

**AWAKENING THE CARTESIAN DREAMER**

**UNIVERSAL VALUES**

**IN SOLIDARITY WITH AN EVOLUTIONARY UNIVERSE**

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## “AWAKENING THE CARTESIAN DREAMER”

### UNIVERSAL VALUES

### IN SOLIDARITY

### WITH AN EVOLUTIONARY UNIVERSE

“Humanity is part of a vast *evolving universe*. Earth our *home*, is alive with a unique community of life...The resilience of the community of life and the well-being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems....*The protection of Earths vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust*...To realize these aspirations we must decide to live with a *sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities*....The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature”

Preamble Earth Charter

#### **Purpose:**

To contribute to this edition’s focus on cosmology and ecological perspectives I will first examine the design of our current cosmology, and how it plays itself out in our universal educational forms: family, school, work and recreation. To do this I will link cosmology with educational philosophy. Linking cosmology with educational philosophy allows a glimpse into our current values and life practices within these universal educational forms. In each of them our cosmology is not from an ecological perspective. The second intent of mine is to propose a re-design of our current cosmology/educational philosophy in a fourfold conversation between the wisdoms of science, religion, tribals and women. This conversation facilitates an awakening and conversion of cosmology and life practice fuelled by universal values.

In relation to our cosmology/educational philosophy the article is organized around four questions, Where are we? How did we get here? What is possible now? Where do we go from here? These four questions and the title for this article are adopted from the Awakening the Dreamer: Changing the Dream Symposium (ATD)<sup>1</sup> developed by the Pachamama Alliance<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> These four questions are the basis for the inspirational educational programme, *Awakening the Dreamer Changing the Dream* (ATD) Symposium. The purpose of the international symposium now in 60 countries and in 13 languages is “to bring forth an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling and socially just human presence on this planet”. It was developed by the *Pachamama* “Earth Mother” *Alliance*, in collaboration with the indigenous peoples of the world, as a response to the accelerating degradation of the planet. The oppression of people and land is based on a faulty dream of a particular understanding of progress and development. By awakening from this dream Earth communities can join with indigenous people to ‘revitalize the commons’

I recently facilitated ATD symposiums in seven locations around India<sup>3</sup> with Sr Gail Worcelo<sup>4</sup> and her colleague from Indonesia Ami Hendani. The goal for the symposium is to foster an environmentally sustainable, socially just and spiritually fulfilling human presence on the planet. My own narrative research dissertation traced the patterns of somatic alienation, awakening and connection back to Earth happening around the world, itself a pattern of conversion<sup>5</sup>. The conversion was a result of the conversation of the fourfold wisdom.

As I worked, presenting the symposium, I was struck by its effectiveness as a model to foster an awakening. The questions themselves draw attendees from alienation through a sense of connection. The footnotes in this article describe how this is done. The language is ‘secular’ but the programme is obviously deeply religious. It is also accessible to everyone, young and old alike because it avoids complicated theological and academic terms. For the purposes of this article the four questions serve two functions within the process of conversion—

1. as containers for information regarding cosmology, educational philosophy and life practice
2. as the structure for facilitating the recentering of one’s previous conscious or unconscious images of value and power’.

## 1. Where are We?<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Pachamama Alliance [www.pachamama.org](http://www.pachamama.org) was founded in 1996 by the initiation of the indigenous Achuar peoples in South America with the ‘people of the north’. The alliance partners with the indigenous peoples to help them preserve their lands, lifestyles and to bring forth a new world view to the ‘people of the north’ that honours and sustains all life.

<sup>3</sup> Over 500 people attended the symposiums and programmes. I am very grateful to our hosts and communities who worked with me to organize the events and make them a success. (Mumbai: St Xavier’s College, Jivanikas Sadan, Kotayam, CSI, Goa: PBVM and CSC, Bangalore: Fireflies and Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Patna: Tarumitra and New Delhi: Vidyajyoti).

<sup>4</sup> Sr Gail is co foundress of Green Mountain Monastery in Vermont, USA. [www.greenmountainmonastery.org](http://www.greenmountainmonastery.org). Sr Gail was mentored by Thomas Berry (1914-2009) [www.thomasberry.org](http://www.thomasberry.org) for over 20 years and founded the monastery with him. Berry was a monk, cultural historian and cosmologist. Berry was inspired by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, global religions, and the Universe Story. Sr Gail has started the first religious order in the Catholic tradition dedicated to the healing of Earth’s life systems. Along with the ATD symposium, Sr Gail presented her research, ‘Moments of Grace’. See section “Where do we go from Here?”

<sup>5</sup> I am aware of the socio political history of this term in India and around the world in particular around the colonization of various nations. My intent is not to stress a conversion from Hindu into Christian or Muslim cult, but a conversion of heart, an awakening, an enlightenment, a metanoia.

<sup>6</sup> The first question “Where are We” in the ATD symposium asks attendees to face, as a group, the scope and urgency of the current global social, environmental and spiritual crises, and to understand them as interconnected facets of one crises...not three separate issues. Extensive information from around the globe is offered to show the extent of the crisis. My interest is to show ‘where we are’ in our cosmology

We are part of a vast evolving Universe, in an interdependent community named Earth. Currently, I and many readers of this issue rely on the various bioregions that collectively are named India. Distant readers belong and rely on far away bioregions, yet each of these diverse bioregions contributes to the collective health of the living organism, Earth, a.k.a Gaia<sup>7</sup> which sustains us. The Gaia theory, notes Diurmuid O’Murchu “invites us to engage not with life on earth, but rather, with the life-form that is the Earth. Our Earth is not an object to be exploited, but a living organism inviting our dialogue and participation..... We resent anything that points to the fact that something other than ourselves is in charge, that we are meant to be a servant species at the service of a greater organism” (O’Murchu, 1997, 201-2)

“Where are we?”, in relation to this understanding, is the overall focus of this article. We may or may not be living from this perspective or we might be wondering about how to foster this perspective. ‘Whereness’<sup>8</sup> is crucial to our identity John O’Donohue claims, and asks us “Why then is it so rarely noticed? Why is it so rarely considered to be a presence? Why is it abused, raided and raped?” (O’Donohue, 2010, 129). It is because many have lost their identity of being ‘dust to dust’ and of the soil.

The preamble from the Earth Charter<sup>9</sup> at the beginning of the article serves as an anchor for a particular design and understanding of adulthood as well as the values, aspirations, and responsibilities of that adult community. The Earth Charter statement is an understanding and faith in the ‘integrity of creation’<sup>10</sup> and expression of values to fuel life practices to conserve the integrity of creation. It is a mystical orientation. <sup>11</sup>Clearly, many do not aspire to these ideals, their current cosmology is not from an ecological perspective.

Religious educator Gabriel Moran links cosmology and educational philosophy stating:

‘Ideals of adulthood can be co-related to educational systems. Which comes first is a chicken-or –egg question. The ideal is embodied in the pattern of education while that education continually reinforces the ideal’ (1979, 34).

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<sup>7</sup> *Gaia* the Gaia hypothesis, developed by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis, presents Earth as a living ecosystem. Instead of repetitive mechanical processes, Earth now presents herself for view as an intricate interacting system. Gaia is the term the Greeks used for Earth and considered her a Goddess. The implications of Gaia theory for theology as an earth science have been developed by Anne Primavesi (2000, 2003) and for spirituality by Diurmuid O’Murchu (1997, 2007)

<sup>8</sup> *Whereness*, however is crucial to the indigenous identity, . Indigenous identity and language is based on relationships and prioritizing a spatial epistemology. (See question three)

<sup>9</sup> *Earth Charter*: The Earth Charter is a universal expression of ethical principles and has been recognized by UNESCO as an important ethical framework for sustainable development. The Earth Charter Initiative is the global network that embraces uses and integrates it into their institutions. For more information and endorsement visit [www.earthcharterinaction](http://www.earthcharterinaction). The Charter can be downloaded in .....languages.

<sup>10</sup> *Integrity of creation* is a term

<sup>11</sup> The relationship between the mystical and political dimensions of existence is documented in Janet Ruffing's, ed “*Mysticism and Social Transformation*”, In particular, why does the organization of power in a culture often become the focus of religious analysis. Now, even religious institutions are sometimes the target of criticism for their own institutional oppression, abuse and collaboration with organizations of power. Each tradition of mystical realization, Islam, Buddhist, Hindu, Taoist etc point to another form of culture and other ways of being human together. Roger Gottlieb presents deep ecology as a movement with roots in mystical consciousness in the chapter “The transcendence of Justice and the Justice of Transcendence: Mysticism, Deep Ecology and Political Life”. See also his book *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature and Environment*.

We face a deep rooted educational crisis, but Moran's analogy reveals that the process<sup>12</sup> of cosmology/education extends much farther than the schoolroom. It is intergenerational, international, interinstitutional, and intrareligious.

To reinforce the understanding that *cosmology* and *educational philosophy* are linked I will simplify and use an abbreviation from now on "coed". Because of space, time and more importantly language constraints based on cosmology, I have limited my observations and analysis of coed to schools<sup>13</sup>. However this same analysis could be done with families, work place or recreation setting. The advantage of analysing coed through schools is because of curriculum design analysis developed in the field of school education. The analysis of curriculum design in schools presents for view the design of our cosmology and our ideals.<sup>14</sup>

By uncovering the ideals and values embodied in adults and inherited by children as they learn life practices our problems of social justice, environmental sustainability and spiritual fulfilment can be seen as an educational issue—as a faulty cosmology. The fact that we even are devoting a volume to an ecological perspective of cosmology shows the extent to which our educational philosophy is no longer religious.<sup>15</sup> Knowing our cosmology is faulty anthropologist and systems theorist Gregory Bateson wondered "What is heresy?.....that it is possible to be epistemologically wrong? Wrong at the very root of thought?" (Bateson, 1988)

Theologian Elizabeth Johnson<sup>16</sup> describes our fundamental task to heal this heresy :

The damage can begin to be healed only by conversion, meant here in the biblical sense of metanoia, a turning around. We must allow ourselves to be converted to the patterns established by the Spirit in the giving of life itself. What is crucial for a viable future is a religious spirit that converts us to the Earth....Coherent with feminist and other liberation spiritualities, being converted to the Earth entails the mutually fertilizing elements of contemplation and prophecy (1993, 63).

James Fowler<sup>17</sup> defines conversion as

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<sup>12</sup> Cosmology is our fundamental epistemology and an active process. We co-create the world based on our epistemology. Currently we are co-creating in ways that are fundamentally ignorant of our 'whereness'.

<sup>13</sup> There has been an emerging flood of research in schooling practices critiquing Cartesian cosmology in school rooms (including adult learning) as if this is the only place where people are taught and ignoring the overall process that teaches.

<sup>14</sup> Curriculum design analysis will be addressed in question three.

<sup>15</sup> *Religio* latin for bound

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Johnson's vision and her book .....has been the target of .....controversy.....and her. Www....etc. One can see that the criticism is from a perspective that does not understand her perspective and that which she is showing as emerging in the *sensus fidelis*

<sup>17</sup> James Fowler writes about faith development, but not from the perspective of a culture that promotes a faith in the integrity of creation. Feminists have critiqued his theories saying that women develop in a different pattern (eg alienation awakening and connection)....as if it were somehow normal to be alienated but because of patriarchal practices in religious institutions women would not be alienated. Coming from an ecofeminist perspective I would rather base my critique on his underlying cosmology and understanding of adulthood. Yes,

“a significant recentering of one’s previous conscious or unconscious images of value and power, and the conscious adoption of a new set of master stories in the commitment to reshape one’s life in a new community of interpretation and action (1995, 281-82).

In particular reference to *dharma* Sanskrit literature and conversion T. S Rukmani writes:

“Sanskrit literature conveys the dominant world view of *dharma*, which is ecologically friendly. It is also important to define the kind of human being who can fit into the ecologically friendly universe. It is the kind of individual whom we might call and “ecoperson” and whom the Hindus call a dharmic individual: one who can live in harmony with nature as a whole. The stress here is on the inner transformation of an individual, a transformation which allows the sharing of the planet and its resources in a sense of mutuality.” The dharmic and ideal human being sought through Sanskrit literature “must be a *tyagi* (one who can sacrifice self-interest for the larger good) a *sastracaksuh* (one who is well versed in the sastras) and a *dharmikah* (one who follows the path of *dharma*)” (Rukmani,.... 110-111)

What values determine our daily life practice and what master stories have we embodied which need to be made conscious? What are our unexamined assumptions within our current heresy?

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Cartesian cosmology is practiced in today’s religious institutions but the responsibility for the development of a ‘religious’ understanding is far wider than our current understanding of religious institutions. His words defining faith and conversion do allow us to capture the movement from a Cartesian cosmology to a Gaian cosmology, our global awakening.

## 2. How did we get here?<sup>18</sup>

“A value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. A value system is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable models of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance”  
(Rokeach, in ESD 2010)

“We got here” as the result of a 13.7 billion year cosmogenesis. We are descendents of the stars, literally star dust. Our coed does not recognize, believe and understand this sense of interconnection and ongoing Divine creativity. This has had a profound impact on our environmental, social and spiritual lives, where we are in our coed. Our issue is a religious one and summarized by Gregory Bateson:

Most of us have lost that sense of unity of biosphere and humanity which would bind and reassure us all with an affirmation of beauty....We have lost the core of Christianity. We have lost Shiva, the dancer of Hinduism whose dance at the trivial level is both creation and destruction but in whole is beauty....There have been, and still are, in the world many different and even contrasting epistemologies which have been alike in stressing an ultimate unity and, although this is less sure, which have also stressed the notion that ultimate unity is aesthetic. I hold to the presupposition that our loss of the sense of aesthetic unity was, quite simply, an epistemological mistake. I believe that that mistake may be more serious than all the minor insanities that characterize those older epistemologies which agreed upon the fundamental unity. (Bateson 2002, 16-17)

Instead of valuing Earth our focus is on ‘progress and development’ and this is fuelled by various values. Around the globe, increasingly, there are many voices critical of the development paradigm and the values that are shaping globalization. Children are being shaped for a materialistic and consumption oriented lifestyle to support this economic globalization by their elders in four universal educational forms: family, school, work and recreation. This educational philosophy and dysfunctional cosmology has resulted in a sense of alienation from various aspects of self, each other and Earth (Hazra, 2009). The ideal of adulthood and accompanying values are that of a rational and autonomous individual, independent, competitive and liberated to achieve her/his personal goals.(a.k.a anthropocentric) The 1986 *National Policy on Education* notes “India’s political and social life is passing through a phase which poses the danger of erosion of long accepted values. Not only are the young ignorant of, and often contentious of ancient Hindu visions of life, but

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<sup>18</sup> This section of ATD intends to awaken participants from the cultural trance we have fallen under as individuals and society. Understanding the causal relationship between the trance and the dream of the modern world. One exercise is to identify unconscious unexamined assumptions that perpetuate the dream trance and recognize a ‘blessed unrest’.

the ‘modern’ values of secularism, socialism, democracy and professional ethics are coming under increasing strain” In 2012, twenty six years later the problems have only intensified. It is critical to begin to uncover the roots of our problem and our explicit and implicit value system. We must uncover our chicken-or – egg dilemma.

Values are considered too intangible and difficult to measure, however the life practices based on certain values can be measured. Our school classrooms are one educational institution where the various ‘intelligences’ for this ideal and values are shaped and measured. (Vevaina, 2012).

This design of consciousness, a.k.a. “Cartesian cosmology”, is based on a sense of radical separation from aspects of self, each other and the environment. Residents of Cartesian culture have a particular way of viewing the world that is problematic. This ethos and cultural structure has developed over time (in particular since the Industrial Revolution<sup>19</sup>) and to the extent that the earth is no longer considered sacred. Cartesian culture is secular<sup>20</sup>. This way of attending the world represents a patriarchal, hierarchical, dualistic consciousness: Nature/society, Matter/mind, Body/soul, Female/male, Sensuousness/intellect, Black/white, East/west, Human/God, Earth/heaven, Bad/good, Subjective/objective, Community/individual, Inner/outer, Profane/sacred, Secular/religious, Lateral/linear, Dionysus/Apollo.

Personal identity is equated with nationalism, consumerism, success and possessing the symbols of social hierarchical status and power. Types of attention, awareness, and skill competence necessary for industrial progress and development are fostered. The sense of unity, mystery, awe, wonder and responsibility for a collective goal of sustainability is suppressed. In contrast, reveals Native American theologian Tink Tinker: “the particular gift of Native Americans (and of other indigenous peoples) is an immediate awareness and experience of the sacredness and interdependence of all creation” (Tinker, 1989). Diarmuid O’Murchu states clearly that our alienation and dysfunctional practices to deal with it, including their correctives, are culturally fostered. He states: “More than anything else our disconnection from the earth is probably the severest form of pain we know today. The problem is that most people don’t feel it consciously. We have invented a vast array of sedatives, drugs, alcohol, hedonism, workaholism, religiosity and pseudo-therapies to rationalize our alienation” (O’Murchu 2007, 49). Like the bird in Rabindranath Tagore’s, *The Parrot’s Training*, students and society at large wander where “only its inner stuffing of book-leaves rustled” (Tagore 1918, 274).

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<sup>19</sup> Susan Bordo notes that this development, born in the Cartesian era out of the maternal universe of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, is the birth of a sense of “the separate self, conscious of itself and of its own distinctness from a world “outside” it...It is a psychological birth of inwardness of subjectivity of locatedness in space and time generating new anxieties and ultimately new strategies for maintaining equilibrium in an utterly changed and alien world” (Bordo 1987, 7).

<sup>20</sup> *Secular*: the popular usage of the term seems to have evolved to mean avoiding the promotion of a particular religious cult eg hindu, catholic, muslim, Buddhist etc. This, of course is crucial for democracy . I am using the term to mean the adoption of ‘secular’ habits. In contrast to a faith in the ‘integrity of creation’, a religious understanding of all faith traditions, Cartesian coed now practiced through a Hindu, Catholic, Muslim, Buddhist etc etc effectively secularizes “to dissociate from religious or spiritual concerns, convert to material and temporal purposes; turn (a person etc) from a religious or spiritual state to wordliness”. It is remarkable how convoluted our understanding of religion has become!



This type of unsustainable development paradigm has had disastrous consequences for Earth and all her inhabitants. Our paradigm reveals what Rokeach describes as the embedded value system and ‘enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable models of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance’. In India, these explicit beliefs and implicit values are confirmed in the 12 March 2012 MHRD *Report to the People on Education*

“The spread of education in society is at the foundation of success in today’s globalised world, where the real wealth of a country is not in its tangible natural resources but in knowledge, which is the driver of economic development”

This recent report shows that the Ministry of Human Resource Development is ignorant of the implications of their ideals and values. There is certainly no reverence for Earth our home of tangible natural resources, there is no compliance with the Earth Charter nor the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development! The statement betrays an understanding that humans are decoupled from their environment<sup>21</sup>. The development of ‘knowledge’ is viewed as the resource with priority to be ‘developed’ and made competitive. Yet, we know, that without natural resources—water, fertile soils, and the other life forms existing in harmony and balance these forms of life will perish and indeed are perishing. Wisdom is nowhere in sight.

In India these public or development projects have resulted in tribal’s losing land and livelihood. Without the conservative life practices of the tribal’s, the land is raped and pillaged for ‘resources’ in support of globalized development. Our values and sense of ‘public purpose’ is linked with the application and enforcement of judicial systems. Anthony Dias has traced this in his recent book *Development and its Human Cost* “Poverty, indignity, misery and distress in the tribal areas may not be due to lack of economic growth but rather paradoxically it is because of it” (Dias, 145, 2012) Political unrest is evident across the nation and an increasing amount of land now lies barren, water contaminated or gone completely and human suffering is increasing.

Globally we are in a massive extinction of species, not seen since 65 million years ago when the dinosaurs vanished from Earth because of the aftermath of a meteor collision with Earth<sup>22</sup>. Many wonder why this is not front page news. This current extinction and massive human suffering, however, is the result of the unbridled activities of the human driven by the dream of a dysfunctional cosmology. The 65 million year Cenozoic geological era, which gave birth to the human, 6 million years ago, is ending. For progress to be valid it must include the entire Earth in all its aspects. We cannot designate the human plundering of the planet as ‘progress’. This is a distortion.

Remembering the earlier quotes of Johnson, Fowler, and Rukmani, the crucial move for humanity to make at this point in time is to heal this sense of alienation and Cartesian consciousness and move to a communion and religious consciousness giving birth to a new sustainable Ecozoic<sup>23</sup> Era. Only then will we be able, in the words of cultural historian

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<sup>21</sup> The mission statement for the US Department of Education has a similar vision of the need for competitive skills. It states “ED’s mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access” downloaded 10 May 2012 [www.ed.gov/about/landing.jhtml](http://www.ed.gov/about/landing.jhtml). It has not been amended since I downloaded it originally in 2007! No wonder we have such difficulties communicating in the Rio, Copenhagen summits!

<sup>23</sup> *Ecozoic Era* Term coined by Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme (*Universe Story*) to mean our emerging geologic and cultural time when humans live in unity with nature instead of exploiting it and endangering all. It

Thomas Berry, to “evoke the psychic and spiritual resources to establish a new reciprocity of humans with the Earth and one another”. This same sentiment can be seen to underlie various documents from the United Nations, in particular those from the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD).

“Education for sustainable development (ESD) is a vision of education that seeks to balance *human* and economic well-being with *cultural traditions* and respect for the *earth’s* natural resources. ESD applies *transdisciplinary* educational methods and approaches to develop an ethic for *lifelong learning*; fosters respect for human needs that are compatible with sustainable use of natural resources and the needs of the planet; and nurtures a sense of *global solidarity*. ESD integrates concept and analytical tools from a variety of disciplines to help people better *understand* the world in which they live.” ( UNESCO, 2010, ESD in Brief)

These documents and others with a similar call have been in circulation for a long time. They have been ineffective because the fundamental problem of cosmology has not been addressed or models developed to heal it. Because the idea of education is still linked with schools and not with coed our chicken or egg dilemma persists. However, by inserting the word ‘cosmology’ in the above ESD quote we have a statement which would fit in any family, school, work place or recreation<sup>24</sup>. For example: Schools for sustainable development is based on a cosmology that seeks.....Families for sustainable development is based on a cosmology that seeks.....Corporations for sustainable development is based on a cosmology that seeks.....Recreation for sustainable development is based on a cosmology that seeks.....

How do we redesign and foster a chicken with another coed?

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is based on a consciousness of our shared ancestry and interdependence with Earth. Andrew Cohen who was recently sponsored for a speaking tour around India by Times Foundation calls this awareness *Evolutionary Enlightenment* in his book by the same name. These concepts and references to the works of Berry and Swimme were recently published in 26 February, 2012 edition of TOI *Speaking Tree* and earlier editions.

### 3. What is possible for the future?<sup>25</sup>

It may be that the “new environmental ethic” toward which so many environmental philosophers aspire--an ethic that would lead us to respect and heed not only the lives of our fellow humans but also the life and well-being of the rest of nature--will come into existence not primarily through the logical elucidation of new philosophical principles and legislative strictures, but through a renewed attentiveness to this perceptual dimension that underlies all our logics, through a rejuvenation of our carnal, sensorial empathy with the living land that sustains us. Such recuperation is, perhaps, already underway. (Abram 1996, 69)

To heal our alienation we need to shift our understanding and root metaphor<sup>26</sup> from Cartesianism (the autonomous individual) to that of being a participant in an interdependent ecological system, Earth, and an open evolving universe. This shifting reshapes values and heals the Cartesian heresy. To do this Berry (1999) suggested a “fourfold wisdom” to guide us into the future. To help recover and become responsible to a deeper dimension of existence the wisdoms of science, religion, tribal’s/indigenous and women are placed in conversation with each other<sup>27</sup>. Each has a contribution to make toward an integral wisdom tradition for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Six universal core values<sup>28</sup> held within the worlds religious and indigenous traditions have emerged through this conversation. These are ‘reverence, respect, restraint, redistribution, responsibility and renewal’. The distinctive functioning and common support

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<sup>25</sup> In ATD symposium question three is a chance for participants to be energized and inspired by the emerging groundswell of committed action around the world, giving birth to a new society in relation to environmental sustainability, social justice, and spiritual fulfillment. This is hope in action responding to ‘blessed unrest’

<sup>26</sup> C. A. Bowers has consistently written of the need to address our underlying cosmology when considering efforts of sustainable education. Bowers is also aware of the dangers of critical and liberation pedagogies for ignoring cultural patterns available that can be retrieved for sustainable living e.g. religious traditions, indigenous wisdom etc which are examples of “intergenerational knowledge and systems of mutual support that enable individuals and communities to be less dependent on consumerism” (Bowers, 2003, 158)

<sup>27</sup> This conversation is seen at Yale University, USA in the development of a Masters degree in Religion and Ecology, collaboration between the schools of Divinity and Environment. At Dominican College, California, all students are required to take a course in ‘Big History’ (the Universe Story) and all course work at the college is placed in conversation with the Story. Microsoft Bill Gates has funded a curriculum development project in 2012 at the College and in Australia. The first International Big History Association meeting will be held in August 2012 for educators to share notes and ideas on how to teach the Story, as well as the implications of the Story on any of our life practices. Our project could be linked to theirs. The 2011 “*Journey of the Universe*” film is being viewed on all PBS (Public Broadcasting System) stations across the United States. This film and accompanying educational series will be included in our project.

<sup>28</sup> These universal values were identified as a result of a series of conferences and publications involving 600 scholars, religious leaders and environmental activists between 1996 and 1998. The collaborative project was initiated by the Centre for the Study of World Religions at Harvard for exploring the various world religions and their relation to ecology and resulted in the series of edited books e.g. *Jainism and Ecology, Christianity and Ecology, Indigenous traditions and Ecology, Hinduism....Islam....etc and Ecology*. Mary Evelyn Tucker and her husband John Grim facilitated this and then formed the Forum on Religion and Ecology.

[www.fore.research.yale.edu](http://www.fore.research.yale.edu)) The Forum is the largest international multi-religious project of its kind. Mary Evelyn reiterated the importance of these universal values in a 20 April 2012 panel response to a keynote lecture given by Amartya Sen “Towards an Ethos of Inclusion- A Contribution to the Post-2015 Development Dialogue”. Sen’s concern was the decoupling of economics and policy making from moral and conscientious reflection. By focusing on cosmology it is easy to show that because of humanity’s decoupling from Earth, it is understandable that our values are not supportive of a particular kind of moral and conscientious reflection. ([www.ustream.tv/recorded/21986213](http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/21986213))

of each is helping many around the world to make the shift to an interdependent understanding of life and ways of living in which all can flourish. Fostering this fourfold wisdom facilitates the integration of concepts and the development of analytical tools envisioned by UNESCO Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Making use of these particular transdisciplinary methods and approaches supports the ESD vision of education. The method evokes other values and reshapes human desires ‘that are compatible with sustainable use of natural resources,....a sense of global solidarity.....to help people better understand the world in which they live.’

### **An Ecological Model for Educational Reform of Values**

“As in much of tribal religion, we seem to be returning to the figure of the teacher as healer; not the one who lays claim to the title of healer but the one whose effect on a community is healing. There may come a time when great visionaries arise who can point the way out of the desert night. For the present, we can only help people to stand fast, with their souls in readiness, until the dawn breaks and a path becomes visible where none suspected it” Gabriel Moran 1997

### **The Wisdom of Women**

#### **Awakening to the Body: Self and Universe**

Through feminist analysis women around the globe have effectively brought to light the various hegemonic practices of patriarchy. Women in ‘developing’ countries pointed out various practices that women in ‘western’ countries were doing that were oppressing them. Bonds of solidarity and compassion grew. Some of these feminists evolved their thinking to embrace an ecofeminist analysis when realizing the issue we were facing was one of cosmology. Their exploration and analysis brings to light the Cartesian cosmology underlying patriarchy and that the cosmology is also contributing to the demise of Earth and the increasing displacement and suffering and conflict for the majority around the world.. They recognized this was because temporal and sacred realities were considered erroneously incompatible and that the sacred reality was assigned to life after death. Men have also contributed to this discussion, but because women’s bodies have been objectified in Cartesian culture, women seem to have researched and published more extensively and about bodily experiences in the fields of women’s spirituality and education. Starting with feminist analysis, women wrote about the mind/body split, body alienation, dualism and how this was perpetuated in school classrooms and religious institutions. Theologian Sallie McFague calls for an ‘attentional epistemology’ writing:

“Christians have often not been allowed to feel at home on the earth, convinced over centuries of emphasis on otherworldliness that they belong somewhere else--in heaven or another world. The profound ascetic strain within the tradition that has feared too close association with human bodies has extended this as well to other animals and the body of the earth” (McFague 1993, 102)

Women in the field of pedagogy recognized that the formation of their epistemology and body alienation began in school rooms and that this disassociation perpetuated injustice. One

way of capturing the inheritance of Cartesian cosmology and concurrent values in schools is through the field of curriculum studies<sup>29</sup>. Maria Harris refers to three curricula that institutions teach—the explicit, implicit, and null curricula. Harris writes of the latter:

“The null curriculum is a paradox. This is the curriculum that exists because it does not exist. It refers to areas left out and procedures left out. And the point of naming it and including it here is critical; ignorance is not neutral. Not being educated in something skews our perceptions, limits our alternatives, narrows our options”(Harris, 1988, 245)

Blythe McVicker Clinchy reflects on the narratives of alienation, repression, and division documented in the groundbreaking research, *Women's Ways of Knowing*. Clinchy writes: “At the start of the project, we saw little connection between the two sets of issues--epistemological development and feelings of alienation; later, we changed our minds about that” (Clinchy 2003, 31).

Addressing the null curriculum and retrieving a religious sensibility has been the focus in women's spirituality groups. Affirmation of the body in an attentional epistemology heals the Cartesian divide. Awakening is listed by Maria Harris as the first step taken by women in the seven-step Dance of the Spirit. Experiencing the senses alive, Harris writes:

“The Awakening of spirituality starts with this special form of sensual attentiveness, which all of us possess, to feeling, touching, seeing and hearing, as well as to movement, gesture and rhythm.... We will wake up as women to the essential connection between body and spirit, and come to know that the way to spirituality, and therefore the way to God and to everyone and everything else is through the body...and in the connection, never in the separation, we will begin to cultivate a rich inner life” (Harris 1989a, 11).

Question One reviewed the explicit and implicit values of Cartesian curriculum are competition, autonomy, etc. I came to realize that the null curricula of Cartesian culture is our somatic sense of unity. The responses from acknowledging our ‘whereness’ are the values currently suppressed within the null curriculum: reverence, respect, restraint, redistribution, responsibility and renewal.

### **Wisdom of Tribals**

Native American philosopher Anne Waters casts her spotlight on the ways of indigenous coed, underlying values, and that there are other ways of living together. Waters writes:

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<sup>29</sup> This type of analysis of cosmology and educational philosophy could also be applied within family, work and recreation

Worldviews embed value judgments. Values arise from particular places and historical events/experiences in those places. Value judgments are markers informing subjects about which aspects of the observed are important, and which are unimportant. Value judgments are markers informing the subject which attributes are to be paid attention, and which are not; which attributes are to be recognized and which are not. Perhaps, and most important, they mark which attributes are acknowledged as being (having existence) in the world, and which are not (to be). (Waters 2004, 162)

Tribal wisdom and mystical thought in the world's religious traditions have consistently expressed the understanding that separation is an illusion. The basic framework for indigenous coed is an intimate and complex set of inner and outer place-oriented environmental relationships. Indigenous peoples know Earth is interconnected and fuelled by Divine agency. Simon Cajete clarifies: "It is this relationship to a place which the Acoma Pueblo poet Simon Ortiz refers to as "that place Indian people talk about....This is not only a physical place with sun, wind, rain water, lakes, rivers and streams, but a spiritual place, a place of being and understanding" (2001, 621)

Indigenous ways of knowing around the globe<sup>30</sup> reveal a people aware of the unity of creation whose cultural practices have supported the awareness of the integrity of creation for thousands of years. They pay attention to different somatic experiences, and foster different values. Their goal is not to progress but to survive as a group. Their group includes 'all my relations' the human and the non human. Tribal ways of knowing and values are in sharp contrast to life practices and values in Cartesian culture. We have a lot to learn from them, yet paradoxically it is the dream of Cartesian culture that is destroying them and their habitats in the name of development<sup>31</sup>.

## **Wisdom of Science**

The wisdom of science, our 13.7 billion year Universe Story also shows that we are bound together. It also serves to offer us a new story (NEED STORY BLURB FROM SWIMME) this. We do not live in a static mechanistic cosmos, but an ongoing cosmogenesis. Over the 13.7 billion years, the universe entered into 'thresholds' of increasing complexity. Thresholds is a term used by David Christian, Craig Benjamin and Cynthia Stokes Brown to describe the entrance, doorsill/transition point at which the Universe/Earth enters into a new stage of greater complexity...transcending, yet including the earlier stages of development. The thresholds of the Universe Story identified by scientists to date have been: Origins of the Universe, origins of stars and galaxies, death of stars, formation of solar system and Earth, evolution of life, appearance of human beings, transition to agriculture/sub-threshold: first cities and states, and industrial revolution and fossil fuels.

The realization that the cosmos is not static and that it is still unfolding invites us to new possibilities. Humanity, with this awareness of molecular interconnection, a.k.a. 'integrity of

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<sup>30</sup> I have not had access to the publications of tribal/indigenous peoples from India so am including those from the tribals of North America. Although tribes vary in customs throughout their various bioregions in the world, each shares a coed practice of bioregional conservation bound by a sacred trust.

<sup>31</sup> The global history of indigenous peoples is becoming known as they themselves access positions of power in the dominant culture, publish their ways of knowing and find friends and allies who acknowledge their ways of living as lessons for sustainable living and advocate for their survival.

creation', is being invited to co-create in a sustainable way in this transition time. The response to the magnificence and grandeur of the process becomes the energy and "responsibility" to ensure its continuity. Knowing we are stardust, from an earlier threshold, this redefinition of self, a universal Earth membership, expands our notion of "social" and social responsibility. Our social network and social responsibility at the molecular level is Earth, human and non human in a dance of co-creation. Understanding the 'integrity of creation' in the words of indigenous scholar Tink Tinker, "will then most naturally include other individuals and communities of human beings. And justice and then peace will flow out of our concern for one another and all creation." (Tinker, 1989, 536).

To effectively reshape the design of our world view and evoke values that will offer correctives for our environment, social and spiritual concerns we first need to heal ourselves. By healing ourselves we can point the way to our colleagues, a public spiritual direction. Engaging the fourfold wisdom unexamined assumptions and values that are operative culturally in themselves and others allows the dawn to break and another way forward based on a faith in 'the integrity of creation' the opening line of the Earth Charter 'Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe...'. Another set of values become operative in compliance with the ethical framework of the Earth Charter.

#### 4. Where do we go from here?

Climate chaos, brutal economic inequality, and social disintegration are jointly pushing human communities to the brink. We can either let the processes of destruction, disintegration and extermination continue unchallenged or we can unleash our creative energies to make systematic change and reclaim our future as a species, as part of the earth family. We can either keep sleepwalking to extinction or wake up to the potential of the planet and ourselves.

Vandana Shiva

“In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century all human institutions, professions, programmes and activities must now be judged primarily to the extent to which they inhibit, ignore or foster a mutually-enhancing Earth/human relationship” Thomas Berry

#### Conclusion

Within the 8 May edition of *Times of India* is an excellent example of a ‘disparity of cult’ of educational philosophies. Guru Speak on page 15 urges young people to

“Enjoy Life, but Live Within Means....There is general lack of awareness among the young about the importance of financial planning or on the knowledge of financial products, they need to be guided to answer all their how’s, what’s and whys”.

The author is a financial manager, concerned about India’s GDP and for youth to develop money saving practices. His advice is not from an Earth perspective. While saving money is a conservative survival strategy, saving ones bioregion for the next seven generations is a conservative practice of long term survival. Ironically on the other side of the sheet, made transparent in the light is a “Speaking Tree” article from Andrew Cohen author of *Evolutionary Enlightenment: A New Path to Spiritual Awakening*. A side bar, “Sacred Space” offers a quote from Rabindranath Tagore

“I am willing to serve my country, but my worship I reserve for ‘right’ which is far greater than my country. To worship my country as a god is to bring a curse upon it.” (Home and World).

Tagore is one of three poets honoured by the UN<sup>32</sup> for their ability to foster a reconciliation between humanity and environment. Tagore would be horrified to see the extent to which the peoples of India have embraced and worship the nation state and have lost the ability to worship the land. Their minds are no longer free and are tethered to financial security.

From an evolutionary coed Guru Speak’s phrasing would be perhaps to foster *Dharma* in another way:

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<sup>32</sup> UN/UNESCO 180 EX/Decision Rabindranath Tagore (2011) Pablo Neruda (2012) and Aime cesaire (2013)



“Enjoy life, but live within means (sustainably). There is general lack of awareness among the young about the importance of Earth planning (sustainable living) or on the knowledge of Earth products (the long 11 billion year Earth gestation and what Earth has made in four billion years another identify of adulthood) They need to be guided to answer all their how’s, what’s and whys.”

Holiness does not dissolve, it is a presence  
Of Bronze, only the sight that saw it faltered and turned from it.  
An old joy returns in holy presence.

Denise Levertov