal being is only beginning. But only within the twofold world, mortal and immortal, whose expression is the sense-perceptible physical world, can we acquire the faculties that will lead the world to immortality. Our task is to harvest from the mortal world fruits for the immortal. (*HW*, 199, ¶ 4)

This understanding is fully compatible with Whitehead's understanding of the creative process, which does not require conditions corresponding to those which prevail in our physical universe during this cosmic epoch, and in which past creative conditions and experiences are interwoven into the fabric of the ongoing procession of creativity in a series of prehensive inclusions in concrescent processes.

Similarly, both Whitehead and Steiner conceive of past events and experiences as being preserved in an everlasting form on both microcosmic and macrocosmic levels. For Steiner, each soul preserves the traces of its previous experiences, and all spiritual events and experiences in their interconnected totality are preserved in what he calls the akashic record, or akashic chronicles.

As Steiner explains:

For the moment, it should only be mentioned that as far as spiritual research is concerned, facts about even the most distant past have not disappeared. Once a being has achieved physical existence, the material part of it disappears after the death of its body. However, the spiritual forces that have expelled this bodily element do not “disappear” in the same way. They leave their traces, exact reproductions of themselves, in the spiritual foundations of the world. If we are able to raise our perception from the level of the visible world to the invisible, we ultimately find ourselves face to face with something comparable to a mighty spiritual panorama that records all the bygone processes of the world. These imperishable traces of everything spiritual may be called the

“Akashic record,” if we designate the spiritually lasting element in world events as their Akashic essence, in contrast to their transient forms. (*Outline*, 121–122, ¶ 8)

As this record is continually being added to by new unfolding events and experiences, and it is itself a dimension of the relational creative process to which these unfolding events belong, the subtle relational creative essence of these akashic traces would be transformed by the procession of creativity, but previous events and experiences would be preserved in a meaningful continuity of ongoing experiential process. In this sense also the fleeting becomes eternal, though it never ceases to change and evolve.

For Whitehead, not only does every actual occasionprehend the entire past and include it in a novel creative envisagement, but the consequent nature of God also preserves the entire creative past in a comprehensive and perfecting divine envisagement, allowing every element to be preserved in an ideal harmonious unison with every other.

This final phase of passage in God’s nature is ever enlarging itself. In it the complete adjustment of the immediacy of joy and suffering reaches the final end of creation. This end is existence in the perfect unity of adjustment as means, and in the perfect multiplicity of the attainment of individual types of self-existence. The function of being a means is not disjoined from the function of being an end. The sense of worth beyond itself is immediately enjoyed as an overpowering element in the individual self-attainment. It is in this way that the immediacy of sorrow and pain is transformed into an element of triumph. This is the notion of redemption through suffering which haunts the world. (*PR*, 349–350)

Thus there may be some correspondence between Steiner's notion of the Akashic record and Whitehead's notion of the consequent nature of God,¹⁸² although Steiner's notion of the Akashic record does not directly involve this element of divine harmonization and perfection. For Steiner this redemption of suffering and

perfection of existence are part of the total process of spiritual evolution, which would be reflected in the relationship of the evolving spirit to the formation and experience of its Akashic traces. In the context of this transmuted integrative vision, the divine nature is seen as constituting a paradoxical unity and plurality within the similarly singular and plural *anima mundi*, so that past events and experiences might be preserved and creatively transmuted through a multitude of different creative envisagements, each of which would possess its own unique qualities and balance of internal harmonies and emphases. In this sense, everything that has ever happened in the entire relational creative process of existence is creatively embedded and preserved in the ongoing procession of creativity, but every element is also eternally transforming and evolving. Both Whitehead and Steiner are optimistic about this cosmic evolutionary process, despite its apparent perturbations and the suffering they entail, and Steiner especially sees all of existence as moving toward an inevitable perfection. Therefore he states with confidence that "in the end, we must all appear in harmonious perfection" (*HW*, 201, ¶ 7). If the evolution of existence is eternal, then this perfection must be ever evolving and ever deepening.

Conclusion

We seem to be at a critical juncture in the evolution of humanity, of the biosphere, and perhaps of the entire spiritual creative cosmos. Human self-reflective intelligence and ingenuity is reaping the early rewards of its competitive preeminence and technological mastery, and is also being forced to face the consequences of its selfish and irresponsible misuse of power. We are destroying

the ecological world of natural and spiritual beauty to which we belong as participants before we have had an opportunity to comprehend its deeper nature and our optimal creative role within it, and in so doing are undermining the very foundation that supports us and betraying our fellow spiritual beings. However, this very reflective intelligence and ingenuity has the potential to deepen and enhance our creative participation in existence, allowing us to cultivate wisdom, compassion, and honoring connection with ourselves, our fellow beings, and the living spiritual mystery that pervades and connects us. In order to do this, we must assume a more spiritual attitude toward existence itself, seeking wisdom before instrumental knowledge, compassion and understanding over defensive control, and spiritual intimacy and beauty over power and domination.

This in turn requires that we develop a living vision of existence that honors its sensitive relational depths and pervasive spiritual mystery, opening us to deeper self-awareness and more honoring modes of creative participation with our fellow beings and within the sacred whole of existence. We must realize that we are shaping reality together at every moment—with our actions and through the evolving movements of our consciousness—sense that, as Steiner says, "in the act of knowing one is within the being of things" (*Auto*, 85), and take responsibility for this in our moment to moment awareness and relationships. We are thus challenged to awaken to the deeper spiritual and creative potentials of our nature, and of the creative spiritual reality to which we belong, because, as Steiner explains, "we can truly work on the earth only if we share in those worlds where creative forces are concealed" (*HW*, 175–176, ¶ 4). With increasing knowledge

and power comes increasing responsibility and the need for ever deepening spiritual maturity and wisdom. As Jung prophetically announced, “The only thing that really matters now is whether man can climb up to a higher moral level, to a higher plane of consciousness, in order to be equal to the superhuman powers which the fallen angels have played into his hands” (“Job,” 460, ¶ 746). If we do not do this we will destroy and diminish much of the spiritual and creative beauty that has evolved over billions of years, and betray the sacred trust of our fellow beings. Though this transient life be a passing phase in an eternal spiritual process, what we do now and at every moment has consequences that ripple through eternity. Thus we are challenged to live with love, wisdom, and beauty at every moment, deepening love and intimacy, rather than suffering and estrangement, creating an eternally evolving paradise of creative collaboration and communion, rather than an eternal hell of agony and despair.

Existence itself is a great creative venture, and as Whitehead observes, “Adventure rarely reaches its predetermined end” (*AI*, 278). Correspondingly, “Only the adventurous can understand the greatness of the past” (*AI*, 279) and bring this wisdom to the courageous and sensitive shaping of the future. We have the potential to live most beautifully out of our highest and most beautiful creative visions, allowing these visions to shape our creative participation and simultaneously be transformed by them in an ever deepening spiral of creative evolution. We live most beautifully through cultivating and inhabiting a space of spiritual openness and receptive collaboration with our fellow beings and the spiritual mystery of existence, eternally guided in our collective evolution by

love, wisdom, and beauty. As Steiner proclaims, "This is the mystery of all future evolution: that our knowledge and everything we do out of a true understanding of evolution sow seeds that must ripen into love. The greater the power of the love that comes into being, the more we will be able to accomplish creatively on behalf of the future" (*Outline*, 396–397, ¶ 11). And we, as the divine actors in this unfolding drama, are both the creators and the recipients of this future, eternally discovering ourselves in new forms of divine creative relationship and spiritual communion.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Since you alone are the guiding power of the universe and without you nothing emerges into the shining sunlit world to grow in joy and loveliness, yours is the partnership I seek . . . great goddess.

—Lucretius¹⁸³

And if man's life is ever worth the living, it is when he has attained this vision of the very soul of beauty.

—Plato¹⁸⁴

We are in the midst of a momentous phase in human and planetary development. The power we have to affect the world and all the beings in it brings with it tremendous responsibility and creative potential. It is essential that we develop a wisdom and awareness commensurate with our knowledge and capacity for influence. To do this we are challenged to engage our experience and the world in an integral, holistic, and reflective manner, which honors the multiple dimensions of experience, selfhood, and relationship that constitute our shared reality. In engaging this process, we are called on to reflect and participate sensitively in relationship, perceiving the fundamentally collaborative, ethical, and aesthetic character of all of our experiences and actions. Specifically, this requires that we not only learn to think together but also feel together, and that we open to the interior life of other beings with whom we participate in a sensitive and sacred spiritual ecology. To do this deeply and consistently, we are called upon to develop openness and compassion, and a capacity to sense our shared selfhood while honoring our unique, mysterious, and interdependent individualities. Ultimately, to be whole and live harmoniously together, we must

be guided by love. Awakening to ourselves as creators, as sensitive experiencing beings, and as participants in intimate relationship, we can strive for spiritual beauty in every dimension of our lives, and in all of these strivings, we can be guided by love, wisdom, and beauty. In this way we have the promise of participating in a process of spiritual evolution that is a continuous deepening into beauty.

ENDNOTES

¹ Heraclitus, *Fragments*, 45, [71]

² Aurelius, *Meditations*

³ Rumi, *Essential Rumi*, 37

⁴ Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 31

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Tolkien, *Tree and Leaf*, 76

⁷ Novalis, *Novalis*, 25 [17]

⁸ O'Donohue, *Anam Cara*, 9

⁹ Rilke, *Rilke's Book of Hours*, 99

¹⁰ While the concept of extension, in its barest sense, merely indicates a scheme of potential relationships that emerges in relationship to actuality, extensiveness in our cosmic epoch generally implies spatiotemporal dimensionality and position. Thus a completed entity has extension in so far as it has a determinate place in the extensive continuum, and this generally means that it also has definite spatiotemporal dimensionality and position, though as Whitehead makes clear, it is theoretically possible to have extensive entities that are not definable in terms of shape, dimensions, or measurability, the basic qualities which define our cosmic epoch (PR, 66–67).

¹¹ The entire creative procession can be conceived as a paradoxically single and manifold open creative whole, so that events and even cosmic epochs cannot be fully abstracted from the entire process of creation. If this is true, then events never achieve a final completed form but continue to evolve with the ongoing procession of Creativity, and this would include events that we ordinarily consider to belong to the past. All of existence would be evolving together, and relatively future events would continue to shape relatively past events insofar as they shape the creative context of their ongoing unfolding. The character of the causal relationship between past and future events would be non-symmetrical, as the influence of the past on future events is more direct, transmitting its form and mode of feeling more directly to the concurring entities that proceed it, while the influence of later entities on those of the past would be more indirect, shifting the creative context and mode of universal creative feeling through which the past entity is continually transformed and re-enlivened in the ongoing procession of Creativity. While this conception seems to violate our usual notion of the past as

completed and unalterable, it emerges naturally from a conception of the world as a continual process of creative transformation. In such a conception, there is no place for the past to exist in a fixed form and nothing to separate it from what proceeds it. If one asks the question, "where is the past," the answer would be that it lives in the eternal creative procession, which is always changing. If nothing is ultimately separate from everything else, then all elements of existence continually change in their shifting relationship to each other and to the evolving whole of the creative procession. All beings, times, and processes are mutually shaped and eternally co-enlivened.

¹² Some of these criticisms of Whitehead's notion of eternal objects have been addressed by Charles Hartshorne, in his essay, "Whitehead's Idea of God" (*Philosophy of ANW*, 555–559). The current position I am adumbrating extends these criticisms in several respects. Firstly, I am questioning the existence of any "pure potentials" whatsoever. Even the truths of geometry and mathematics cannot be said to exist in a fixed sense, apart from their relation to the world of process, though they may extend in a relatively coherent and unchanging form throughout creation. The relativity and dependence of such abstract generalities is of the subtlest character, though like all other forms they are what they are by virtue of their relationship with the shifting totality of existence, and thus assume different subtle attributes depending on their context. Secondly, I am suggesting that the primordial nature of God is itself subject to change, and that there is no place in existence where potentiality could exist independently of shifting actuality. Lastly, I am suggesting that actuality and possibility exist on a dynamic continuum, in which each necessarily partakes of the reality of the other: There is no strict ontological distinction between potentials and actualities, but rather a difference in degrees of realization.

¹³ Whitehead describes this element of creative process in terms of the formation of actual entities, but does not see it as taking place in time, in so far as the derivation of the subjective form of an entity involves an operation of the mental pole in the selection of eternal objects that are outside of time (PR, 69). I have challenged the notion that eternal objects exist outside of time, and therefore rather than seeing the operation of the mental pole as taking place outside of time, I see the entire formative process of an actual occasion as a unique temporal creative process, which forms the basis for derivative emergent time currents and systems. From the perspective of examining material processes in the physical world, most temporal processes will conform to the dominant extensive space-time structures, but in relation to inner creative process and experience there might be a multiplicity of alternative time currents and pathways that transcend and weave through physical space-time. Insofar as there are non-physical realms and dimensions of existence, this more open and fluid conception of time is of greater relevance.

¹⁴ See the volume *Time* in the Hackett Readings in Philosophy series for a survey of the diversity of ways in which prominent thinkers and authors have experienced, conceived, and depicted the passage of time.

¹⁵ The three time conceptions are: (1) Processional time, which moves forward from occasion to occasion; (2) Extensive time, which emerges within the spatiotemporal dimensionality of the extensive continuum; and (3) Concescent time, which is internal to the formative process of each occasion. Whitehead discusses all three processes, but he does not conceive of the third in terms of time. I am here suggesting that the concescent process can be understood as constituting a different type or dimension of time. Conceptions 1 and 3 together constitute the time of actual occasions and creative process—and may prove to be inseparable, insofar as concescent processes are not really separate—while conception 2 constitutes an emergent aspect of this underlying temporal creative process, governing spatiotemporal relationships in the physical world.

⁷ However such a picture of the essential fluidity of creative process in turn requires us to explain the relative crystallization of form which results in a world of observable distinctive entities, and how such distinctive entities both form and endure through time. This can still be understood in terms of a continuous pulsating process of concescence, in which waves of increasingly greater centralization of feeling and coherent identity takes place, and in which an infinitude of possibilities is configured into an increasingly distinctive pattern of actualization, relative to which the greater part of these possibilities are reduced to a vanishing point of actualization without ever completely ceasing to exist within the creative continuum. This process of centralization is here conceived as relative, rather than absolute, and as manifesting at multiple levels, so that at the broadest level no point of ultimate separation and crystallization is ever achieved, and some measure of fundamental openness and inter-connective unity is always maintained.

The relatively distinctive entity still has as its broadest base the dynamic openness of creativity, and never achieves an entirely fixed and unalterable form, devoid of process, though it may give rise to manifestations, such as societies of enduring objects, that appear fixed and separate from a limited vantage point. Such distinctive patterns of individualization still shape the ongoing process of creativity, informing the development of new patterns in which essential features of their individuality endure, thus perpetuating a meaningful continuity of form. The relatively enduring patterns which emerge provide the stability of structure observable in the world around us, and provide a context of relative stability in relation to which more fleeting creative events take place. Thus both fluid creative interconnection and the emergence of relatively individualized and distinctive

entities are aspects of a single creative process, without either constituting an entirely independent principle.

¹⁷ The first way of understanding this idea is that the past exists within the present forms of creativity—within the present occasions and their complex interrelationships, or within the life of creativity as it weaves in and through the current dynamic structures of the extensive continuum. Therefore, the past has no static or fixed existence, and is always being transformed within the present, or continuing to live in a continuously but subtly transfigured state of process. The question as to the present existence of the future is even more subtle and complex, and could be understood in several ways. One way of seeing it, which preserves a subtle but important distinction between the ontological status of the present and future, is based on the notion, which I am suggesting in this paper, that there is a dynamic continuum of actuality and possibility, in which each partakes of some measure of creative actuality, no matter how faintly, or how nearly approaching the vanishing point of non-existence. Within this context the life of creativity and the extensive continuum can be seen as continuing indefinitely into the future with some measure of creative actuality, while the present still preserves its status as the temporal center of creative formation. Therefore it would be possible to speak of the future as possessing a measure of actual reality, beyond the realm of mere abstraction, while also maintaining a meaningful dimension of indetermination that renders the dynamic creative freedom of the present intelligible. This way of conceiving the actuality of the future has some bearing on David Ray Griffin's discussion of pre-cognition in his introductory essay in *Archetypal Process* (*AP*, 34–36), since it would then be intelligible to speak of prehending the future and of the future influencing the present. This would establish the possibility of recursive influence between all dimensions of creative life, rendering the concrescent process more dynamically open. The concept of the present could also be re-defined as a dynamic center of concrescence, so that there might be a multiplicity of such centers, and past, present, and future would be relative to perspective.

¹⁸ "Just as the river where I step is not the same, and is, so I am as I am not" (Heraclitus, *Fragments*, 51, # 81).

¹⁹ As Whitehead notes (*AI*, 186–187), both conceptions of reality in terms of atomicity and continuity have long histories, and each seems to describe some fundamental truth of existence. Whitehead's scientifically informed understanding of creativity as manifesting in discrete pulsations is fundamental to his conception of actual entities. Alexandra David-Neel and Lama Yongden, in their *The Secret Oral Teachings in Tibetan Buddhist Sects*, discuss a similar duality of vision in the Tibetan tradition, in which both pulsation and continuous becoming are variously described as the fundamental characters of existence. For Whitehead, these two aspects of reality are exemplified in his philosophy by actual entities and creativity itself. In the context of the vision I am presently exploring, reality

can also be seen as exemplifying both elements, although pulsation is here understood as an element within a larger process of creative fluidity. Actual entities can be conceived both as coalescing into specific forms, whose physical dimension conforms to space-time contours, and as existing eternally beyond these limited manifestations, continuously transforming with the dynamic creative activity from which they are inseparable.

²⁰ Whitehead's own description suggests that the distinction between an actual entity and a prehension may be subtle, and perhaps more a matter of degree than a clear-cut distinction. "A prehension reproduces in itself the general character of an actual entity: it is referent to an external world, and in this sense will be said to have a 'vector character,' it involves emotion, and purpose, and valuation, and causation. In fact, any characteristic of an actual entity is produced in a prehension. It might have been a complete actuality; but, by reason of a certain incomplete partiality, a prehension is only a subordinate element in an actual entity" (PR, 19). In the context of the modifications to Whitehead's concepts that I am here suggesting, it becomes possible to see prehensions and actual entities as existing on a continuum, in which they may be more or less coherent expressions of emerging selfhood and unity of feeling.

²¹ Towards the very end of *Process and Reality*, Whitehead discusses the insurmountable difficulties that arise when the static and fluent dimensions of existence are attributed separately and exclusively to different entities. "But if the opposites, static and fluent, have once been so explained as separately to characterize diverse actualities, the interplay between the thing which is static and the things which are fluent involves contradiction at every step in its explanation" (PR, 346). Ironically, this difficulty seems to arise in relationship to his characterization of the primordial nature of God and the eternal objects as static amid a world of fluency and creative flux. It seems clear from this discussion that he means to avoid this very contradiction. His subsequent comment seems to reflect on this very situation, potentially expressing a realization that his own living intuition and philosophical vision may not be fully expressed by his linguistically articulated metaphysical system. "Such systems have the common character of starting with a fundamental intuition that we do mean to express, and of entangling themselves in verbal expressions, which carry consequences at variance with the initial intuition of permanence in fluency and fluency in permanence" (PR, 347). My hope is that the current discussion of these paradoxical dynamics may help to clarify the philosophical intuition underlying his written formulations.

²² Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 178

²³ Le Guin, *The Farthest Shore*, 36

²⁴ This duality of both personality and vision seems to have been present in some form from the beginning of Jung's life, as he himself recounts in his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*.

²⁵ The most open discussion of his more explicitly spiritual and metaphysical ideas and experiences takes place in *The Red Book*, in his letters, and in his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, written in collaboration with Aniela Jaffe. For a description of an opening that took place late in Jung's life, following his illness and an associated near death experience, see note twelve.

²⁶ Jung does occasionally make unguarded and unqualified statements of a metaphysical character, especially in his more personal letters, but to the end of his life he never ceases to make qualifications and impose limitations on such claims in other contexts.

²⁷ Freud was not the first psychological thinker to discuss the concept of the unconscious, but he was among the first to articulate a rigorous, empirically grounded psychological theory in which the unconscious played a central role. He is also the psychologist who has had the greatest influence in introducing the concept of the unconscious into popular discourse. For a discussion of the history of the unconscious previous to Freud's development of psychoanalysis, see L. L. Whyte's *The Unconscious Before Freud*.

²⁸ Freud distinguished between a preconscious portion of the psyche, whose contents are just beneath the threshold of awareness and might pass easily into consciousness, and an unconscious, whose contents are generally unavailable to consciousness, either due to repression, or because their contents are deeply buried and have no ready bridge to conscious experience. Jung does not emphasize this distinction, nor is it necessarily as clear a distinction as Freud suggests, for there are many gradations and forms of consciousness, and as Jung points out, the accessibility of psychic contents depends on their shifting relationship both to the ego complex and to the overall constellation of the psyche, both of which are always in flux ("Psychological Foundations," 306,, ¶ 580).

²⁹ For a brief treatment of the concepts of archaic vestiges and phylogenetic inheritance in Freud's writings, see: *Totem and Taboo* and *The Ego and the Id* (32–35).

³⁰ According to this more limited conception, the archetypes are directly operative only in the shaping of psychic life, and express themselves in the external world only indirectly, through the mediation of human perception and activity. In many of his later writings, however, Jung greatly expands his conception of archetypes. At their broadest, archetypes are seen as both psychoid and transgressive,

meaning that they have properties analogous to those possessed by psychic agencies, i.e. consciousness, intentionality, and self-determination, and that they transcend the subject-object duality and are operative both in the shaping of psychic life and in the shaping of the world around us.

³¹ In his earliest formulations, Jung's conception of the collective unconscious does not differ greatly from the conception suggested by Freud in his few remarks concerning the possibility of a phylogenetic inheritance, containing vestiges of the feelings, impulses, thought forms and psychic structures of our ancestors. In *Symbols of Transformation*, where Jung first discusses the concept openly, he describes the collective unconscious primarily as a universal substrate in the human psyche, in which reside "the archetypes of the collective unconscious" (158, ¶ 224). These he in turn describes as "the archaic heritage of humanity" (*Symbols*, 178, ¶ 259), as representing "an inborn disposition to produce parallel thought formations" (*Symbols*, 158, ¶ 224), and as "psychic structures common to all men" (*Symbols*, 158, ¶ 224), corresponding to the "'pattern of behavior' in biology" (*Symbols*, 158, ¶ 224).

However, Jung afforded his conception of the collective unconscious—and of the archetypes that are its primary contents—a much greater importance and centrality in his understanding of the human psyche than did Freud, and was struck from the beginning by the sense of numinosity and mystery that tended to accompany its manifestations, as well as by its capacity to stimulate profound psychological regeneration. For example, in the same work quoted above, he describes contact with the mother archetype as revealing the "primordial images and primitive forces that underlie all life and are its nourishing, sustaining, creative matrix" (*Symbols*, 413, ¶ 640)—the archetypes themselves.

³² The first presentation of the concept of synchronicity that appears in Jung's collected works is in a brief talk given in 1951 at the Eranos conference and later published in written form as "On Synchronicity," followed the next year by the more extensive monograph, *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle*. While it is his most substantial written treatment of the subject and provides rich material for analysis and reflection, his discussion in the monograph is somewhat confused and stands in need of conceptual clarification.

Much of the confusion in his discussion arises in relationship to his formulation of synchronicity in terms of an "acausal connecting principle." Rather than implying a breakdown in causality and the need to conceive an "acausal connecting principle," synchronistic phenomena seem to point toward another type of causation which is not bound by the physical laws that ordinarily govern

efficient causation. In the context of synchronicity and Jung's psychological vision, some form of archetypal causation seems to suggest itself. Richard Tarnas, in *Cosmos and Psyche* (78, 81–82), suggests that Aristotle's conceptions of formal and final causation provide the basis for a more nuanced and encompassing understanding of causality—particularly as it pertains to the phenomena of archetypes and synchronicity—supplementing the efficient and material conceptions that tend to monopolize scientific discourse and thinking. Archetypal causation can be seen as potentially operating according to both of these principles: in the shaping and informing of events through dynamic patterning and creative conception, and in the configuration of processes toward the achievement of an envisioned aim or the furtherance of a developmental process. In each case, the archetype has the potential to function as an element and expression of a larger creative process and vision, participating in a kind of holistic causation, in which the activity and nature of the individual archetype is informed by the larger whole in which it participates.

³³ Synchronicity is often first experienced as the expression of a mystery that transcends our ordinary mode of experiencing the world. Some deeper meaning or intimation of a spiritual patterning and presence suggests itself, as a brief glimpse through a sudden opening in the fabric of reality. If heeded closely, synchronistic experiences often seem to carry a specific message, addressing a particular situation, or suggesting a direction of individual or collective development. Jung provides several striking examples of such synchronicities in his monograph on this subject. The case of the golden scarab ("On Synchronicity," 525, ¶ 982), which comes from his own clinical practice, is especially illustrative.

As an individual develops a relationship to such experiences and learns to heed them as he or she would the symbolic messages in a dream, synchronicities become a source of ongoing guidance and revelation, as well as an expression of the divine beauty and creative intelligence of the living cosmos. For a more complete description of a typical sequence of development in relationship to synchronistic experience, see Richard Tarnas' discussion in *Cosmos and Psyche* (55–56).

³⁴ Jung's first reference to the transgressivity of the archetypes is in his monograph on synchronicity, "Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle." In *Answer to Job*, Jung is unequivocal in his assertion of the transgressivity of the archetypes: "It not only seems so, it simply is so, that the archetype fulfils itself not only psychically in the individual, but objectively outside the individual" ("Job," 409, ¶ 648). His language in this passage is significant, as it suggests a conception of archetypal causation which he attempts to avoid in his monograph on synchronicity, where he speaks instead of an "acausal connecting principle." As discussed in footnote nine, this formulation is problematic, and belies an

understanding of archetypal causation that is apparent in many of Jung's other statements.

In his late essay, *On the Nature of the Psyche*, published in a revised form two years after his monograph on synchronicity, Jung describes the shift in his treatment of the archetypes in terms of their "psychoid" nature, indicating that though they manifest psychically and are "psyche like" in their behavior, their nature is transcendent to the psyche and not necessarily bound by its limitations.

In my previous writings I have always treated archetypal phenomena as psychic, because the material to be expounded or investigated was concerned solely with ideas and images. The psychoid nature of the archetypes, as put forward here, does not contradict these earlier formulations; it only means a further degree of conceptual differentiation, which became inevitable as soon as I saw myself obliged to undertake a more general analysis of the nature of the psyche and to clarify the empirical concepts concerning it and their relationship to one another. ("Nature of Psyche," 215, ¶ 419)

This discussion assumes a more limited conception of the nature and scope of the psyche. To the extent that the term 'psyche' is also used to designate what is here being conceived as the greater collective unconscious, or anima mundi, the distinction between what is psychic and psychoid loses something of its meaning and relevance. To some extent this way of speaking serves as a bridge between his more reductive and his more expansive conceptions.

³⁵ Jung's own relationship with the archetypes and their creative dynamism evolved throughout the course of his life. In several places Jung describes his writings as emerging out of deeper impulses in the collective unconscious. In his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung describes a powerful creative opening that occurred following his heart attack and associated near death experience:

After the illness a fruitful period of work began for me. A good many of my principal works were written only then. The insight I had had, or the vision of the end of all things, gave me the courage to undertake new formulations. I no longer attempted to put across my own opinion, but surrendered myself to the current of my thoughts. Thus one problem after the other revealed itself to me and took shape" (*MDR*, 297).

Here Jung describes not only a freer relationship to the expression of his own thoughts, but also a surrender of his ego to the currents of inspiration and illumination that were informing his vision. Understood in the light of his more expansive understanding of the archetypes, this surrender to the current of his thoughts also represents a profound receptivity and openness to the revelations of the archetypal domain, or to the anima mundi.

³⁶ Jung reflects in several places on the possible unity and identity of the physical and psychic dimensions of existence: “Also, we do not know whether what we on the empirical plane regard as physical may not, in the Unknown beyond our experience, be identical with what on this side of the border we distinguish from the physical as psychic” (*Mysterium*, 537, ¶ 765). In addition to his conception of the psychic and physical as manifestations of an underlying psycho-physical continuum, Jung also entertains the possibility that what we regard as physical is merely a limited expression—or perception—of a psychic or spiritual reality.

The apparent interconnectedness of psychic and physical processes itself suggested to Jung that they might be polarized expressions of some larger reality: “That even the psychic world, which is so extraordinarily different from the physical world, does not have its roots outside the one cosmos is evident from the undeniable fact that causal connections exist between the psyche and the body which point to their underlying unitary nature” (*Mysterium*, 538, ¶ 767). The phenomenon of synchronicity seems to have served as a further indication of the interconnectedness and malleability of these processes, and therefore of the probability of their fundamental unity (“Nature of Psyche,” 215, ¶ 418).

³⁷ One of Jung’s primary concerns throughout the monograph on synchronicity is the nature of space and time and the possibility of their alteration or disappearance as factors constituting and limiting the unfolding of events. Jung suggests that space and time are hypostasized concepts, or useful psychic categories that have become fixed through continuous repetition, but do not exist independently of human consciousness. He sees the success of the J.B. Rhine experiments as evidence that time and space are psychically relative and under certain conditions can be “reduced almost to vanishing point” (“Synchronicity,” 435, ¶ 840). This he explains in terms of the effects of the archetypes, which are not bound by space-time, and configure the consciousness of the observer in such a way that it reflects the structure of physical events. This is possible only so far as the collective unconscious, the realm of the archetypes, includes within itself the very structures that are reflected in consciousness, so that as Jung says, “the psyche observes, not external bodies, but *itself*” (“Synchronicity,” 436, ¶ 840).

Jung also reflects in a footnote at the end of the monograph on the idea that what we experience in succession in ordinary experience exists in simultaneity in “the mind of god” (“Synchronicity,” 518, ¶ 967 [n. 17]). Taken in its most literal sense, this might seem to imply a static picture of reality, in which all creative manifestation is eternally completed and no true novelty is possible. This static picture can be avoided through seeing all creative manifestation as co-existing in the openness of the *unus mundus*, not in a literal simultaneity, but in a dynamic inclusiveness of interrelated creative processes and dimensions. The *unus mundus* would therefore be shaped, inflected, and expressed through various spatiotemporal dimensions and processes, but not bound to any limited mode of manifestation. It would be the home and meeting place of all such dimensions and processes, which would be related in complex ways that do not conform to our

ordinary understanding of spatiotemporal relationality. This would allow for continuous transformation and creative origination in all dimensions of being, so that the openness of the unus mundus, rather than being static, would be eternally and inexhaustibly filled with its own creative dynamism.

Looked at within the context of the unus mundus, the anima mundi, and the archetypes, physical reality can be seen as a pattern within a pattern, itself archetypally constituted, and subject to the creative dynamism of the larger patterns and forces which it expresses. Synchronicity then appears as an emergence of this dynamism through physical form in a way that makes something of its hidden dimensions and capacities recognizable. Some form of creative patterning and intelligence seems to shape and organize physical processes so as to show —more or less intentionally—something of its hidden face.

³⁸ The unus mundus, in representing the ultimate unity of existence, is also a realm of paradox and mystery, since it not only contains within itself all oppositions, but also encompasses the paradoxical identity of unity and multiplicity, or unity and relationship, through whose interplay all oppositions arise.

³⁹ Jung provides one of his most direct and substantive discussions of the relationship between archetypes and individual consciousness in *Answer to Job*.

But since, as I have showed in the introduction, the archetypes in question are not mere objects of the mind, but are also autonomous factors, i.e., living subjects, the differentiation of consciousness can be understood as the intervention of transcendently conditioned dynamisms. In this case it would be the archetypes that accomplish the primary transformation. But since, in our experience, there are no psychic conditions which could be observed *through introspection* outside the human being, the behavior of the archetypes cannot be investigated at all without the interaction of the observing consciousness. Therefore the question as to whether the process is initiated by consciousness or by the archetype can never be answered; unless, in contradiction to experience, one either robbed the archetype of its autonomy or degraded consciousness to a mere machine. We find ourselves in best agreement with psychological experience if we concede to the archetype a definite measure of independence, and to consciousness a degree of creative freedom proportionate to its scope. There then arises that reciprocal action between two relatively autonomous factors which compels us, when describing and explaining the processes, to present sometimes the one and sometimes the other factor as the acting subject.” (“Job,” 470, ¶ 758)

⁴⁰ If the psycho-physical continuum possesses no absolute vanishing point where the psychic element totally ceases, then the whole of the unus mundus is pervaded

by psychic life, no matter how diffusely. This would also mean that physicality possesses a psychic dimension, and vice versa. However, the extent to which a substantial psychic element is present in all physical forms remains an open question in Jung's writings, and it therefore makes sense to conceive the *unus mundus* in terms which preserve its paradoxical character rather than assimilate it one-sidedly into the domain of the psychic. The same principle applies more generally to the characterization of the *unus mundus* in polarized terms, although the term itself achieves distinctive meaning through its emphasis on the unitive character of existence.

Though Jung frequently referred to the term *anima mundi*, especially in his alchemical writings, he never employed it himself as an enlargement of his concept of the collective unconscious. Richard Tarnas' discussion in *Cosmos and Psyche* suggests the appropriateness of this shift in terminology, which is reflective of the more expansive and mystical dimension of Jung's vision.

⁴¹ Some of Jung's most explicit and in-depth descriptions of the autonomy and freedom of the archetypes are presented in *Answer to Job*.

These *entia* are the archetypes of the collective unconscious, and they precipitate complexes of ideas in the form of mythological motifs. Ideas of this kind are never invented, but enter the field of inner perception as finished products, for instance in dreams. They are spontaneous phenomena which are not subject to our will, and we are therefore justified in ascribing to them a certain autonomy. They are to be regarded not only as objects but as subjects with laws of their own. From the point of view of consciousness, we can, of course, describe them as objects, and even explain them up to a point, in the same measure as we can describe and explain a human being. But then we have to disregard their autonomy. If that is considered, we are compelled to treat them as subjects; in other words, we have to admit that they possess spontaneity and purposiveness, or a kind of consciousness and free will ("Job," 362, ¶ 557).

If the archetypes are understood to function beyond the individual psyche and to belong to a larger psychic totality, this autonomy belongs in some measure to the archetype itself, and in some measure to the *anima mundi*, of which it is both an element and an expression.

Although it is possible to imagine that archetypes are intelligent and autonomous agents in a larger reality which is itself otherwise devoid of intelligence and intentionality—analogous to the way the scientific-materialist perspective tends to conceive the role of human and biological intelligence within the physical world—the degree of interpenetration and precise orchestration manifested by the archetypes suggests that they are better understood as creative tendencies and thought forms belonging to a more encompassing psychic totality. The nature of this larger psychic reality remains an open question and a mystery, and we must perhaps beware of envisioning it naively along the lines of a human

personality. However, Jung, again drawing on Alchemical and Gnostic traditions, frequently discusses the individual psyche as a microcosmic reflection of the larger macrocosm in which it is embedded, implying that many of the structures and qualities which characterize the individual psyche are reflections of larger cosmic processes. The character and extent of individual unity possessed by the anima mundi remains a relevant and important question, which will be discussed towards the end of this essay in terms of the concept of *cosmic individuation*.

⁴² The apparent autonomy, purposiveness, and creative freedom at times expressed by the archetypes and the collective unconscious—in dreams, in synchronicity, and in the configurations of the individuation process—along with the relative independence demonstrated by the complexes of the personal unconscious, suggested to Jung that the “unconscious” is only unconscious from the perspective of a limited conscious center of awareness, and might better be conceived as a more encompassing psychic reality, possessed of multiple levels and centers of awareness.

In some of his later writings, Jung is more explicit in describing the openness and inclusiveness of the collective unconscious. In "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," for instance, he writes: “No, the collective unconscious is anything but an incapsulated personal system; it is sheer objectivity, as wide as the world and open to all the world” ("Archetypes," 22, ¶ 46).

The collective unconscious could be conceived in an expanded form that would be identical to what I am here calling the anima mundi, or in a number of other ways that are less encompassing and more specific. I am inclined to follow Jung both in allowing the term to have several senses and in understanding it primarily as that which lies beyond the directly observable field of the conscious personality—and beyond what he defines as the personal unconscious—thereby preserving it as a term which reflects a relationship to the observing conscious subject. According to this understanding it is by definition more limited than the anima mundi, which can be experienced immediately and vibrantly and includes the observing subject.

In his more epistemologically limited formulations, Jung conceives of the archetypes as transcendental factors that do not admit of direct experience. I am here suggesting a more holistic understanding of the archetypes, as both transcending and living within the forms of their manifestation. Therefore in statements in which Jung refers to the collective unconscious as the domain of the archetypes, it makes sense either to replace this concept with that of the anima mundi, or to accord to it a similarly expansive understanding.

⁴³ Jung provides one of his clearest descriptions of the self and its relationship to consciousness in his essay, "The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious."

So far as our present experience goes, we can lay it down that the unconscious processes stand in a compensatory relationship to the conscious mind. I expressly use the term ‘compensatory’ and not the

world 'contrary' because consciousness and unconsciousness are not necessarily in opposition to one another, but complement one another to form a totality, which is the *self*. According to this definition the self is a quantity that is supraordinate to the conscious ego. It embraces not only the conscious but also the unconscious psyche, and is therefore, so to speak, a personality which we *also* are. It is easy enough to think of ourselves as possessing part-souls. Thus we can, for instance, see ourselves as a persona without too much difficulty. But it transcends our power of imagination to form a clear picture of what we are as a self, for in this operation the part would have to comprehend the whole. There is little hope of our ever being able to reach even approximate consciousness of the self, since however much we may make conscious there will always exist an indeterminate and indeterminable amount of unconscious material which belongs to the totality of the self" ("Relations," 177, ¶ 274).

This understanding of the self depends for its interpretation on the nature and scope of the unconscious. According to the more expansive understanding that I am exploring in this essay, the self could potentially encompass both the *anima mundi* and *unus mundus*.

In some of his later writings Jung makes this more expansive conception of the self explicit: "What is meant by the self is not only in me but in all beings, like Atman, like Tao. It is psychic totality" ("Good and Evil," 463, ¶ 873). As a paradoxical principle that informs and unites individual and cosmic self-hood it is thus reminiscent of the identity of atman and Brahman in *advaita vedanta*. According to this more expansive conception, the self is also seen as transcending the subject-object division, or the separation between psyche and world: "But this self is the world, if only a consciousness could see it. That is why we must know who we are". ("Archetypes," 22, ¶ 46).

⁴⁴ See the previous note for a discussion and quotations illustrating Jung's more expansive conception of the self and its relationship to what are here being described as the *anima mundi* and *unus mundus*.

⁴⁵ Since Jung himself did not employ either of these terms or their associated concepts in a technical capacity in his psychology, I am here exploring the relationship between these terms and concepts in accordance with the logic of this emerging vision.

⁴⁶ As Jung notes at the end of his main exposition in *On the Nature of the Psyche*, "the self comprises infinitely more than a mere ego. . . . It is as much one's self, and all other selves, as the ego" ("Nature of Psyche," 226, ¶ 432).

⁴⁷ Though Jung does at times use the word Eros, like the term *anima mundi*, it is not employed in any systematic way in his psychology. I am introducing this as a

fundamental principle of this emerging vision, and see it as implicit in Jung's more expansive conceptions and formulations.

⁴⁸ For an insightful and nuanced discussion of the multidimensionality and multivalence of archetypes, see Richard Tarnas' *Cosmos and Psyche*, particularly the chapter "Archetypal Principles" (pp. 80–87).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Within this understanding, the narrower, exclusively psychological conception of the archetypes can be seen as indicating the more limited and regular activity of the archetypes in shaping psychic life. These are the consistently operative and numerous repeated patterns of thought, feeling, and perception that are common to nearly all human life, themselves expressions of the transcendental archetypes whose range and variability of expression is far greater, and which are capable of autonomous activity and creative origination which transcend these habituated psychic forms.

⁵¹ In addition to the comprehensive discussion of archetypes by Richard Tarnas alluded to in note 25, see within this his synthetic distillation of Hillman's dynamic description in *Re-visioning Psychology* (*Cosmos and Psyche* 83).

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ This understanding is based on the transgressive conception of the archetypes articulated by Jung in his later writings and informing this emerging vision, with its correspondingly expansive conceptions of the self, unus mundus, and anima mundi, and corresponding participatory epistemology. Thus the more philosophically complex and nuanced understanding of the archetypes articulated in this section is implicit in Jung's most expansive conceptions and has been more fully elaborated by subsequent thinkers, notably James Hillman and Richard Tarnas. Here I draw on Jung's own broadest conceptions, the insights of these later thinkers and expositors, and the logic implicit in the emerging philosophical and spiritual vision that is the primary subject of this essay.

⁵⁴ This last point is based upon my own reasoning, and applies as well to the unus mundus and anima mundi themselves. Though such a reality is paradoxical and encompassing, it is part of this paradoxical nature that it is both an emergent unity and irreducible multiplicity, and that both of these dimensions of its nature have a particularity that is distinctive and could imaginably be otherwise. Though each of these interpenetrating realms of existence—the archetypes, the unus mundus, and the anima mundi—can be understood as encompassing a dimension of infinite potentiality, this potentiality is also inseparable from the dimension of actuality and exists with it on a dynamic continuum that is characterized by a distinctive

pattern of creative activity in which possibilities are not realized with uniform intensity.

⁵⁵ “The transcendental psychophysical background corresponds to a ‘potential world’ in so far as all those conditions which determine the form of empirical phenomena are inherent in it” (*Mysterium*, ¶ 769). Jung conceived of this “transcendental” background as in turn structured and permeated by the archetypes. Though Jung tended to conceive of this transcendental background in Kantian terms as inaccessible to direct perception and in that sense unknowable, in the context of the participatory epistemology being explored in this essay such transcendence is better understood in terms of the transgressivity of the archetypes, indicating their unboundedness in relation to divisions between the physical and psychic spheres, as well as their transcendence of the limitations of ordinary conscious perception. Insofar as the self is understood as similarly transgressive—pervading the anima mundi and unus mundus at its broadest levels—this transcendent potential realm need not be beyond the boundaries of perception.

⁵⁶ For a comprehensive discussion of Jung's conception of complexes, see his essay “A Review of the Complex Theory.”

⁵⁷ Jung describes the incomplete and fragmentary nature of consciousness, and the role of the ego as a central organizing complex in his essay, “The Psychological Foundation of Belief in Spirits.”

Common to all three types of phenomena is the fact that the psyche is not an indivisible unity but a divisible and more or less divided whole. Although the separate parts are connected with one another, they are relatively independent, so much so that certain parts of the psyche never become associated with the ego at all, or only very rarely. I have called these fragments ‘autonomous complexes’, and I based my theory of complexes on their existence. According to this theory the ego-complex forms the centre characteristic of our psyche. But it is only one among several complexes. The others are more often than not associated with the ego complex and in this way become conscious, but they can also exist for some time without being associated with it (“Psychological Foundations,” 307, ¶ 582).

This understanding of the ego is made explicit earlier in the same essay: “the ego is a psychic complex of a particularly solid kind” (“Psychological Foundations,” 306, ¶ 580).

⁵⁸ While initially Jung had conceived of complexes as relatively fixed in their form and mode of activity, his more comprehensive understanding—according to which the ego is the central ordering complex around which individual

consciousness is constellated—attributes to them a potential complexity, dynamism, and creative autonomy which allows the psyche itself to be comprehended as a kind of higher order complex, powerfully constellated around the archetype of the self.

⁵⁹ Jung described the capacity of complexes to transmit themselves from one individual psyche to another. He also observed interpersonal and collective complexes which had the power to affect a multitude of individuals, as was strikingly manifested by the phenomenon of Nazism during World War II. On a more abstract level, many disparate particulars can be seen as participating in a larger pattern of identity, which in turn participates in still larger patterns, ad infinitum. Higher order complexes can still be specific and relatively localized, for instance in a particular geographical region, or time period, while uniting a multiplicity of more specific complexes. At the broadest level, archetypes can be seen as cosmic complexes, potentially encompassing many levels of more specific and localized complexes, but never losing the unique pattern of particularity that constitutes their relational essence.

⁶⁰ For an extensive discussion of the possessive character of complexes, see "A Review of the Complex Theory."

⁶¹ James Hillman similarly comments on the possessive character of archetypes: "But one thing is absolutely essential to the notion of archetypes: their emotional possessive effect, their bedazzlement of consciousness so that it becomes blind to its own stance." (Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, xiii).

⁶² See for instance Jung's discussion of "Archetypal personalities" in the essay "Conscious, Unconscious, and Individuation" ("Individuation," 286–287, ¶ 517–519) and his discussion of the figures of the unconscious in "The Psychological Aspects of the Core" ("Core," 186–187, ¶ 313–315). Archetypal contents often express themselves in individual and personalized ways in the personal unconscious, in some sense constituting a *complexio oppositorum*, or synthesis of opposites. For this reason, the strict boundary between the personal and collective unconscious seems to be illusory. They are distinguishable only in an abstract and relative sense.

⁶³ Despite the limitations of Jung's initial observations and formulations, there is no reason to assume that the anima and animus are only present in individuals possessing the opposite sex to that of the psychic figure. It seems more likely that there may be masculine and feminine—and perhaps also androgynous and alternatively sexed—figures in every individual psyche, and that the relative power and prevalence of a given figure is complexly determined by both the extent of unintegrated psychic material belonging to that archetypal configuration and by the nature and power of the individual's relationships with the archetypal forces which those figures embody. A number of later psychologists have

explored these dynamics, building on and developing Jung's foundational conceptions and formulations. See for instance Hillman's book, *Anima: An Anatomy of a Personified Notion* (1985), and Howard Teich's *Solar Light, Lunar Light: Perspectives in Human Consciousness* (2012).

⁶⁴ For a basic overview of the shadow, anima, animus, and other "figure of the unconscious," see the essay "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious."

⁶⁵ See Jung's 1957 work, *The Undiscovered Self*, as well as his discussion of collective development in the chapter "Late Thoughts" of his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*.

⁶⁶ See Jung's essay "The Transcendent Function."

⁶⁷ This relationship of mutuality between archetype and individual means that the archetype too may be constrained in its development and expression by a lack of receptivity and collaborative openness on the part of the individual selves in whose lives and developmental processes it participates.

⁶⁸ Jung quotes Nicholas of Cusa as "defining God himself as a *complexio oppositorum* ("Nature of Psyche," 207, ¶ 406).

⁶⁹ Jung describes this process as enacted in mythological terms both in Christianity ("Structure of Psyche," 156, ¶ 336) and in the Ancient Greek tradition, the latter being described in terms of a personal vision of the nuptial consummation of Hera and Zeus experienced after his recovery from a major heart attack late in his life (*MDR*, 156).

⁷⁰ In relation to the concept of the archetypes and their "transcendental nature," the epistemological barriers which Jung's thinking imposes on the possibility of their apprehension can be overcome by realizing that the archetypes are actually present within the archetypal images and phenomena through which they manifest, as well as in the forms of subjective perception through which they are apprehended. Thus rather than remaining eternally hidden behind a world of appearances, they both reveal themselves and are elaborated and transformed through the process of manifestation and apprehension.

⁷¹ Jung's conception of the psychic relativity of space and time, and of the possibility of reducing distance in space and time to a vanishing point, which he uses in explaining synchronicities and paranormal phenomena, also provides a basis for an expanded epistemology. For if there are immediate connections between spatially and temporally disparate subjects and events, which are constitutive of integral identities and processes, rather than simply interactions between separate entities, real knowledge may arise from such interconnections

without crossing any barrier between subjective appearances and independently existent realities.

⁷² Jung's expanded understanding of the archetypes and the anima mundi allows for a multidimensional, relational, and co-creative knowing, in which knowledge and wisdom are both fostered and disclosed through the cultivation of sensitive and honoring modes of engagement with the living wisdom of the cosmos and the relationships that collectively constitute it. Jung himself engaged in this very form of inquiry and knowing throughout his life, cultivating relationships both with the "figures" of the "unconscious," and with the mysterious wisdom of the "unconscious" itself. His expanded understanding of the archetypes, the anima mundi, and the phenomenon of synchronicity allowed him to cultivate a sensitive awareness to the patterns of creative intelligence that were present all around him, so that his awareness could be informed by the behavior of animals, the lapping of waves, and the stopping of a watch, as well as by the messages of dreams, the disturbing symptoms of his patients, and the intimations of inspired vision. For a concise and eloquent exposition of Jung's relationship to synchronistic patterning in his own life and practice, see the chapter "Synchronicity and Its Implications" in *Cosmos and Psyche*.

⁷³ Jung uses the term absolute knowledge in a different way in describing psychic knowledge that transcends the limitations of ordinary sensory perception ("Synchronicity," 489, ¶ 912). I am not here denying the possibility of such knowledge, but I am indirectly suggesting that the word absolute is inappropriate and misleading for describing it. In denying absolute knowledge, I am denying knowledge that is complete and certain, and without the limitations of subjective vantage point and situatedness. Certainty is admitted only as a subjective experience and intellectual or emotional stance, without any adequate epistemological foundation.

⁷⁴ See the subsequent discussion and quotation on page 43 of this essay.

⁷⁵ As a psychologist, Jung speaks of the need for myth to give meaning and orientation to human life. The vision that I am here exploring is a version of what Jung describes as his own containing myth. In this context he allows himself to employ a "mythic language," which more profoundly expresses the living character of such a spiritual vision than does the sterile and depersonalized language of scientific discourse. The primary religious "mythology" that Jung draws on is Christianity. In quoting Jung's mythic expression of his psychological and spiritual vision, I am not intending to situate the vision I am exploring in this paper in a specifically Christian framework, but rather to allow space for the deeper dimensions of this vision to shine forth through the resonant mythic language in which it finds expression in Jung's writings. In the context of this essay, the cosmic selfhood of the anima mundi plays the role that 'God' does in this and subsequent quotations drawn from his autobiography, *Memories*,

Dreams, Reflections. This conception of the anima mundi seems to encapsulate the paradoxical understanding of an imperfect and evolving divine being suggested in these quotations, while divesting it of unnecessary Christian associations.

⁶⁵ I intentionally use the phrase 'modern man' to indicate the role that patriarchal thinking and domination have played in this schism-ing and oppression, under which feminine wisdom has often suffered and for which it cannot be expected to share equal responsibility.

⁷⁷ Le Guin, *The Farthest Shore*, 66–67

⁷⁸ Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, 382

⁷⁹ Others have noted and explored this complementarity and convergence: for instance, see the introductory essay in the volume, *Archetypal Process*, edited and with an introduction by David Ray Griffin, and based on a conference devoted to exploring this convergence. The approach in the present article differs from the similarly-themed introductory essay by David Ray Griffin in that it explores an emerging vision that involves significant transformations of each of their respective visions. That volume as a whole contains a diversity of exploratory perspectives and served as one of the inspirations for this current project.

⁸⁰ I have explored transformed visions of both Whitehead's and Jung's philosophies in separate articles: Santilli, "Flux and Openness," and Santilli, "Mystery, Paradox and The Cosmic Soul."

⁸¹ Though Jung frequently referred to the term anima mundi, especially in his alchemical writings, he never employed it in a consistent technical capacity as an enlargement of his concept of the collective unconscious. Both James Hillman ("Anima Mundi," 1982) and Richard Tarnas (*Cosmos and Psyche*, 2006) employ this term in a ways that suggests the appropriateness of this shift in terminology, which is reflective of the more expansive and mystical dimension of Jung's vision. In a previous essay on Jung, "Mystery, Paradox and The Cosmic Soul," I explore a philosophical vision that interrelates the conceptions of the anima mundi, unus mundus, and self that are employed in this current essay. Consult that essay for more in-depth treatments and explorations of these concepts in the context of Jung's psychology and writings.

⁸² For Whitehead's own original account of the primordial and consequent natures of God, see the final chapter, "God and the World," of *Process and Reality*.

⁸³ See the quote on page 7 relating Jung's conception of archetypes to his conception of the unus mundus.

⁸⁴ See *Cosmos and Psyche*, 83, for Richard Tarnas' synthetic distillation of Hillman's dynamic description of archetypes in *Re-visioning Psychology*.

⁸⁵ For a nuanced discussion of the multidimensionality and multivalence of archetypes, see Richard Tarnas' *Cosmos and Psyche*, particularly the chapter "Archetypal Principles" (80–87).

⁸⁶ Though both Jung and Whitehead at times use the word Eros, as with the term *anima mundi* in Jung's writings, neither of them employ it in a systematic way. I am introducing this as a fundamental principle of this emerging vision, and see it as implicit in both Whitehead's and Jung's more expansive conceptions and formulations.

⁸⁷ Each of these terms represents a mode of the integration of opposites, drawing on what Jung refers to as the transcendent function, or the ability to combine seemingly opposed elements in a transcendent synthesis ("Transcendent Function," *CW* 8). For a contextual application of each of these integrative terms, see Jung's autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, pages 338, 339, and 294 respectively.

⁸⁸ See especially his exploration of a collective or divine developmental process in "Answer to Job" (*CW* 11) and the chapter "Late Thoughts" in his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*.

⁸⁹ For a relatively detailed account of the character and process of *concrecence*, see *Process and Reality*, 40–42.

⁹⁰ In Whitehead's philosophy there is a distinction both between actual entities and prehensions—or the feelings of the objectified forms of other entities which are constituents of the forming entity—and between actual entities and *nexūs*—or groups of entities that are not informed by a unity of feeling and subjective aim. While I find this to be valuable as a practical distinction, in the vision I am here exploring the archetype of the Self is understood as pervading all of existence along a continuum, so that there is no clear ontological distinction between individual entities and various distinctive formations of creativity, but rather a difference in degree of unity and constellated self-organization.

⁹¹ For a discussion of the potential autonomy of complexes, see "A Review of the Complex Theory" (96, ¶ 200–201).

⁹² As noted earlier in the discussion of the *anima mundi* and the consequent nature of God, I do not conceive of the entirety of existence as existing in a fully unified or perfected form, so that the *anima mundi* contains relatively contrary and unharmonious elements in the fullness of its nature, and the divine nature, which

is itself both a paradoxical unity and multiplicity, constitutes an idealized dimension of the anima mundi, whose integration within the greater totality is only partial. It seems to be the fundamental nature of existence to be a paradoxical unity and multiplicity, and to possess a boundless creative dynamism that expresses itself through limitless patterns of creative self-relationship. However, the deeper potentials for harmony, beauty, and depth of intimacy—which are themselves inexhaustible—have yet to be fully realized in the creative process, at least as it appears in the visible universe pervaded by human discourse and participation. The exploration of these potentials and the creative process of their fulfillment is the primary subject of this essay, and will hopefully be in some measure illuminated by the discussion that follows.

⁹³ What was said earlier regarding the provisional and contextual characterization of the emergent principles applies just as strongly to this elaboration of values. This list of values is neither absolute nor exhaustive, and the number and selection of terms used represents an emergent aesthetic symmetry that is expressive of an organic conceptual process. The values of existence are infinite, irreducible, and ineffable.

⁹⁴ Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 63

⁹⁵ Virgil, *Georgics, IV*: 149–227

⁹⁶ O'Donohue, *Anam Cara*, xvii

⁹⁷ Le Guin, *The Farthest Shore*, 66

⁹⁸ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 52

⁹⁹ Novalis, *Novalis*, 25, [17]

¹⁰⁰ I have written three previous papers, each devoted to an exploration and creative re-visioning of the respective philosophies of Whitehead, Jung, and Steiner, and a fourth exploring the integration of the emergent visions of Jung and Whitehead. This paper broadly synthesizes all of these previous papers and their corresponding visions. The first two essays have already been published, and the second two are in process of revision and submission for publication. These essays are all listed in the work cited page.

¹⁰¹ Of course, there are also important differences between their philosophies, but the focus in this essay is on their convergence and complementarity, and especially on the integration of the transformed visions that emerge out of my engagement with each of them.

¹⁰² For a detailed description of the sources and course of development of Whitehead's thought, see Victor Lowe's extended essay, "The Development of Whitehead's Philosophy," in the compendium volume *The Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead*.

¹⁰³ The most intimate account of these methods and processes is provided in Jung's autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, and in respect to his private introspective and imaginative psychological process, in *The Red Book*, published posthumously in 2009.

¹⁰⁴ Steiner influenced so many different fields that it is difficult to find a single adequate account of his diverse achievements. Biographers Gary Lachman, in his *Rudolf Steiner: An Introduction to his Life and Work*, and Henry Barnes, in his *A Life for the Spirit: Rudolf Steiner in the Crosscurrents of Our Time*, both provide accounts of his important contributions and the development of his thought, while one must seek out more specialized works, for instance on Waldorf Education, Biodynamic Agriculture, or Medical Anthroposophy, for detailed accounts of his contributions to these respective fields.

¹⁰⁵ The word clairvoyant, which means literally, "clear seeing", does not here denote omniscience or infallibility of perception, but refers to the ability to see clearly into subtle spiritual dimensions of reality that are usually excluded from sensory perception and ordinary waking consciousness.

¹⁰⁶ See his autobiography, *Chapters in the Course of My Life: 1861–1907*, for a spare description of his early spiritual experiences and development.

¹⁰⁷ See Whitehead's many incisive reflections in the first chapter of *Process and Reality*, entitled "Speculative Philosophy," as well as the preceding quotations in this section of the current essay.

¹⁰⁸ Jung employs this epistemological stance without critically examining it throughout much of his formal writing, though he at times makes statements that would seem to go beyond it, especially in his personal and less formal writings. Thus he often distinguishes between archetypes and the archetypal images and ideas to which they give rise, and speaks of the archetypes as inaccessible to direct perception. In describing the collective unconscious, he states that: "It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents" ("Concept of the Collective Unconscious," 43, ¶ 90). He here assumes that the archetypes are not themselves present in their manifestations but stand invisibly behind them, whereas in the context of this essay the archetypes are understood as permeating the creative world and being active in and through their manifestations.

¹⁰⁹ Numerous examples of such philosophical speculation could be adduced, both from Jung's personal writings and from his later theoretical publications. For instance, in the second to last footnote of his monograph on synchronicity, *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle*, Jung suggests that "what happens successively in time is simultaneous in the mind of God" ("Synchronicity," 518, ¶ 967).

¹¹⁰ This critique is especially marked in his introductions to both his monograph on synchronicity and his autobiography, and is implicit in many of his later writings. For Jung, it is essential to recognize that the psyche is itself a great mystery and cannot be taken for granted as a familiar object or reduced to material processes in accordance with the trends of scientific materialism. Jung reinforces this in his comprehensive later essay *On the Nature of the Psyche*, when he states that: "All the same, every science is a function of the psyche, and all knowledge is rooted in it. The Psyche is the greatest of all psychic wonders and the *sine qua non* of the world as an object" ("Nature of Psyche," 169, ¶ 357). The philosophical vision implicit in his later writings, which are collectively one of the bases for this essay, diverge considerably from the reductive scientific materialist paradigm.

¹¹¹ See "Synchronicity," especially pages 515–516, ¶ 964–965.

¹¹² For a concise exposition of Jung's more spiritually sensitive and responsive therapeutic and investigative methods, including his relationship to synchronistic patterning, see the chapter "Synchronicity and Its Implications" in Richard Tarnas' *Cosmos and Psyche*.

¹¹³ *Psychological Types*.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Chapter X.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Chapter X.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 495, ¶ 856.

¹¹⁷ This need to adjust his methods of investigation to the requirements of spiritual research is a motif in many of his writings, including his most comprehensive volume, *An Outline of Esoteric Science*. For a more intimate description of the development of his approach, see his autobiography, *Chapters in the Course of My Life*.

¹¹⁸ Steiner makes this clear in many places, as when he states that, "Only because sense-perceptible things are nothing other than condensed spirit beings can we human beings—who can lift ourselves up in thought to the level of spirit beings—think about and understand them" (*Theos*, 149, ¶ 54).

¹¹⁹ While Steiner refers to his early philosophical work, translated as *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path: A Philosophy of Freedom*, as expressing his foundational epistemology, comments contained in the addenda to that work and in his autobiography, as well as scattered among his later esoteric writings, suggest a development in his epistemological position. I have explored this in a recently completed unpublished essay, entitled "Collaboration, Intimacy and Evolution: Exploring Steiner's Epistemology of Spiritual Perception." In this later emergent epistemological perspective the limitations of conscious perception are more clearly illuminated.

¹²⁰ Jung gave an early exposition of his theories and findings on the archetypal symbolism contained in dreams and mythology in his book length work *Symbols of Transformation*, originally published in 1912, and continued to research these symbols and develop his theories for the remainder of his life.

¹²¹ Feeling in a broad philosophical sense is especially central for Whitehead, although he does not emphasize emotion more strongly than the other two thinkers.

¹²² Steiner describes this existence of a living occult language and the process of learning to decipher it in the following manner:

This occult script is inscribed forever in the spiritual world. Once the soul has attained spiritual perception, the script is revealed to it. But we do not learn to read this occult alphabet in the same way that we learn to read an ordinary human alphabet. Rather, it is as if we grow toward clairvoyant knowing, and while we grow, there develops in us—as a soul faculty—a force impelling us to decipher, as if they were the characters of a script, the events and beings of the spiritual world present before us. (*HW*, 72, ¶ 9)

¹²³ Jung expressed this concern increasingly in his later writings, often addressing the interconnected plights of the individual and society. See for instance, *The Undiscovered Self* and the chapter "Late Thoughts" in his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*.

¹²⁴ This approach and concern is powerfully expressed in his 1957 work, *The Undiscovered Self*, as well as in his autobiography.

¹²⁵ See the sources cited in the previous endnote.

¹²⁶ Though Jung made use of this term, familiar to him from his explorations of neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, and alchemy, in referring to a cosmic or world soul, he did not himself systematically employ it as a replacement or enlargement of his

later expanded conception of the collective unconscious. Richard Tarnas suggests the appropriateness of this terminological shift in *Cosmos and Psyche* (57), especially when referring to the more expansive and mystical conception of a spiritual cosmos implicit in Jung's mature philosophical and spiritual vision. I have employed the term in this way in two previous papers—on Jung, and on Jung and Whitehead—that are in certain respects foundational to the present one (See first endnote and reference section).

¹²⁷ The phenomenon of collective development is described in the last quotation, and the role of consciousness in the evolution of collective development, re-conceived here in its broadest form as the evolution of the anima mundi, is also central to Jung's analysis in "Answer to Job."

¹²⁸ As Jung expresses it, "Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to oneself" ("Nature of Psyche," 226, ¶ 432).

¹²⁹ Thus Jung continuously urges us to embrace our own individuation processes and become mature psychological individuals. Characteristically, he writes:

We can say that individuals are equal only in so far as they are unconscious—unconscious, that is, of their actual differences. The more unconscious a man is, the more he will conform to the general canon of psychic behavior. But the more he becomes conscious of his individuality, the more pronounced will be his difference from other subjects and the less he will come up to common expectations. Further, his reactions are much less predictable. This is due to the fact that an individual consciousness is always more highly differentiated and more extensive. But the more extensive it becomes, the more difference it will perceive and the more it will emancipate itself from collective rules, for the empirical freedom of the will grows in proportion to the extension of consciousness. ("Nature of Psyche," 160–161, ¶ 344)

¹³⁰ See the quotations in the body of the text below, and also his many references to the need for spiritual development in *How to Know Higher Worlds* and *Outline of Esoteric Science*.

¹³¹ Thus Steiner writes:

We come to the insight that we are causing damage to the whole world and all the beings in it when we do not develop our own forces in the right way. If we ravage our life by losing our connection to the supersensible world, not only do we destroy something within us, something that can ultimately drive us to despair as it dies off, but our weakness also creates a hindrance to the evolution of the entire world in which we live. (*Outline*, 24, ¶ 19)

¹³² See for instance his references to history and literature throughout the first part of *Adventures of Ideas*, and his appeal to religious experience and intuitions in *Religion in the Making* and *Modes of Thought*.

¹³³ All of these themes are treated in his magnum opus, *Process and Reality*, and they are treated independently or in combinations in a number of other works, including both scientific and speculative writings from the middle period of his career, and the important later philosophical works listed in the reference section of this essay.

¹³⁴ See the quotation and discussion at the end of page 13 of this essay.

¹³⁵ For an in-depth discussion of the limitations of scientifically reductive accounts of reality, see Whitehead's reflections in the chapter "Nature Lifeless" in *Modes of Thought*. For an examination of this broader tendency towards conflation of prevailing scientific worldviews with genuine scientific methods of investigating reality, see Thomas Kuhn's discussion of paradigms in *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*.

¹³⁶ See Jung's autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, for detailed accounts of his psychiatric work and personal experiences and their effect upon his development and thinking. See also the recently published autobiographical accounts of his inner development in *The Red Book*.

¹³⁷ This endeavor is especially apparent in Jung's monograph on Synchronicity, *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle*, which he originally published in 1952 in an independent volume, *The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche*, along with an essay by physicist Wolfgang Pauli. However, the influence of then recent developments in theoretical physics is evident in much of his writing during the latter decades of his life.

¹³⁸ Jung discusses his personal containing myths, or the myths by which he lives, in his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, as well as the important role that such shared mythologies play on a collective level.

¹³⁹ In his 1947 essay, *On the Nature of the Psyche*, published in a revised form in 1954, two years after his monograph on synchronicity, Jung describes a development in his treatment of the archetypes in terms of what he refers to as their "psychoid" nature, meaning that though they manifest psychically and are "psyche like" in their behavior, their nature is transcendent to the psyche and not bound by its limitations.

In my previous writings I have always treated archetypal phenomena as psychic, because the material to be expounded or investigated was

concerned solely with ideas and images. The psychoid nature of the archetypes, as put forward here, does not contradict these earlier formulations; it only means a further degree of conceptual differentiation, which became inevitable as soon as I saw myself obliged to undertake a more general analysis of the nature of the psyche and to clarify the empirical concepts concerning it and their relationship to one another. ("Nature of Psyche," 215, ¶ 419)

While this discussion assumes a more limited conception of the nature and scope of the psyche, to the extent that the term 'psyche' is also used to designate the greater collective unconscious, or anima mundi, the distinction between what is psychic and psychoid loses something of its meaning and relevance. This way of speaking serves as a bridge between his more reductive and his more expansive conceptions.

¹⁴⁰ See the section "Method of Proof" in the essay "The Concept of the Collective Unconscious" for a brief account of methods for accessing and identifying archetypal manifestations.

¹⁴¹ Though Jung himself did not employ the term trans-conscious in a technical capacity in his psychology, I here introduce it as a way of suggesting that there may be levels of awareness that are beyond rather than beneath ordinary consciousness. For as Jung notes, the unconscious is only unconscious from the perspective of ordinary waking consciousness, and is not "necessarily unconscious of itself" ("Structure of Psyche," 334, ¶ 641).

¹⁴² For a discussion of complexes, see Jung's essay, "A Review of the Complex Theory," in *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, CW 8.

¹⁴³ Jung describes the individuation process and the integration of conscious and unconscious psychic elements throughout much of his written work. In the following quotation from *On the Nature of the Psyche*, Jung describes this process as also encompassing the development of a reflexive relationship to the archetypes. "The achievement of a synthesis of conscious and unconscious contents, and the conscious realization of the archetype's effects upon the conscious contents, represents the climax of a concentrated spiritual and psychic effort, in so far as this is undertaken consciously and of set purpose" ("Nature of Psyche," 210–211, ¶ 413). For an exploration of the relative creative autonomy of the archetypes, see Jung's discussion of the archetypes in "Answer to Job," *CW 11*.

¹⁴⁴ Jung's discussions of his various therapeutic techniques are scattered throughout his collected works, and there is also a significant body of secondary work consolidating and extending his methods. See his autobiography, *Memories*,

Dreams, Reflections, for examples of how he employed these methods in actual therapeutic situations, as well as in his own life.

¹⁴⁵ See his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, and *The Red Book*.

¹⁴⁶ See *Theosophy*, 126–128, ¶ 38–39.

¹⁴⁷ In referring to the philosophies of each thinker during this second section of the essay, I refer to the versions of their respective visions that emerge out of my selective engagement in the context of this integrative synthesis. Alternative versions could be extracted that would emphasize different stages or trends in their thinking and development. Where my conception of various elements diverges from their corresponding original conceptions, these differences will be made clear.

¹⁴⁸ Drawing on his ongoing explorations of alchemy and Gnosticism, Jung frequently referred to this larger reality which encompasses not only the physical and psychic dimensions, but all polarities and oppositions, as the *unus mundus*, or one world ("Conscience," 452, ¶ 852).

¹⁴⁹ Whitehead describes Creativity as "the universal of universals," which cannot be adequately characterized because "all characters are more special than itself" (*PR*, 21).

¹⁵⁰ Though the term 'Eros' is at times employed by each of these thinkers in a secondary and non-technical manner, its use and definition here are based on the logic implicit in their respective philosophies and this emerging vision, and not on their specific manners of employing it.

¹⁵¹ In his essay, "The Psychological Foundation of Belief in Spirits," Jung describes the incomplete and fragmentary nature of consciousness, and the role of the ego as a central organizing complex.

Common to all three types of phenomena is the fact that the psyche is not an indivisible unity but a divisible and more or less divided whole. Although the separate parts are connected with one another, they are relatively independent, so much so that certain parts of the psyche never become associated with the ego at all, or only very rarely. I have called these fragments 'autonomous complexes', and I based my theory of complexes on their existence. According to this theory the ego-complex forms the centre characteristic of our psyche. But it is only one among several complexes. The others are more often than not associated with the ego complex and in this way become conscious, but they can also exist for some time without being associated with it ("Psychological Foundation," 307, ¶ 582).

¹⁵² Whitehead describes the fundamental "categories of existence" in chapter 2, page 22 of *Process and Reality*. In addition to actual occasions, prehensions, and nexūs—or groupings of occasions—there are a number of derivative notions, which do not have direct bearing on this discussion but fall into the broad description to which this note corresponds. Eternal objects, which are discussed and reconceived in this essay, are also included among the eight basic categories of existence.

¹⁵³ For a lucid exposition of the many ways in which archetypes can be conceived and experienced, see the section "Archetypal Principles" in Richard Tarnas' *Cosmos and Psyche*, with special attention to the discussion on page 84.

¹⁵⁴ Though Jung at times used both of these terms, they are here employed in a more prominent and technical manner, with meanings that have been elaborated in the context of this emerging vision.

¹⁵⁵ See my later more in-depth treatment of this topic on pages 72–73 of this essay for relevant quotations and discussion

¹⁵⁶ See *Process and Reality*, page 13 and Part 5, chapter 2, "God and the World."

¹⁵⁷ Whitehead analyzes his own "philosophy of organism" as being more akin to certain strains of Indian or Chinese religious thought than their Western counterpoints, in so far as it makes process primary, rather than any transcendent metaphysical absolute (*PR*, 7). David Ray Griffin, in his article "Steiner's Anthroposophy and Whitehead's Philosophy" (*Re-vision*, 1–22), also suggest that different aspects of Whitehead's metaphysical system might be understood as corresponding to different fundamental religious interpretations of reality.

¹⁵⁸ Jung, as a student of the Gnostics, was undoubtedly influenced by this tradition, and he refers specifically to Jacob Boehm, among Christian mystics, as a support for his understanding of the paradoxical co-existence of good and evil within the divine nature (*MDR*, 333–334).

¹⁵⁹ See for instance Huston Smith's discussions of Hinduism and Primal religion in *The World's Religions* (60–61, 376–377), or Mark Dyczkowski's treatment of Kashmir Shaivism in *The Doctrine of Vibration* (46).

¹⁶⁰ For a relatively detailed account of the character and process of concrescence, see *Process and Reality*, pages 40–42.

¹⁶¹ Whitehead sees the concrescent process as being non-temporal, insofar as it cannot be located in time (*PR*, 69). I am here conceiving it as temporal in a complex way that transcends the limitations of emergent space-time as it is

usually conceived, and therefore allows for a multi-directionality of creative time currents and processes that interpenetrate in non-linear ways. See my essay, "Flux and Openness: Dissolving Fixity in Whitehead's Vision of Process" (*Process Studies* 41.1: 150–170), for a more in-depth discussion in relationship to Whitehead's philosophy. See also part 2, section 5 of this essay for a more general exploration of the nature of time in the context of this emerging vision.

¹⁶² In *On the Nature of the Psyche*, Jung describes the indefinite and incomplete character of the self and its corresponding modes of consciousness: "Nor is it a fully integrated whole even at the higher and highest stages; rather, it is capable of indefinite expansion" ("Nature of Psyche," 189, ¶ 387). For a similar observation on the part of Steiner, see the quotation from *An Outline of Esoteric Science* on page 55 of this essay.

¹⁶³ On a more practical and definite level, this means that all of our sensory modalities; our somatic and proprioceptive sensations; our emotions, dreams thoughts, imaginations, and intuitions; and our modes of interaction and functional participatory behavior are all ways of knowing and shaping reality. A full experience of knowing integrates these many interacting dimensions of our experience in a spontaneous and holistic manner. While we share many of these basic modes of perception and experience in common with other people and living beings, we also participate in and know reality in unique and never repeated ways. This type of integral participatory epistemology is present in the thought of many thinkers from the last century, being present in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo (*On Yoga: The Synthesis of Yoga*), implicit in the works of Jung, Whitehead, and Steiner here being explored, and emerging clearly in the more recent work of philosophers such as Richard Tarnas (*Cosmos and Psyche*) and Jorge Ferrer (*Re-visioning Psychology*).

¹⁶⁴ See endnote 23 for Jung's emphasis on the importance of self-knowledge in the individuation process. Steiner expresses the importance of self-knowledge for spiritual development repeatedly throughout his writings, as in the following quotation. "It cannot be emphasized often enough that the sure path to higher worlds leads through careful self-knowledge and the self-assessment of our own nature" (*HW*, 144, ¶ 35).

¹⁶⁵ This is analogous to the way in which underlying quantum field processes and relationships, including non-local connections, are obscured or interrupted at the level of the dense aggregate activities that constitute most of the directly observable physical world, as explained by the theory of decoherence (*Fabric*, 210).

¹⁶⁶ David Ray Griffin offers a similar and more in-depth analysis of how Whitehead's prehensive theory of perception can help to explain extrasensory perception in his essays on Jung and Whitehead ("Archetypal Psychology and

Process Theology: Complimentary Postmodern Movements," *Archetypal Process*), and Whitehead and Steiner ("Steiner's Anthroposophy and Whitehead's Philosophy," *Re-vision*, 1–22).

¹⁶⁷ See *Process and Reality*, page 91. Also note a similar understanding in the works of biologist Rupert Sheldrake, the proponent and expositor of the theory of morphic resonance (*A New Science of Life, The Presence of the Past*).

¹⁶⁸ Steiner asserts this emphatically in the opening sentence of *How to Know Higher Worlds*: "The capacities by which we can gain insights into higher worlds lie dormant within each one of us" (13, ¶ 1).

¹⁶⁹ "Just as natural forces equip the physical body with organs fashioned from unstructured living matter, so the care and cultivation of our lives of feeling and thinking endow our soul and spiritual bodies with higher senses and organs of activity" (*HW*, 39, ¶ 3).

¹⁷⁰ Steiner asserts this unequivocally in *How to Know Higher Worlds*, when he states that "perception of our ordinary sense-perceptible surroundings already requires a degree of clairvoyance" (*HW*, 173, ¶ 2).

¹⁷¹ As Steiner observes, "In ordinary life man has only one "intuition" — namely, of the ego itself, for the ego can in no way be perceived from without; it can only be experienced in the inner life" (*Stages*, 9).

¹⁷² "Through directly experienced ideas, one comprehends not the sense world but the spiritual world adjoining the sense world" (*Auto*, 167).

¹⁷³ See chapter one of *Theosophy*.

¹⁷⁴ Whitehead distinguishes between several primary modes of perception: perception in the mode of causal efficacy, or prehension; perception in the mode of presentational immediacy, in which a given world appears fully formed in our awareness, as exemplified by conscious sense perception; and the mixed mode of perception in the mode of symbolic reference, in which meaningful relationships are sought between elements disclosed through the other two modes, as exemplified by abstract thought and speculation (*PR*, 61, 121, 168). It might be argued that we already have inner psychic experiences in the mode of presentational immediacy, in the form of spontaneously arising and immediately presented dreams, memories, and inner visions. To have clairvoyant perception of subtle spiritual realities in this mode would require the development of a corresponding set of psychic senses and cognitive functions. Once evolved, these perceptions would naturally be integrated into the content of experiences in the mode of symbolic reference—they would inform our thinking and vision.

¹⁷⁵ In his magnum opus, *The Phenomenon of Man*, Teilhard de Chardin suggests a fundamental principle that "Fuller being is closer union" and that accordingly, "union increases only through an increase in consciousness, that is to say in vision (31). This basic understanding is also implicit in this vision.

¹⁷⁶ In relationship to Whitehead, this insight is clearly expressed in the quotation immediately following this note in the main body of the text, and in relation to Steiner in the quotations found in the following paragraph. For Jung, the need to enlarge consciousness is central to his conception of individuation, which "does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to oneself ("Nature of Psyche," 226, ¶ 432). Thus individuation requires the individual to expand consciousness to encompass both the seemingly inward realm of the unconscious and the archetypes, and the seemingly outer world of fellow beings, collective social consciousness, and the surrounding environment, and to integrate them and realize their ultimate unity within the encompassing reality of the Anima Mundi, from the unique perspective of the forming individual.

¹⁷⁷ Jung explores the progress of individual and collective psychic development through integration of psychic tensions and polarities in the chapter "Late Thoughts" of his autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Similarly, in the chapter entitled "Ideal Opposites" in *Process and Reality*, Whitehead describes the way creative advancement requires a continual movement through cycles of relative order and disorder, creative novelty disrupting old patterns of order in order to potentiate the emergence of new harmonies out of discord and tension. Rudolf Steiner describes a similar evolution of the spiritual worlds through successive phases of decay and the emergence of new life, including the passage through perishable physical incarnations on both individual and collective levels (*HW*, 198–199, ¶ 3–4).

¹⁷⁸ The entire apophatic approach, or *via negativa*, with representations in nearly every religious tradition around the world, is a testament to this universal experience and challenge.

¹⁷⁹ This concept is also posited by Teilhard de Chardin in terms of the gradual transformation of tangential into radial energy. As Teilhard writes:

It is thus entirely by its tangential envelope that the world keeps on dissipating itself in a chance way into matter. By its radial nucleus it finds its shape and its natural consistency in gravitating against the tide of probability toward a divine focus of mind that draws it onward. Thus something in the cosmos escapes from entropy, and does so more and more. (*The Phenomenon of Man*, 271)

If one posits spiritual energy as the original source of all matter, and matter as a temporary form that spiritual energy assumes in its process of creative evolution,

than this represents a creative return, perhaps occurring in endless evolutionary spirals of process. What we know as matter may just be one such form that spirit can assume in its endless processes of metamorphosis, fashioning for itself endlessly new cocoons and winged emergences.

¹⁸⁰ See *How to Know Higher Worlds*, pages 198–199.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² This similarity is also explored by David Ray Griffin in his article, "Steiner's Anthroposophy and Whitehead's Philosophy" (*Re-vision*, 1–22).

¹⁸³ Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, 41

¹⁸⁴ Plato, *Symposium*, 563

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APPENDIX A: APHORISTIC REFLECTIONS BY THE AUTHOR FOR
JUNG–WHITEHEAD ESSAY

The individuation process is the self-formation of the Self archetype in each of its manifestations.

Wholeness, individuality, and unity are all expressions of the archetypal principle of the Self.

It is the openness of Creativity which unites contemporary events beyond the limitations of their structured space-time relations—which grants them their measure of creative freedom.

Wholeness requires novelty, the conversion of infinite potential into ceaselessly emerging novel forms of relationship and creative manifestation.

The very transcendent dimension of Creativity which is active in the formation of each entity unites all entities in their process of formation.

Some dimension of each occasion is eternally open and transcends its specific pattern of extensive manifestation, and therefore continues to grow and evolve within the shifting context of the evolving universe. And with the growth and transformation of the element, the whole is itself necessarily transformed, and therefore the meaning and nature of its component parts. In this sense every element of the universe is in a process of continuous transformation, and the whole of existence is continually transforming.

The novel individual entity emerges out of the creative communion of the living currents of relationship.

The archetype of the Self pervades all creative forms along a continuum.

A stone comes into greater individual unity of feeling through participation in the perceptive consciousness of the human psyche.

The principle of relationality, the longing for relational union and communion, and the movement toward relational Beauty, are all expressions of Eros.

Eros unites in relationship, delights in intimacy, longs to create through union, and receives and bestows infinite beauty.

Both Eros and the Self unite, both Eros and the Self differentiate—and move through new forms of creative manifestation in an endless dance of movement and embrace.

The Self is that principle which experiences cohesion of feeling and identity, which experiences itself in relationship, and recognizes and seeks itself and the realization of its inmost potentials through endless patterns of creative novelty and elaboration.

The Self belongs to Eros and Eros belongs to the Self; Creativity belongs to both and is their joint activity; both belong to Creativity.

Each of these is a dimension of the Divine Spirit of Existence, which creates and experiences itself in relationship—in the paradoxical dwelling place of the *unus mundus*, and through the sustained feeling configured depth of the *anima mundi*.

This Divine Spirit of Existence is the primordial and consequent natures of god united and divested of their duality and static dimensions. It remains an infinite self-movement through paradox, mirroring Whitehead's division of God's nature in the distinction between *anima mundi* and *unus mundus*.

Wholeness is the realization of a unique pattern of individuality within the relational whole of existence. Wholeness is dynamic and continuously unfolding, while pervaded by stillness.

Wholeness is achieved in climactic moments of coalescence, which are themselves inseparable from the continuous flow of creativity, with its movement towards ever new forms of wholeness, in relation to which these too receive a new shape, life, and meaning.

Wholeness is a realization of the infinite potentials of existence in some novel form of togetherness, unity, and creativity.

Wholeness always involves relationship and creative realization of some potential for a beautiful experience of self-existence, be it the most still presence of the divine spirit of existence.

The Self, Eros, and Creativity are always co-present, though their prominence in experience may vary. Each is guided by Beauty, and realizes Beauty as its highest ideal.

Unity can express itself through a multiplicity of interrelated creative forms, and through the distinctive pattern that unites them. Thus individuality belongs to both unity and relational multiplicity, to interrelated creative forms, and to the pattern of relationship that unites them. Ultimately, relational pattern and individual manifestation are inseparable, but in our experience we perceive a range in emphasis.

Creativity is continually energized by the principle of novelty, and both are guided by the principle of Eros and Self, and by the sense of Beauty which unites them all in Divine Creative Communion.

Depth of feeling, intimacy, love, integrity and relational honoring, creativity and aliveness, all belong to Beauty. Beauty is the principle that guides and envelopes the emergence of these other qualities; they are each forms and qualities of Beauty.

Beauty, intimacy, and love are the primary guides and lures of existence, where love is the feeling evoked by the beauty of intimacy.

Peace is an expression of the everlasting self-enjoyment of existence, content in the experience of Beauty, whose Eros is boundless and enveloping.

All forms of life and all principles envelope each other.

All numbers and categories and patterns dissolve into infinity, and into openness.

Words can evoke a sense and vision of reality, but they can not reflect it in the full infinitude of its complexity.

Every vision and every way of thinking is a way of relating.

The question concerning every flowing element of creative process is whether it is beautiful, honoring, and life-enhancing, whether it is inspired and alive in each movement of experience.

The living vision always changes; what is written down is a seed and a shadow, whose justification is its potential for birthing new vision in the aliveness of other moments—for offering beauty and wisdom as a resource for other beings in their processes of creative and relational self-formation.

The concept of the good is subsumed by relational honoring, creative enhancement, love, compassion and Beauty. This includes the honoring of one's own selfhood, and of the creative forms and potentials of existence that permeate us.

Morality is a perspective and a realization of relational honoring.

Ethics is an abstract survey of this relational field.

The concept of importance in Whitehead points to the relational fields of meaning and value.

Individual consciousness may assign a meaning or value to some element of experience, but there are deeper dimensions of meaning embedded in the interrelationships that constitute it.

Importance indicates directionality to creative awareness—that some potential or dimension of existence has a value, to realize and to honor.

Without a sense of importance consciousness would always be lost.

With a vast enough sense of importance consciousness can never lose itself, and finds infinite direction and infinite enjoyment, infinite meaning and infinite inspiration.

The understanding of metaphysics I am here suggesting does not involve a set of fixed beliefs about the ultimate nature of reality, but a phenomenological reflection on the depths of existence concealed within the immediacy of lived experience.

Thus the notion of a living vision, embedded within experience, whose contours can be articulated and written, but which is irreducible and dynamic, ever unfolding, ever-changing, and inexhaustible.

We both discover and create reality in every moment.

We are participants in a divine reality which is paradoxically unaware of its own divinity at multiple levels of self-relationship and creative manifestation, resulting in widespread injustice, suffering, and despair.

Wisdom is Beauty guiding the understanding.

In this sense every constellation of feeling, or occasion of experience, is an individual being, manifesting the principle of the Self, and therefore possessing self-hood and expressing the entire unity of being in a particular pattern of individual manifestation; is a being of relationship, manifesting the principle of Eros, and expressing the interrelationship between all beings and patterns of relationship in a specific pattern of relational manifestation; is a being of Creativity, manifesting the infinite diversity and creative energy of existence in a particular constellation; and is a being of existence, participating in the eternal existence and presence of Being. All of these principles are contained in the Openness of being, which unites them in eternal mystery and freshness, and bestows upon them infinitude and eternal transcendence.

Part of the creative challenge of existence is the harmonization of these principles, which can in some sense work at odds with one another. Proliferation of new creative forms can undermine unity, but it can also deepen it; increase in individual differentiation can decrease relational connection, but it can also deepen, transform, and strengthen it; elaboration of creative complexity can fragment presence, or heighten and intensify it in new constellations of self-reflective brilliancy and sensitivity.

As Whitehead points out, established harmony and creative innovation are always in some form of dynamic tension, which is necessary for their mutual development. Similarly, the individual and society, the parent and the child, the creature and its environment, are always in dynamic relationship, each sacrificing for the well-being of the other, and yet in so far as the integration is successful, ultimately completing and enriching the other, and furthering their mutual creative development.

These fundamental principles could be modified and multiplied potentially without limit, and their dynamics infinitely explored. The aim of this present essay is to point toward some of the basic contours of an emerging vision, and some of the creative principles that arise to guide us in our creative participation.

I am suggesting that there is no such static primordial order, but a rippling field of actuality and potential, in which possibility and actuality exist together on a dynamic continuum.

Instead of a single procession of divine consequent occasions, constituting a single unfolding consequent nature of god, I would conceive a potentially limitless number of interrelated divine occasions of wholeness, each drawing on the infinite field of dynamic potentiality, and each feeling and conceiving the fullness of existence in its own unique harmony of creative vision.

Here I conceive of the anima mundi as a more or less unified constellation of divine perspectives, always subject to further integration, expressing the dynamic unity of feeling which characterizes existence.

In this sense the anima mundi is the whole of existence conceived in terms of the interior meeting and integration of all of its constituent feelings, emerging into ever deeper and more complex forms of relational identity and creative self-expression.

The unus mundus is the whole of existence conceived in terms of paradoxical unity and openness. As such it cannot be characterized, except in the most abstract terms, which point towards its paradoxical and inclusive nature.

The primordial nature is thus understood as the dynamic ground of existence, an open and dynamic plenum of possibility, in which actuality is paradoxically contained.

The primordial nature can also be understood as ideal dimension of this dynamic plenum, which constitutes a harmonious vision and creative matrix available as a guide and lure for the ongoing process of creation.

The primordial and consequent natures of god are eternally united and inseparable, the two terms merely pointing toward the potential and actual dimensions of a unified continuum, in which the potential and actual contain each other.

If the two dimensions of god are both conceived in terms of ideal dimensions of this larger continuum, then they represent the respectively potential and actual dimensions of this inseparable ideal dimension, at once the lure and the transcendent experience of beauty and harmony pervading the chaotic flux of existence. They are thus inseparable both from each other, and from this larger flux, and represent an eternal divine principle which is continually unfolding, spanning the paradoxical continuums between potentiality and actuality, comprehensive unity and selective individual envisagement and realization.

The extensive continuum expresses the structural fabric of potential relationships that emerges between occasions, in which all occasions and their corresponding potentials are united. As such it is a term of abstract functional significance, which does not tend to evoke the interior experience and spirit embodied in the fabric of interrelationships it designates.

Divested of the specific terminology with which it has here been discussed and articulated, this vision can be understood in terms of the Divine Spirit of Existence, of Mystery and the Cosmic Soul, of Openness and dynamic Paradox, with the alluring, changing face of Beauty shining forth as its eternal essence.

The vision that I am here exploring and presenting has its source both in a vision that has been living and growing in me for many years, which I bring to my engagement with these powerful thinkers, and in the meeting and integration of their respective visions within this context, giving shape to the living vision in which they are transformed and integrated.

The collective unconscious can be conceived as that part of the anima mundi that is excluded from the consciousness of an individual psyche in a given moment and mode of awareness, or of the unconscious dimension of a particular constellation of collective consciousness, be it a particular group of individuals, a society, or the entire earth community. The concept of the collective unconscious always stands in relation to some center and constellation of consciousness, and always serves as the compensation and completion of that limited conscious field and mode of perception. We can therefore conceive of multiple levels of collective consciousness, and multiple level of collective unconscious, the term being inherently relative, and pointing toward the larger reality and living mystery which surrounds and completes every limited perspective.

At their broadest each of these interrelated principles fully contains all of the others. Thus Being contains all Creativity, all Self-hood, all Eros, and all Openness, and this is equally true for all of the other principles.

Each of these principles reflects the totality of existence from a different perspective. Therefore each can be seen as a face of existence, or a reflective lens through which existence beholds itself.

Thus the totality of existence is reflected in a number of different forms in this integration of Jung and Whitehead's visions: as *anima mundi* and *unus mundus*, as the unified nature of god, and as the fullest expression of each of the principles here discussed—Creativity, Self, Eros, Being, and Openness.

In exploring their writings and ideas, certain fundamental principles merge, both within their respective visions and in the convergence between them.

These principles are revealed as profoundly interconnected patterns, dimensions, and qualities of existence, all of which are dynamic, multi-dimensional, and inexhaustible, and transcend all possible forms of quantification, conceptualization, and linguistic expression.

They are fundamental patterns to be perceived, explored, illuminated, and elaborated through creative participation.

Their emergence and treatment in this essay are spontaneous contextual expressions, which should in no way be taken as final or ultimate descriptions of their nature. Their number, the names with which they are designated, the descriptions given and the dynamic interrelationships explored, are all limited and contextual expressions of their mysterious and inexhaustible nature, and of the greater mystery of which they are shimmering patterns.

Openness is the ground of the eternal dynamism of existence. It invites us, through each of the other principles, into a life of ceaseless transcendence of every limiting dimension of existence, and into an awareness of paradoxical unity and multiplicity, so that nothing is ultimately separate or beyond us, and yet nothing is ultimately limited or reducible to what we can perceive, conceptualize, or absorb into self-identification. All of existence transcends and is transcended, and lives eternally beyond itself, in its own indefinable wholeness, which is eternally Open.

Being is a quality of Creativity, and Creativity is a dynamic movement within Being.

All of these principles are interdependent, and each expresses itself along a paradoxical continuum which encompasses its potential opposites.

There are certain interrelated essential divine principles which can be experienced as animating and shaping all of existence. The encompassing dynamic complexity of their activity requires that they be discerned in the most widely expansive patterns of reflective thought and experience, and therefore related through concepts of wide abstraction. Nonetheless, these principles lose their essential meaning if they are not recognized as vital elements pervading our lived experience.