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INTEGRAL REVIEW

A Transdisciplinary and Transcultural Journal For New Thought, Research, and Praxis

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Integral Education



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January 2015 Special Issue Introduction

Issue Editor: Bahman A. K. Shirazi

Once again, we are gratefully delighted to share with the readers of *Integral Review* another cross-section of scholarly writings based on the Founders Symposium on Integral Consciousness at the California Institute of Integral Studies in this special issue!

The first few articles in this issue represent a cross-section of topics in integral education ranging from integral methodology to pedagogy. We start with *Integral Education in Light of Earthrise* by Craig Chalquist. This article explores the relationship between integral education and the emerging terrestrial consciousness—a consciousness of interdependency, sovereignty, and earthly responsibility. It asserts that integral education is well positioned at this time when urgent environmental catastrophes threaten our planet, to help us recover an integral relation with the universe and our planet Earth, and contribute to restoration of a sense of earthly wonder and reverence.

The next article by CIIS president, Joseph L. Subbiondo, titled *The Dynamic Unity of the Opposites: Haridas Chaudhuri's Integral Method and Higher Education*, highlights CIIS founder's principal methodological approach known as Integral Dialectics and its related principle of the 'dynamic unity of the opposites,' as an essential aspect of his unique model of integral education. Integral dialectics aims at reconciliation of what appears to the mind as polarized conceptual opposites and engages the totality of human experience, educating the whole person beyond the dualistic rational methods of Western education.

My article titled *Integral Epistemology and Integrative Methodology* provides an introduction to integral epistemology and integrative methodology through a discussion of basic ontological principles of integralism and their implications for developing integrative approaches to knowledge. As an application of the integral dialectical approach the current dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative research methods is reconciled by showing that various research methods belong to a wide spectrum of methodologies that correspond to an integral epistemological gradient. Lastly, I discuss 'integral dialectical synthesis,' 'unity-in-diversity,' and 'analytico-synthetic integration' as three basic strategies for integrative research.

The next article is a unique collaborative project by a group of fellows and teachers from the Integral Teaching Fellowship Program at CIIS titled *Positionality as Knowledge: From Pedagogy to Praxis*. In this article, the authors Sara Maria Acevedo, Michael Aho, Eri Cela, Juei-Chen Chao, Isabel Garcia-Gonzales, Alec MacLeod, Claudia Moutray and Christina Olague help the reader better understand the epistemological relevance of positionality in integral education and critical pedagogy, encouraging students and educators to recognize their social positionings and reflect on how the institutionalization of their social identities not only inform the lenses through which they view the classroom, but also influence how they participate in the classroom. By employing an integral learning model, a learning community is transformed into a



dynamic positioning field, in which students and educators interact and co-create knowledge beyond their habitual or institutionally imposed positionings.

The final article in this subset is an example of integral scholarship by a current CIIS student, Robert V. Burke, who explores two personal non-ordinary state spiritual experiences in the context of traditional yogic potentials, also known as siddhis, in his article *Manifest Transpersonal Experiences: Aṇimām and Laghimā Siddhis*. Such experiences which are not likely to be discussed in traditional higher education exemplify the nondual, non-rational and non-ordinary transpersonal states through a specific discussion of how *aṇimām siddhi* of infinitely small somatic perceptions and *laghimā siddhi* of levitation are manifested.

The next two articles are philosophical in their scope. First, Karabi Sen in her article titled *The Restoration of Wholeness* explores one of the key principles of integral philosophy—wholeness. Sen argues that integration is a developmental process which takes place in time and space. The self matures, shines and brings itself to fruition only through trials and tribulation due to loss of wholeness—without which we would not have a vision of what constitutes wholeness; nor would we aspire after its retrieval. Sen asserts that the journey to integration is difficult when we separate ourselves from our fellow humans and other forms of life or see ourselves as different from the soil and air and water that make us. Once we see ourselves in all that surrounds us and recognize them in ourselves uniting is not hard any longer. When we unite with the world we achieve a united, harmonious, whole self within as well.

Individuation, Cosmogesis and Technology: Sri Aurobindo and Gilbert Simondon by Debashish Banerji is a fascinating exploration of the philosophy of conscious evolution emerging from different cultural backgrounds and historical eras. Banerji argues that the idea of conscious evolution, which has sometimes been seen as a philosophical consequence of Darwin's evolutionary theory in the life sciences, is more importantly related to the enhanced scope of human subjectivity made possible by technology. This essay considers the ideas of two generations of thinkers, focusing on Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) from the earlier generation, and Gilbert Simondon (1924-1989) from the more recent era, questioning the consequences of contemporary technology in their thoughts, goals and practices. In developing the historical continuity of ideas, it tracks the question of technology from the earlier to the later generation, highlighting the understanding of both its promises and its ills and engaging with it the possibilities of conscious evolution.

Our last article is an integral psychospiritual case history of Etty Hillesum, a Jewish woman whose letters and diaries kept between 1941 and 1943 describe life in Amsterdam during the German occupation. *Unfolding Toward Being: Etty Hillesum and the Evolution of Consciousness* by Barbara Morrill is an account of the unfolding of Etty Hillesum's developing consciousness from an integral individual evolution of consciousness perspective. In the introductory section some parallels and similarities between aspects of transformation of consciousness and personality in integral yoga psychology and the work of A.H. Almaas and Karen Johnson, the developers of the Diamond Approach, is drawn upon to set the stage. Subsequently, based on her diaries, the spiritual and psychological journey of Etty Hillesum is examined in the context of the stages described by the Diamond Approach's method of inquiry.

CIIS owes much gratitude to Integral Review for providing the opportunity for this publication!

Bahman A.K. Shirazi
San Francisco, December 2014

Integral Education in Light of Earthise

Craig Chalquist¹

Abstract: This article explores the relationship between integral education and the emerging terrestrial consciousness—a consciousness of interdependency, sovereignty, and earthly responsibility. It asserts that integral education is well positioned at this time when urgent environmental catastrophes threaten our planet, to help us recover an integral relation with the universe and our planet Earth, and contribute to restoration of a sense of earthly wonder and reverence.

Keywords: CIIS, Earthise, Ecology, Ecopsychology, Ecospirituality, Integral Education, Sri Lalita, Tripura Sundari.

In 1912, the supposedly unsinkable RMS *Titanic* sank, ending its career on the bottom of the sea, exactly where the gods of the Greeks had confined the Titans, those gigantic, inflated, world-offending powers whose acts of hubris against the natural order laid them low. Perhaps a useful question to ask as the oceans rise might be: How can integral education as we tend it at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) equip humanity to evolve beyond unsustainable, unjust, world-wrecking titanism?

"Integral" is a word with many meanings, but they all derive from a Latin word for "complete, whole." Here at CIIS we use it to mean forms of education that bring together wisdom traditions, fields of knowledge, and embodied practices into meaningful new combinations. How we teach here embraces not only the intellectual, but also the experiential and the applied, or to say it in shorthand: not only the mind, but the body and spirit. As a depth psychologist I would add *soul*, not as a metaphysical entity but as the felt sense of what is numinous, surprising, and enchanting. A root of "integral" is *tangere*, which means "to touch."

In 1968, the year CIIS was founded, astronauts from Apollo 8, the exploratory project whose mission patch bore an infinity sign joining the Earth and the Moon, saw our planet rise in beauty over the lunar horizon and were captivated—touched. Although they never fully emerged from their state of awe, they did take some marvelous pictures up there without fully realizing that the images announced a new era.

¹ **Craig Chalquist**, PhD., is the program chair of East-West Psychology at CIIS. Craig focuses his scholarly writing and teaching on depth psychology, ecopsychology, qualitative research, Systems Theory, ecotherapy, and mythology from a psychological perspective. He practices what he refers to as "Deep Education": the kind that invites the human relationship to nature, elements, creatures, and Earth to shift from mere utility to deep appreciation. He also trains psychotherapists in ecotherapy techniques, has presented at Bioneers, and gives local presentations on "Gardening and Mental Health." Craig is on the editorial board of the journal *Ecopsychology* and a member of the International Association for Ecotherapy.

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This conjunction of events strikes me as meaningful and anticipatory. A few years before the astronauts beamed the famous Earthrise photograph back home, Rachel Carson (1962) published *Silent Spring* to warn the world of the dangers of unregulated pesticides. As new CIIS students witnessed dialogues between depth psychology, shamanism, Buddhism, and tantra, as Earthrise spanned the gulf of scientific inquiry and soulful response between planets and within the hearts of appreciative spacefarers, as Dr. Martin Luther King lay in peace after giving his life for what he called the Beloved Community, as demonstrators marched for peace and equality in Chicago, Atlantic City, Mali, Mexico City, Paris, and Prague, and as bombs stopped falling in Vietnam, the world watched as a new terrestrial consciousness, a consciousness of interdependency, sovereignty, and earthly responsibility, began to melt away archaic dualisms of nation, gender, religion, and race. "You see the whole Earth," stated Joseph Campbell (1991) in the year of his death, "without any national divisions at all." (p.41). This dawn of Earthrise, and of what Sean Kelly (2010) refers to as the Planetary Era, also heralded the gradual rapprochement of self and world, culture and nature, inner and outer, celestial and terrestrial. As Earth rose up and shone in collective consciousness, humanity beheld a vision it had never seen, not in a million years of evolutionary and preevolutionary time: our homeworld glimpsed as a whole entity. "With our view of Earthrise," Campbell stated in an interview,

we could see that the Earth and the heavens were no longer divided but that the Earth is in the heavens. There is no division and all the theological notions based on the distinction between the heavens and the Earth collapse with that realization. (Joseph Campbell quoted in Marler, 1987, p. 61)

He also referred, as would the astronauts who came later, to "the opening of the heart and eyes to the wonder of the world we're in" (p. 61).

Why is this sense of deep appreciation and wonder of our planet so important? Read the latest environmental news and you will see the grim results of their lack. We will not protect and cherish what we do not love. The environmental crisis now upon us presents, on many levels, a crisis of the capacity for reverence. My question has evolved somewhat: What can integral education contribute to this sense of earthly wonder and reverence? How (as I ask my students) might we feel truly at home on our homeworld?

Wonder and reverence for the beauty of nature and Earth have never been scarce at CIIS. In 1972, Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri, co-founder of CIIS, gave a speech here in San Francisco—the city, be it noted, where the United Nations Charter was signed—about the work of his teacher Aurobindo Ghosh. In that speech Dr. Chaudhuri spoke of bringing spiritual realization down into physical presence, an action with the potential of transforming our material lives into an expressive image of the Divine. Citing Sri Aurobindo, he described this as "a cosmic evolutionary process" that could lead to "the establishment of mankind's age-long dream of the kingdom of heaven on this planet." These ideals link the personal, the spiritual, the cultural, the cosmological, and the planetary (Chaudhuri, 1972, para. 12).

In 1975, Father Thomas Berry, who loved the natural world and called himself a geologist, held up Sri Aurobindo as an exemplar of meeting contemporary troubles with ancient spiritual practices and insights. Berry wrote, "He decisively answers those who say that Indian spirituality

has nothing to contribute to modern humanity and insists that Indian spiritual traditions are fully capable of entering into the modern world of science and historical development."(Quoted in Ohara, 2014, p. 86)

For Aurobindo, as for Berry (2009), "The political and economic, the scientific and technological, the artistic and the literary, the spiritual and the religious are all valid forms of human existence that must be preserved, developed, and integrated with one another." (p. 15). Sri Aurobindo's spiritual partner Mirra Alfassa, usually known as the Mother, was even more emphatic about the earthly base of deep spiritual work. Criticizing practices that take leave of planet and body in search of higher realms, she asked,

Why should life have begun at all if it is only to be climbed out of? ... Evolution is not a tortuous path which brings us back, somewhat battered, to the starting-point. It exists in order to teach the whole of creation the joy of being, the beauty of being, the grandeur of being, the majesty of a sublime life and the perpetual development, perpetually progressive, of this joy, this beauty, this grandeur... It is on earth that we progress. It is on earth that we can accomplish. It is in the body that the Victory is won. (Alfassa, 1977, p. 424)

The land stewardship at Auroville, which she founded, demonstrates the ecological dimension of her vision.

To emphasize the continuing Earth connection at CIIS I would draw your attention to the school's logo of interlocking triangles. These are the yantric emblem of the Indian deity affectionately known as Sri Lalita, "She Who Plays," Tripura Sundari and the Red Goddess. Ancient depictions associate her strongly with aspects of the natural world, from the pot of honey she holds to her lotus, her lion throne, and her arrows made of flowers. Her hair is said to smell like flowers, and in some tales she is herself symbolized by a red flower. She created fire and gods and stars, grew mountains from her breasts, and she wears the sun and moon for earrings. Yet she is also associated with cities and urban places, suggesting that in her eyes, nature and culture need not stand in opposition. She rode around on a chariot built of light.

Although Sri Lalita is as lovely and seductive as an idyllic landscape or a purely flowing river, she can be a demanding deity, for she asks us questions for which we find no ready answers. How shall we tend the natural world from within the urban heart of cities as towers rise all around us? How can we be responsive to Earth's needs from within a square building? How do we teach renewed nature access with so little of it to rely on here?

We take our cue from nature: we make do.

Our faculty include adventurous souls who have performed fieldwork in indigenous communities, taught dance in sacred sites and shrines, and gone outside to counsel the poor. We do art and photography in nature, at home, in the classroom, and in the streets. We have courses in ecopsychology and Earth-rooted spiritual practices and programs in Integral Ecology and Ecology, Spirituality, and Religion. Some of us have worked with Joanna Macy, a true elder and mentor in her a lifetime of dedication to the Great Turning away from an industrial growth model

of society toward urgent visions of a life-sustaining civilization. Our feminism courses include ecofeminism. As of last summer CIIS became a signatory of the Earth Charter, an international blueprint for a just, peaceful, and sustainable world community. The East-West Psychology department, has created a Certificate in Ecoresilience Leadership to train participants in how to guide groups of people frightened into helplessness by climate change news move beyond denial and paralysis into reflection and effective action.

One of the oldest dualisms challenged by the image of Earthrise, a dualism as old as writing, places everything pure and green outside in Nature and everything mechanical and degraded in the city, which we leave on excursions or vacations into still-verdant locales. But why not invite the greenery into the city? Our faculty, staff, and students quest for visions in the desert and the jungle, but they also bring back some of what they find out there. At CIIS we even make our own honey. The Red Goddess would like that—just don't tell her we named it after one of her sisters.

I am sometimes asked what relevance our integral learnings and psychospiritual practices still possess now that multiple environmental catastrophes have begun to sweep the entire planet surface. My reply is: "More than ever." In the words of Thomas Berry (1999),

To recover an integral relation with the universe, planet Earth, and North America needs to be a primary concern for the peoples of this continent. While a new alignment of our government and all our institutions and professions with the continent itself in its deep structure and functioning cannot be achieved immediately, a beginning can be made throughout our educational programs. (Para. 11)

Having briefly mentioned some of our many points of departure in this project of deep homecoming, I would like to suggest that Sri Lalita holds forth a strategic hint about how to proceed in an increasingly imperiled world in which icecaps melt and liberties vanish even faster.

The ancient stories tell us that when the demon Bhandasura was born of the ashes of destroyed love, Sri Lalita and her followers rode to battle with him on elephants, peacocks, horses, eagles, swans, and, in her case, on a chariot pulled by a lion. Music wafted forth from its turning wheels. When she appeared in the field, Bhandasura laughed at her. What was this soft, lovely creature doing here? How could she hope to stand against him, who had hurled even the powerful god-king Indra from his heavenly throne?

Sri Lalita did not deign to fight him on his own violent terms with his own destructive methods. Instead, she unleashed an arrow made of flowers. Its name was Kameshwari, an expression of sacred feminine power. Arcing unstoppably through the sky, it penetrated its target and dropped him with a mountain-shaking concussion. As she stood over her fallen opponent, Sri Lalita knew she could destroy him easily now, but she chose instead to revive him, but not in his ugly form as Bhandasura. No. Rather, she restored him to his original form, that of the divine being he had been before his decline to ashes and darkness: Kamadeva, the god of love and desire.

If you can't beat 'em, transform 'em.

Sri Lalita bears within one of her many names an emphasis on the number three. For example, she holds in her hands the sources of three capacities or powers: will, wisdom, and action. The documentary film *A Fierce Green Fire* showcases all three as the first major documentary on the environmental movement, one of the oldest and most successful movements for cultural transformation. The film takes us through five decades of environmental activism on a global scale. Drawing on interviews, archival footage, and the scientific expertise of biologist E.O. Wilson, among others, the film touches on the early conservation movement, the fight against pollution in the 1970s, the often risky work carried out by Greenpeace to protect endangered sea life, the struggle against rainforest-depleting globalization, and twenty-five years of uphill steps taken to halt the ravages of climate change, recently described by Bay Area activist Rebecca Solnit as a sustained act of unnamed violence.

The film takes its name from a transformational moment in the life of Aldo Leopold. In his book *A Sand County Almanac* Leopold (2001/1949) describes how, having just shot a wolf,

We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes—something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters' paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view. (p.11)

As a result of this encounter Leopold became a lifelong advocate of what he called the land ethic: “The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land” (p. 171).

That land is a community, is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics. A land ethic, then, reflects the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of land. We can be ethical only in relation to something we can see, feel, understand, love, or otherwise have faith in. (Leopold, 2001/1949, p. 171)

Thomas Berry (1999) would agree. When he was a boy, his family moved near a creek flowing by a meadow:

It was an early afternoon in May when I first looked down over the scene and saw the meadow. The field was covered with lilies rising above the thick grass. A magic moment, this experience gave to my life something, I know not what, that seems to explain my life at a more profound level than almost any other experience I can remember (Para. 1).

This early experience, it seems, has become normative for me throughout the range of my thinking. Whatever preserves and enhances this meadow in the natural cycles of its transformation is good; what is opposed to this meadow or negates it is not good. My life

orientation is that simple. It is also that pervasive. It applies in economics and political orientation as well as in education and religion and whatever (para. 3).

He adds:

We might think of a viable future for the planet less as the result of some scientific insight or as dependent on some socio-economic arrangement than as participation in a symphony or as renewed presence to the vast cosmic liturgy. This insight was perhaps something that I vaguely experienced in that first view of the lilies blooming in the meadow across the creek (para. 22).

"Cosmic liturgy" recalls the scientific-poetic teachings of Brian Swimme, of course, who knew Berry and whose demonstrations of the mystery and beauty of the universe not only win awards but invite us to feel at home in the starry cosmos

The reverential tone of Leopold and Berry and Swimme remind me of Alice Walker's. In an essay she wrote:

What I have noticed in my small world is that if I praise the wild flowers growing on the hill in front of my house, the following year they double in profusion and brilliance. If I admire the squirrel that swings from branch to branch outside my window, pretty soon I have three or four squirrels to admire...And then, too, there are the deer, who know they need never, ever fear me (Walker, 1988, p.189).

All these voices represent a legacy of love for a world in decline, a world that cannot recover without a foundational change in collective consciousness away from numbness and disregard toward a deeper recognition of our innate caring for the things around, below, and above us. As Annie Dillard expressed this caring in her book *Teaching a Stone to Talk*:

In the deeps are the violence and terror of which psychology has warned us. But if you ride these monsters deeper down, if you drop with them farther over the world's rim, you find what our sciences cannot locate or name, the substrate, the ocean or matrix or ether which buoys the rest, which gives goodness its power for good, and evil its power for evil, the unified field: our complex and inexplicable caring for each other, and for our life together here. (Dillard, 1982, pp. 19-20)

And so we gather to consider reverence for life and planet in the rising light of Earthrise, the anticipatory mythic image, perhaps, of a just, peaceful, and nature-loving civilization to be assembled from the ground up out of many soulful centers, one of which, perhaps, is here.

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The Dynamic Unity of the Opposites: Haridas Chaudhuri's Integral Method and Higher Education

Joseph L. Subbiondo¹

Abstract: This article focuses on Haridas Chaudhuri's methodological principle known as *Integral Dialectics* and its related principle of the *dynamic unity of the opposites*, as an essential aspect of his unique model of integral education. Integral Dialectics is a methodological principle which is informed by the integral ontological principle asserting that human psyche and cosmological principles on the whole are interrelated and interdependent, and that holistic knowledge of reality presupposes a holistic and integrated psyche. Integral dialectics is a process of reconciliation of what appears to the mind as polarized conceptual opposites and engaging the totality of human experience, the whole spectrum of human consciousness, and educating the whole person beyond the dualistic rational methods of Western education.

Key Words: Haridas Chaudhuri; Integral Education; Integral Dialectics; Integral Philosophy.

Soon after Haridas Chaudhuri's death in 1975, members of the Cultural Integration Fellowship, the parent organization of CIIS, along with faculty and staff of the California Institute of Asian Studies (as CIIS was known then) edited a collection of essays that draws upon Dr. Chaudhuri's many recorded lectures. The collection, entitled *The Evolution of Integral Consciousness* (Chaudhuri, 1977), reflects the broad range of Dr. Chaudhuri's scholarship: it includes chapters on several academic disciplines including education, history, philosophy, psychology, and science. I will focus my attention on a chapter entitled "Methodology" because in it, Chaudhuri discusses his unique method and dialectic and how they inform his vision for, and design of an integral education. He explains in detail how the Indic principle of "the dynamic unity of the opposites," a concept contrary to Western logic, is an essential part of his unique model of integral education.

The chapter begins with Chaudhuri's expansive vision of integral education—an education inspired by Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga; an education rooted in the notion of an integral universe; and an education developed without precedent in the United States. Haridas

¹ **Joseph L. Subbiondo**, president of CIIS since June 1999, has an accomplished background in both administration and academics. He brings over 30 years of achievement in higher education, including appointments on several international academic committees; and he has been active on many accreditation teams for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Prior to coming to CIIS, he served as Dean of the School of Liberal Arts at St. Mary's College of California; Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of the Pacific; Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Santa Clara University; and as a professor of English and linguistics at four universities.

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Chaudhuri's integral education grew out of his deeply held practice of integral Yoga, as he claims:

Yoga ... literally means unity and control. It signifies the union of man with God, of the individual with the universal reality, of each with ALL of existence... But Yoga also means control, that is to say, appropriate self discipline. [Yoga] does not stand for any rigidly fixed rule, to which all should conform. ...The important thing is that every individual should have the opportunity of growing from the root of his own being, following the bent of his own nature, along the lines indicated by his own physical make-up towards the full flowering of his individuality as a unique creative centre of the cosmic whole. (Chaudhuri, 1965, pp. 21-22)

Dr. Chaudhuri integrates this framework into his philosophy of education. He states:

The more we understand the essential structure of the universe as a whole, the more we gain insight into the structure of man. The obverse is also true. The more we understand the essential structure of man, the more we gain insight into the unfathomable mystery of Being. (Chaudhuri, 1977, p.85)

Dr. Chaudhuri maintains that in the complexity of human nature, like in the complexity of the universe, we will discover the "dynamic unity of all opposites" (p. 85). He notes that the "The path leading to this insight [the dynamic unity of the opposites] may be described as integral thinking" (p. 85). For Dr. Chaudhuri, "The method of integral thinking represents a dynamic integration of the scientific, phenomenological and dialectical methods of the West and the self-analytical, psycho-integrative, non-dual value disciplines of the East" (P. 85). In this one comprehensive statement, he provides us with as concise a summary of his concept of integral education as any he or anyone has written.

In Chaudhuri's view, "Our knowledge and civilization began with the unity of all disciplines ... and that [original discipline of unity] was Philosophy" (p. 91). He points out that as scholars studied and created an increasingly wider range of knowledge, they greatly expanded the number and role of disciplines and sub-disciplines. He concludes that the growth of the disciplines has made us realize that we need to reduce their number through synthesis. He suggests: "Now again [as in the past] we are feeling the need for harmonizing all the fragments of knowledge into a comprehensive synthesis, which would be a very sophisticated kind of unity" (Chaudhuri, 1977, p. 91).

However, while designing an education that draws many disciplines together and offers a holistic view of knowledge, Chaudhuri recognizes that the disciplines are valuable if they are not excessive in number. He acknowledges that some academic disciplines, for example philosophy, history, and psychology, are needed to for us to have a substantial understanding of the whole of knowledge. He writes:

All disciplines of human knowledge are in essence organized systems of ideas or verbal propositions. They represent abstractions of thought from the concrete fullness of the real,

designed to fulfill some definite goal or purpose of life—whether intellectual, ethical, religious or political. (Chaudhuri, 1977, p.87)

Chaudhuri recognizes that higher education has moved beyond the point where one method can be applied effectively to all areas of human experience and to all disciplines, because each area and discipline requires its own method. Yet, he insists that no matter how well advanced an area or a discipline may be, it presents a limited and fragmented view of the whole. He maintains that no ideological scheme or discipline could mine “the multidimensional fullness of the universe” (p. 87). He contends:

There are some universal truths which from the standpoint of every discipline of knowledge can be conceptualized, can be expressed in terms of that particular discipline. The same truth can be translated into every discipline of knowledge... (Chaudhuri, 1977, pp. 90-91)

Thus, even though the disciplines have been separated, Chaudhuri acknowledges that they continue to remain interrelated. For example, he notes “...in the study of psychology, the behavior pattern of a human being dynamics can hardly be fully understood without reference to the conscious and unconscious motivation dynamics of man acting as an individual or as a group” (Chaudhuri, 1977, p.86).

Chaudhuri advances the idea that “Since a thought system is then essentially a map, to be distinguished from the territory of the real, it is unthinking confusion to equate it with reality itself” (p. 87). Here he draws on the core principle of the General Semantics Movement: “The map is not the territory.” In the *Epilogue to The Evolution of Integral Consciousness*, Dr. Chaudhuri (1977) cites the work of the founder of this movement, Alfred Korzybski (1879-1950) who in 1933 published a very influential book, *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics* in which, as the title suggests, he challenged Aristotelian logic and the foundations of Western thinking. Given the impact of this book (Korzybski, 1933) on Haridas Chaudhuri’s approach to knowledge, I will comment on it.

I was delighted to see this reference because early in my studies of linguistics, I was and continue to be impressed by Korzybski and the General Semanticists. Korzybski was born in Poland, educated at Warsaw University of Technology, and migrated to the US. He argued that we are confined by the structures of our language and thought, and we do not have direct access to reality—even though we often think so. We only have abstractions of reality. Typically, we confuse our perceptions (*the maps*) with reality (*the territories*). Moreover, our misperceptions regarding language and thinking mislead us regarding the nature of facts. In his first book, *Manhood of Humanity* (Korzybski, 1921), he explored his notion of the human being as the “time binder” species capable of passing on knowledge to future generations of the species; and in doing so, changing culture. Korzybski’s work became the basis for the General Semantics Movement, and following the publication of *Science and Sanity* (Korzybski, 1933) he lectured widely at universities throughout the US.

Korzybski and the General Semanticists taught a variety of techniques to help people realize how they misunderstand “facts” and confuse their perceptions with reality. For example, he

taught a technique he referred to as *indexing* in which we assign each individual a number in order to avoid generalizations about people (e.g. Mary 1, John 2, etc) and *dating* in which we identify each person by a date to remind us that people change from moment to moment. Korzybski was well received by many of Haridas Chaudhuri's contemporaries including Isaac Asimov, Gregory Bateson, William Burroughs, Kenneth Burke, Buckminster Fuller, Samuel I. Hayakawa, Robert A. Heinlein, Alvin Toffler, Alan Watts, and Benjamin Lee Whorf.

Chaudhuri (1977) believed that "the universe is the ground and the comprehensive unity of all thought systems without itself being a determinant system" (P. 87), and that this idea leads to a "non-dogmatic and non-doctrinaire attitude, to a genuine respect for opposite viewpoints and to a synoptic vision of the universe in its integral fullness". He states that a "closed mind is the worse enemy of balanced growth" (p. 88) and that "True respect for others is born of the vision of truth in others" (p. 88).

He notes:

When we focus our love and devotion on one thing – one particular creed, country or conceptual system – as the only ultimate reality, our psychic energy becomes sharply polarized. Attachment and advocacy are bestowed upon the beloved object, the deity. The impulses of hostility and disgust are forcefully directed against any opposition, the menacing evil. Thus a love/hate syndrome develops within the psyche. It corresponds to the God/devil dichotomy in the outside world. (Chaudhuri, 1977, p. 89)

Chaudhuri connects integral thinking to his notion of the identity of the opposites:

Integral or non-dichotomous thinking rejects both the metaphysical as well as the theological interpretation of dichotomies of thought in absolute terms. Dualities are neither sharp divisions in reality nor irreconcilable opposites of value and disvalue... [but] in essence complementary half truths clamoring for reconciliation in unifying categories of comprehensive thinking. (Chaudhuri, 1977, p. 90)

Chaudhuri explains that connecting ideas with their opposites is important for advancing education because it brings ideas into sharper focus. He recognizes that the identity of the opposites, contrasts with basic assumptions of Western thinking, and that it is antithetical to Aristotle's Law of the *excluded middle* which holds that the opposites cannot allow for a middle, or any possibilities in-between. Chaudhuri strongly maintains that denying a middle ground between contradictories leads us to many dichotomies. He notes:

... in Eastern culture, which has been predominately mystical and spiritual, it is just the opposite – the doctrine of the middle path is emphasized. The discovery of that middle is the secret of synthesizing opposites. Everywhere in actual life we find that opposites meet, and there is always a middle ground which it is our task to discover, because that gives us the secret of balanced growth or integrated self-development. Also, this is the secret to attaining an integral vision of the total truth. (Chaudhuri, 1977, p.90)

The term *Dialectic* has its origins in ancient Greek rhetoric, and it traditionally refers to a method of reasoning and/or discussion. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Kant (1724-1804) used the term to refer to discourse dealing with apparent contradictions, Hegel (1770-1831) referred to *thesis* and *antithesis* merging into *synthesis*, and Karl Marx (1818-1883) referred to the contradictions in politics and history due to material needs. Chaudhuri (1977) defines *integral dialectics* as “a methodological postulate of the integral world view. It is also the most essential technique of integral self-actualization or the full flowering of the human potential (p. 92).

Drawing on Hegel’s work, Chaudhuri (1977) maintains that “The human mind’s quest for truth is the movement of consciousness from the dynamic tension between opposites (thesis and antithesis) toward more and more inclusive synthesis embracing the wholeness of Being” (p. 93). He cites the extensive pioneering work of Hegel and Marx in Western philosophy to develop dialectical idealism and dialectical materialism respectively. However, he concludes that both dialectical methods are limited because they are exclusively grounded in Western rationalism with its bias on dualistic logical thinking.

Chaudhuri (1977) proposes an integral dialectics that includes more than logic as it begins “with the indivisible totality of human experience, with the whole spectrum of human consciousness, of which sensory experience and intuitive apprehension of the whole are two inseparable poles” (pp. 99-100). Alluding to Marx, Chaudhuri (1977), argues that...

No matter to what extent the economic and political structure of a society be drastically overhauled, until and unless there is a real transformation of inner consciousness – a genuine change of heart, as Gandhi would say, exploitation and injustice can hardly be eliminated from society. (p. 95)

Chaudhuri (1977) insists on a more holistic view that “Human problems are of a psychological, ethical, and intellectual nature as well as economic and political” (P. 95).

He advances that “Integral Dialectics focuses on the most fundamental dualities of life and reality –matter and mind, nature and spirit, world and God, the phenomenal and the transcendental, etc.” (p. 95). For him, “The essence of Integral Dialectics consists in reconciling such polarities into the kind of comprehensive unity of which they are seemingly conflicting, but really complementary self-expression” (p. 96). Such ideas are unprecedented in the history of U.S. higher education.

In the final part of the chapter, Chaudhuri offers an illustration of his integral dialectics by focusing on the philosophical search for truth and the spiritual quest of self perfection. In making his case for unifying the opposites, he was very aware of the complexity of the task. It is a very heavy lift in Western higher education; but at the same time, he clearly recognizes that U.S. and European colleges and universities need to integrate ancient Eastern wisdom into their contemporary models of education.

The many advances in knowledge resulting from the empirical method of the 17th century Scientific Movement, the Age of Enlightenment, certainly attests to the value of a dualistic model of education. Nonetheless, the fact that it has dominated higher education to the point that

it has discouraged, if not dismissed, the consideration of any alternative model has limited the capacity of Western higher education. I fully agree with Robert Bellah's (2006) description of the defenders of dualism whom he refers to as *enlightenment fundamentalists*, and his complaint that they have prevented free and open inquiry into the nature of knowledge. Consequently, it has been and continues to be extremely difficult in US higher education for a university to have academic credibility and maintain institutional accreditation while challenging the dualistic educational paradigm of the academy.

We should be grateful to our regional accrediting body, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) for accrediting CIIS for the past 45 years despite CIIS' non-conventional acceptance of non-dualistic ways of knowing. Given the resistance in American higher to non-dualistic studies, it is remarkable that CIIS not only has survived, but that it is thriving with increasing appeal to more and more students. In fact, I am convinced that CIIS succeeds today precisely because it advances a non-dualistic model of education, or what we could refer to as *Post-Enlightenment Higher Education*. CIIS faculty and students consistently indicate that it is our alternative educational model that attracts and retains them. Moreover, our integral model of study and practice as promoted by our faculty, students, and alumni are contributing to an emerging receptivity in the U.S. to *Post-Enlightenment Higher Education*.

Dr. Chaudhuri insightfully saw half a century ago what many are beginning to realize today: namely, that higher education needs to embrace integral thinking and education. He passionately believed that "... only when we shall experience this transition from the dualistic... thinking to the non-dualistic way of seeing everything, can the ideal human society or the global society be founded." (Chaudhuri, 1977, p.82)

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Integrative Research: Integral Epistemology and Integrative Methodology

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Abstract: This article provides an introduction to integral epistemology and integrative methodology through a discussion of basic ontological principles of integralism and their implications for developing integrative approaches to knowledge. After a review of classification of approaches to research, integration is introduced as a research strategy that can be applied to various modes of scholarship and within specific research methods. It is argued that the current dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative research methods may be reconciled by showing that various research methods belong to a wide spectrum of methodologies that correspond to an integral epistemological gradient. Lastly, three basic strategies for integrative research: Integral Dialectical Synthesis, Unity-in Diversity, and Analytico-Synthetic Integration are discussed.

Key Words: Haridas Chaudhuri, Integral Dialectics, Integral Epistemology, Integration, Integrative Methodology, Research Methodology, Sri Aurobindo.

The holistic impulse is the integrative urge of our total being in which instinct and intellect, passion and reason, impulse and law, emotions and thought, self and society, psyche and cosmos, intermingle in an all-embracing organic relationship. The great challenge of our time is to restore this organic relationship by sound educational methods.
(Chaudhuri, n.d., p. 54)

Introduction

An integral or integrative approach to research methodology is based on an integral epistemology, which is in turn informed by integral ontological assumptions and principles. Integral ontology holds that reality is multidimensional, and thus avoids the extreme positions that hold either matter to be real and spirit an illusory epiphenomenon in the case of materialism, or spirit to be the only legitimate reality and matter an illusion, as the case has been with many spiritual philosophies. In the integral framework of Sri Aurobindo both spirit and matter are considered real (Sri Aurobindo, 1970).

Several ontological and epistemological tenets are foundational to an integrative framework:

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- Reality is a multidimensional whole. All diversified appearances are expressions of an underlying unified whole.
- Experience of holistic truths presuppose and result from an integration of all levels of consciousness; i.e., unconscious, subconscious, conscious, and supraconscious.
- Highly integrated consciousness is characterized by transcendence of the dualistic framework characteristic of mentally dominated consciousness.
- At highly integrated levels of consciousness the duality between subject and object of experience disappears.
- Duality reflects the polarized structure of reality; *Dualism*, however, is the natural fallacy of the human mind that results in perception of opposites as essentially independent, rather than complementary aspects of reality.
- Symbolic abstractions (such as images, language and thought etc.) are not capable of representing the whole reality.

In the post-renaissance modern era there has been a firm separation between religion and science in the West. Science is primarily a method of investigation of material phenomena, and its findings are at best hypotheses and theories that have not been empirically rejected based on available evidence (Popper, 1959/2002). In other words, science is a method of knowing, rather than a body of knowledge. However, as many recent thinkers (Tart, 2009; Sheldrake, 2012) have noted, an unofficial fusion of materialism and science has produced a dogmatic belief system known as *scientism* which relies on either a conscious or an unconscious assumption that material reality is the only reality, and that all other phenomena such as emotional, mental, and spiritual phenomena are evolutionary byproducts of matter and the nervous system.

Material monism holds the fundamental assumption that only matter is real. In this view the metaphysical, including spiritual, realities are either deemed to be figments of human imagination, subjective beliefs, or illusions of the mind. These subjective states are believed to be the source of bias or error and every attempt is made to isolate or eliminate them. Objective observations are the building blocks of information that produce scientific facts which must be replicable and thus reliable as the basis of firm scientific knowledge under all circumstances. The so called positivist view which began emerging in the middle of the 19th century further sealed the scientific method by rejecting and excluding all metaphysics from science.

Many spiritual systems, in turn, hold that spirit is exclusively real, and matter is either entirely an illusion (e.g. *maya*), or is an extension or modification of spirit into space-time. Those worldviews that hold matter as being the only legitimate reality also subscribe to objective empiricism (knowledge by observation through sense-data) as the appropriate epistemological foundation for knowledge. They hold that objective observations of material phenomena, and testing and verification through empirical means are the appropriate approach to establishing valid knowledge. On the opposite end of the spectrum, subjective, immediate or direct knowledge of reality (knowledge by identity or gnosis) forms the basis for spiritual knowledge.

Integral philosophy holds that both matter and spirit are equally real and that there are multiple ways of knowing corresponding to various gradations of consciousness and reality. Spirit and matter are part of a wider spectrum of consciousness and Being that includes physical, subtle-physical, vital, and mental realms, as well as supramental and psychic consciousness, each

with many gradations and nuances (Sri Aurobindo, 1999, pp. 89-247). These teachings on various parts of being and planes of consciousness are summarized by Dalal (2012) in terms of two systems, a concentric and a vertical system. The concentric spheres are comprised of the *Outer Being*, the *Inner Being*, and the *Psychic Being*, each of which has a threefold mental, vital, and physical constitution. The vertical structure ranges from the *Inconscient*, to the *Subconscient*, and up to the *Superconscient* (which includes: higher mind, illumined mind, intuitive mind, overmind, and supermind).

This complex integral configuration of human consciousness has an epistemological implication; i.e., there are multiple levels of consciousness and thus multiple realities, and multiple ways of knowing. Based on the concentric system of Sri Aurobindo, it is possible to arrive at a simplified epistemological framework we may call an *integral epistemological gradient*. The *Outer Being* refers to our physical body and the five senses which interact with the external material environment. This is the domain of traditional or objective empiricism which is the basis of scientific methodology.

The *Inner Being* is the realm of subjective and subliminal consciousness and is potentially quite vast and multilayered. As consciousness is turned inward we might first encounter a layer that corresponds to what phenomenologists call essential structures of consciousness. Here our main method of knowing is subjective empiricism, or observation of the inner layers of consciousness right below the external forms. Deeper still, there is the realm of subtle physical and subliminal phenomena perceivable only through the subtle senses (e.g. clairvoyance, clairaudience). As we approach the *Psychic Being* we engage with what is known as knowledge by identity or immediate knowledge, also referred to as gnosis in mysticism. Here there are no more forms, gross or subtle, but pure meaning or direct knowing.

Whereas modern science stops at the level of objective empiricism, qualitative methods developed in the latter part of the twentieth century include the surface layer of subjective consciousness, and yoga and mysticism have long advocated gnosis or knowledge by identity. The integral epistemological gradient, in congruence with all-inclusiveness and multidimensionality principles, provides an inclusive framework that validates the relative positionality of all of the above.

The Methodological Spectrum

The impressive panorama of research methods available to researchers today is generally discussed in terms of two major categories: *quantitative* and *qualitative*. These two terms often stand at sharp contrast, or some degree of polarity, with respect to one another. The term *quantitative* readily reflects the nature of measurement strategies employed by such methods. The term *qualitative*, however, implies something more than just a non-quantitative, or less quantitative approach to measurement. It carries with it the disapproving attitude that qualitative researchers often show toward the methodological approaches and epistemological span of the adherents of the "received view" (the traditional positivist scientific epistemology). A similar attitude is held by the majority of statistically oriented, hard scientists towards their qualitatively oriented colleagues.

This paper offers some suggestions that are intended to help reconcile this existing polarity by introducing the *spectrum approach* to research methodology. I will also discuss briefly the nascent field of integrative research methodology. It is my hope that further light may also be shed on some general ways in which research methods are understood and classified.

Classification of Research

Before introducing the *spectrum* approach to research methodology, I will make some preliminary clarifications regarding the ways in which research methods are typically classified. Although there is general clarity regarding the distinction between research methods and research design in most texts, the criteria according to which research methods themselves are classified are to some extent implicit.

In general, research methods may be distinguished as *empirical* and *non-empirical*. Empirical methods employ diverse means of observation and data gathering, descriptions, analyses and interpretations. Natural sciences employ *quantitative* methods as their preferred choice. Human and social sciences make use of *quantitative*, *qualitative* and *mixed methods*, as well as non-empirical methods. The humanities rely for the most part on non-empirical methods such as hermeneutics (text interpretation), literary, or logical analyses.

Another way to classify research is in terms of the number of participants (sometimes referred to as co-researchers or subjects) involved in a specific study. The term *nomothetic* (norm-based) refers to studies that involve a sample of "subjects" often divided into sub-groups as required by a given research design. Average scores computed through statistical procedures are typically the basis on which generalization are made to a larger population using inferential statistical methods. The goal of normative research is to establish descriptive, correlational, or causal relationships that are generalizable to formulate descriptive or explanatory 'laws' within specific theoretical frameworks.

This epistemological ideology is much influenced by the modernist, scientific world view, a tradition that is interested in inferring 'natural' or 'universal' laws (believed to govern the universe, yet ordinarily hidden from the naive observer) by means of generalizations through inductive or hypothetico-deductive procedures. Generalizations are made based on results obtained from samples and by means of statistical inferences. Qualitative epistemologists and methodologists have questioned the appropriateness of this approach to the social sciences in general, and to psychology, in particular.

The *idiographic* method refers to studies that involve only one subject/participant as in single-case studies. An early advocate of this method was Gordon Allport (1962) who drew attention to the individual uniqueness principle and its importance in psychology. Ideographic methods are generally acknowledged as valid methods of study, although their low external validity (power of generalization) is always pointed out as a limitation.

Research may also be classified according to the disciplinary framework or approach to the subject matter at question. *Single-discipline*, *eclectic*, *comparative*, *interdisciplinary*, and *transdisciplinary* methods belong to this system of classification. The eclectic approach draws on

various fields or areas of human knowledge. Its goal is to broaden the scope of inquiry beyond pre-established disciplinary limitations. The comparative method involves contrasting two or more perspectives or approaches to a given topic or subject matter. Comparative methods often evaluate underlying assumptions and presuppositions adopted by alternative or diverse means toward the same end. The *interdisciplinary* approach involves attempts to bring together related, yet distinct fields of knowledge. Its goal is to shed light on a specific area or subject matter in further depth, using the knowledge base and methodologies employed by two or more disciplines. Interdisciplinary methods can be instrumental in studies that involve multidimensional subject matter under investigation. For example, the human brain is a highly complex phenomenon the study of which requires in-depth knowledge of anatomy, neurology, molecular biology, psychopharmacology, and biochemistry, to name a few. In some cases all of the disciplines involved use the same basic methods (e.g. quantitative / experimental or quasi-experimental). In other instances, interdisciplinary approaches are not as easy to establish. For example, the study of human menstrual cycle may require collaboration among several disciplines such as gender studies, biology, cultural anthropology, developmental psychology, and endocrinology. Here, it is not easy to readily reconcile methods adopted by these individual disciplines in isolation.

Sometimes multidisciplinary approaches result in the creation of a new discipline altogether, such as psychoneuroimmunology, which results as the confluence of psychology, neurology and immunology, not just toward addressing a certain research problem, but as an entirely new discipline. *Transdisciplinarity* is a mode of scholarship that crosses or transcends disciplinary boundaries to create a holistic approach. It utilizes concepts or methods that were originally developed by one discipline, but are used by others.

Research methods may also be classified in terms of the strategic rationale or intended epistemological goal. It is in this sense that integrative methods are best understood. Research strategies include analytic, synthetic and integrative approaches. The above information is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Classification of Research Methods

Classification Criteria (levels of inquiry)	Category	Category	Category
Ontological/ Epistemological	Empirical: relies on observation. Data may be qualitative or quantitative, from field or laboratory. Methods: Experimental, Quasi-Experimental, Descriptive (non-experimental)	Non-Empirical: Text or other media based. Examples: Historical/archival Hermeneutic (text/content analysis) Secondary use of empirical data	
Epistemological/ Methodological/ Source of data	Qualitative Rarely uses numbers as sources of data or for analysis of data. Data may be empirical	Quantitative Uses operationalized variables and scales of measurement (nominal/ ordinal/ interval/ratio)	Mixed methods Employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches or sources of data.

	(based on observation) or non-empirical (text-based) and is primarily descriptive.	to convert concepts to numbers to perform mathematical/statistical analyses of data.	
Number of participants	Idiographic: focuses on a single individual profile and emphasizes uniqueness. Data could be qualitative (descriptive) or quantitative (descriptive statistics/demographics).	Nomothetic (normative approach): uses inferential statistical methods (sampling and generalization).	
Mode of Scholarship	Single discipline based Methods are specific to disciplinary boundaries.	Eclectic: non-methodical use of knowledge or information beyond one's area of specialization. Comparative: use of two or more disciplines to address the research problems via compare/contrast method.	Inter/multi-disciplinary: two or more disciplines/ often involves methodological fusion and may lead to creation of new disciplines. Transdisciplinarity is a mode of scholarship that crosses disciplinary boundaries to create a holistic approach to knowledge.
Process/Strategy	Analytic: breaks down wholes to study components.	Synthetic: synthesizes components to arrive at wholes.	Integrative: seeks integration of human knowledge. May use analytic, synthetic, analytico-synthetic, or dialectical approaches during phases of research while embracing various modes of scholarship.

It is important to keep in mind the difference between mode of scholarship and research strategy when it comes to understanding what integrative research implies. An integrative strategy can be employed in any mode of scholarship.

Integrative Methodologies

Haridas Chaudhuri articulated the basic principles of integrative methodologies in his article titled *Integral Methodology*, published posthumously as a chapter in *Evolution of Integral Consciousness* (Chaudhuri, 1977). A key requirement for integral methodology is adaptability and responsiveness to evolutionary demands. The present section is titled 'integrative

methodologies' as it would be inconceivable to postulate a single methodological framework that is capable of fulfilling this basic requirement. According to Chaudhuri (1977): "Integral thinking recognizes that one uniform methodology cannot be blindly applied to all areas of human experience and to all disciplines of knowledge" (p. 85).

However, certain broad guidelines could be useful for practical applications. Marx (1978, pp. 78-81) suggested the following summary of epistemological principles that convey the basic postulates of integral epistemology as envisioned by Haridas Chaudhuri:

- Truth is more than conceptual.
- The basic structure of reality is that of unity-in-diversity: it is nondual and has a polarized structure, and therefore is a unity of opposites.
- The basic nature of reality appears to be comprised of multi-leveled continuums and can be perceived from a multiplicity of perspectives.
- An evolution of integral consciousness is taking place on an individual and collective level.

A basic function of an integrative method is to reconcile apparently conflicting expressions and dichotomies. To this end, integral methodology proposes and utilizes the doctrine of the identity of opposites. Socrates called this doctrine the law of the golden mean; the Buddha taught it as the doctrine of the middle-path. In the Taoist tradition opposites are considered to be complementary, not contradictory to one another. In short, truth is to be found half way between the two extremes.

One of the general goals of integral epistemology would be to reconcile the dichotomy between the quantitative and qualitative approaches. Although the terms empirical and quantitative research are closely associated, they are not synonymous. In fact, almost all empirical/quantitative studies make use of both quantitative and qualitative steps in their procedures. A typical quantitative study starts with certain qualitative concepts that are then operationalized and converted into concrete and measurable terms called variables or factors. These operationalized terms are measured using one or more of several scales of measurement such as nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio scales and their associated statistical tests. Nominal and ordinal scales are less quantitative where numbers designate symbols or categories and require non-parametric statistical tests; whereas, interval and ratio scales use numbers arithmetically and require parametric statistical procedures. Most importantly, when the statistical analyses are performed, the results that are typically stated in numerical terms must subsequently be interpreted in qualitative terms and eventually explicated in the theoretical framework of the study, or the background literature.

Various research designs differ in the degree to which they involve qualitative and quantitative phase or procedures. A first step in the reconciliation of qualitative and quantitative methods involves deconstructing the qualitative-quantitative dichotomy and presenting the diverse range of research methods in terms of a spectrum. Such a spectrum will have at one extreme end highly quantitative methods involving parametric statistics and the use of the ratio and interval scales of measurement. It is important to remember here that even such methods involve certain qualitative steps. All observations start with meaningful terms that are

operationalized for measurement purposes. Numerical analyses are only an intermediate step in the overall process and are merely an aid to logical thinking and analysis. Results of even the most quantitative studies must be interpreted and explicated in terms of meaningful language of everyday life.

Parametric > Non-Parametric > Mixed Methods > Ethnographic > Hermeneutic > Heuristic

Quantitative >>

<<Qualitative

Moving along the spectrum, the next group of methods are those employing non-parametric designs and nominal and ordinal measurement scales. In such studies numbers are not strictly arithmetic and function as an aid in the process of analysis. Qualitative steps in such studies are required for final explications into a language that is non-quantitative.

This group is followed by mixed quantitative/qualitative approaches which employ a combination of sources of data, research methods, or both. Qualitative methods that involve some degree of quantification follow next. Examples are content analysis using computerized or other coding systems, or certain ethnographic methods that make use of numbers or categories. At the other end of the spectrum are the "soft methods" such as the heuristic, the phenomenological and other descriptive methods that make little or no use of numbers or categories and are instead interested in underlying essences or structures of knowledge.

On another level, while embracing the full spectrum of traditional research methods, an integrative framework may include eclectic, comparative, or interdisciplinary modes of scholarship as part of the overall design of a given study. For example, a certain study may utilize the integrative approach as its strategic rationale, and yet employ an interdisciplinary mode of scholarship. On the other hand, a traditional investigation may be designed to incorporate an integrative framework. For example, a phenomenological investigation may follow the traditional steps and reveal underlying essences as phenomenological studies do typically, and take further steps to integrate these essences; i.e., reconcile any possible dichotomous essences that may reveal themselves in the intermediate stages of the study.

The following are some of the guidelines that Haridas Chaudhuri (1974) suggested for building-in an integrative rationale into a traditional study:

- Integrative approaches involve theses that are established by either empirico-rational, or critico-dialectic methods.
- Theses are not merely rhetorical expressions of opinion, but are developed logically through balanced examination of opposite viewpoints.
- Theses should be broad-based upon empirical and phenomenologic grounds, relying on accumulated relevant data.
- Theses should contain a critical element; a critique of one's fundamental concepts and a priori assumptions. Theses should also contain a dialectical element; a balanced examination of opposite viewpoints, bringing out both positive and negative [proactive and reactive] features with an intention to arrive at comprehensive syntheses.

- An attitude of non-dogmatic inquiry is imperative in integrative research. Care should be taken to avoid searching for reasons, or empirical data to support foregone conclusions.

Research Designs for Integrative Research

On the epistemological level, integrative methods attempt to arrive at holistic knowledge. Integral methodologies could utilize quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods in the overall design of a study. The mode of scholarship of an integrative approach could range from disciplinary to cross/multi/trans-disciplinary. It is important to emphasize that integration pertains to research strategy, rather than mode of scholarship or a methodological choice.

Three general designs are suggested here for utilization in integrative studies. These are: *Integral dialectical synthesis*, *unity-in-diversity*, and *analytico-synthetic integration*.

Integral Dialectical Synthesis

Also known as *integral dialectics* (Chaudhuri, 1976), dialectical synthesis is a method of reconciling apparently dichotomous concepts or themes to arrive at higher orders of reality through a dialectical process similar to Hegelian dialectical method. However, integral dialectics is not merely an abstract process and involves intuitive, experiential, somatic and practical understanding as well. This design is generally useful when the intention of the researcher is to reconcile dichotomous concepts and arrive at syntheses on a more holistic level of understanding.

One way to achieve this goal is to engage in dialectical reasoning, as in the case of the traditional Hegelian dialectical method. Another approach may involve the examination of extreme viewpoints regarding a particular subject matter, and the establishment of a spectrum of perspectives or the middle ground between the two extremes. A third approach involves reconciliation of opposites by finding view points or perspectives from which it could be shown that the opposites are in fact complementary.

Unity-in Diversity

Another general integrative design involves the demonstration of the underlying unity of a diverse set of theories, world views, or perspectives. This method involves an in-depth investigation of the research question within each world view or perspective to reveal the underlying structures or the essential assumptions of the question as the initial step. The next step involves a comparative component that demonstrates the similarity or identity of the underlying essences discovered independently. For example, one may examine several different world views such as Eastern or indigenous traditions and unveil implicit or explicit ecological principles embedded in these traditions. Then by pulling together these essential principles, one could develop an integral ecological model.

Analytico-Synthetic Integration

The goal of this procedure is to create parsimonious knowledge by, first, analyzing a large number of concepts, themes, or theories about a certain topic into their main constituent factors, and then re-synthesizing these factors into simplified models that not only reflect the common original themes, but reflect new knowledge as well. For example in a previous study, the present author surveyed four Eastern spiritual traditions as well as several Western schools of psychology on the topic of ‘self’. It turned out that in many traditions the self is understood at three principal spheres (egocentric, psychocentric, and cosmocentric) and this suggested that self in an integral psychological framework may be understood on the basis of the interaction of these three spheres of selfhood (Shirazi, 1994).

The method of analytico-synthetic integration includes two dimensions: conceptual and pragmatic. Conceptually, analytico-synthetic integration restates the principal characteristics of an integral approach; however, it further emphasizes the analytical component. The term synthesis denotes construction and suggests the necessity for some sort of structure. In the dialectical process, for example, a synthesis is constructed from the interplay of the thesis and antithesis. The resultant synthesis in turn becomes a new thesis, laying the foundation for another antithesis.

The word analysis refers to de-structuring or breaking down into components. This process is as essential to the process of integration as is synthesis. Almost endless examples of de-structuring or decomposition in the natural processes might be given; in fact, release of energy is possible only through de-structuring into components that regroup at a lower level of energy, thus releasing some surplus energy. On the other hand, synthesis requires additional energy. It is assumed here that analysis and synthesis are not diametrically opposed or antithetical to one another; rather, they are complementary opposites that are essentially inseparable. As such they are the polar modes of integration, thus allowing simultaneous unification and diversification, as well as creation of new forms in natural processes.

In logic, the deductive principle is an example of the analytic process, while the inductive principle represents synthesis. It is known in logic that a deductive operation, as in a syllogism, does not yield new knowledge; i.e., the conclusion is already implied in the major premise. However, it is possible through induction to arrive at a conclusion that cannot be inferred from any of the premises in isolation. In Aristotelian logic, though often not mentioned, the deductive and inductive processes were considered as two half-circles. Although deduction does not yield new knowledge, it helps unveil premises that can be utilized in inductive reasoning to arrive at new premises. The two half-circles as a whole comprise the full circle of logic.

Although there are numerous ways to design integrative research methods and algorithms, all integrative methodologies strive to arrive at parsimonious, multidimensional, non-dual, and holistic knowledge. Integral epistemology may employ divergent and convergent thinking, inductive and deductive reasoning, rational or intuitive understanding as means toward attaining its goal, the integration of human knowledge. In doing so, it makes use of new and creative or already established ways of conducting research and inquiry, while remaining evolutionary, non-dogmatic, open and self-transcending.

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Positionality as Knowledge: From Pedagogy to Praxis

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Abstract: In this article, the authors will draw from their work in the Integral Teaching Fellowship Program at CIIS, and from their interactive session in the 2014 CIIS Founders Symposium on Integral Consciousness to better understand the epistemological relevance of positionality in integral education and critical pedagogy. A critical approach to pedagogy (drawing from theorists such as Paulo Freire and bell hooks) encourages students and educators alike to recognize their social positionings and reflect on how the institutionalization of their social identities (such as the expert, the genius, the marginalized, the disabled) not only inform the lenses through which they view the classroom, but also influence how they participate in the classroom. By employing an integral learning model (variety of modalities), a learning community is transformed into a dynamic positioning field, in which students and educators interact and co-create knowledge beyond their habitual or institutionally imposed positionings. Supported by our own experiences as integral educators in training, we conclude that developing critical reflection, including previously subjugated perspectives, and gaining the ability to reposition oneself maximizes learning opportunities.

Keywords: Critical pedagogy, integral education, positionality, positioning.

A Note on the Authors' Positionalities

We feel it is consistent with the values of integral education and responsible in light of our subject for us to articulate our own positionalities as authors. Collectively we are a collaborative group of eight emerging from the inaugural semester of the Integral Teaching Fellowship Program at the California Institute of Integral Studies. With an emphasis on critical pedagogy, integral education, and liberatory teaching methods, the program aims to prepare graduate students to teach in the college classroom using innovative approaches to teaching and learning. Positionings within the group are complex. Six of us were fellows and two are the faculty members facilitating the program. Four of the fellows are doctoral students, one an MA student and one an MFA student. The faculty members both have MFA degrees. The authors are listed alphabetically not hierarchically reflecting our understanding that knowledge is co-created and socially constructed.

Earlier work together in the Integral Teaching Fellowship Program, and on the presentation at the 2014 CIIS Founders Symposium on Integral Consciousness that this article is based upon, had left a legacy of hierarchies, alliances, and tensions among us, which came to the surface early on in our collaboration, and which we have had to explicitly navigate during the process of writing this article. Writing collaboratively with even one other person can be a challenge, let alone fitting a close publication deadline into the busy schedules of seven other co-authors. We used personal and group check-ins, which had been a feature of the Fellowship, to stay in

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relation and to negotiate the hurts, conflicts, and tensions which arose. In our work together, as in the classroom, our positionings were not only present, but critically influenced our work. In this spirit, we will start this article by sharing a little about ourselves.

Individually we come from a wide range of positionalities:

Sara Maria Acevedo is a South American woman, she identifies as an immigrant “who passes.” She is a disability studies scholar and a cultural anthropologist focusing on social change. Her interests in scholarship range from feminist theory, to critical geography, to postmodern philosophy.

Michael Aho is a Finnish American straight white male, who was raised by working class grandparents, who works as a manager at a graduate school.

Eri Cela is doctoral student and a somatic psychotherapist, who identifies as an Albanian immigrant in the US, a transdisciplinary, and culturally hybrid.

Juei-Chen Chao is an Asian woman who grew up with Chinese Culture in Taiwan and migrated to the West in the US to receive higher education in her late 30s. She considers herself as a person of “in-between” because after years of immersing in the American culture, she is no longer fitting in the typical Chinese-Taiwanese culture nor becoming American. As a scholar in training, she intends to bridge differences between cultures and attempts to promote equality and diversity by raising awareness of institutionalized racism in her work.

Isabel Garcia-Gonzales is a first generation Filipina American, woman of color, mother, writer, educator, and administrative faculty member in an undergraduate program.

Alec MacLeod is an older university professor who identifies as a heterosexual white male born in the US of largely Anglo Saxon descent. He lives in Oakland with his multi-racial family. He is a faculty member in an undergraduate program.

Claudia Moutray is an Italian American woman who is a feminist with a conservative background that steered her down a liberal path that she continues to walk. She is a PhD student studying Women’s Spirituality, in her other life she is a swim team coach working with kids.

Christina Olague identifies as Chicana. She was raised until the age of 15 on a farm laborer camp and this experience influenced and helped to shape her interest in public policy and social justice issues. She served for 7 years on the Planning Commission of the City and County of San Francisco and 1 year on the Board of Supervisors. Raised Catholic, she has spent much of her life exploring different spiritual practices that include Northern European mysticism and Bon Buddhist practices. Currently she is a graduate student in counseling psychology.

Our collaboration has been a laboratory for learning about the challenges of not only appropriately valuing and incorporating this extensive resource of positionalities, but also of negotiating across a range of cultural differences and personal styles in the midst of complex personal and collective histories.

We will draw from our individual and collective experiences working on an interactive session for the Symposium at CIIS to ground our inquiry into the epistemological relevance of positionality in critical pedagogy and integral education. We will also present and reflect upon the content of the symposium, as well as the planning process itself—the challenging and fruitful work of co-creating knowledge. Finally, we acknowledge that the process of writing this article, as a collaborative group of authors, each with individual positionalities and shifting positions within the group, has also informed not only what we present here, but also what we do not present. In this article, as in the classroom, some positions are explicit, some are assumed, many are invisible and unknown, but all are impactful, even if their presence is not acknowledged.

Integral Education/Critical Pedagogy

The theoretical backbone of integral teaching and learning is rooted in the coming together of critical and integral approaches to education. These two distinct and often overlapping meta-approaches have developed in part as alternatives to conventional systems of education. The conventional educational models have been critiqued for practices that reduce and de-contextualize knowledge (Morin, 2001), preserve and reinforce hierarchical and dominant social orders (Freire, 1996; Giroux, 2007), and disenfranchise the knower from the production of knowledge (Freire, 1998; Shor, 1992; hooks, 1994). The industrialization of education (Giroux, 2007), organized around highly specialized and compartmentalized disciplines, produces knowledge that is disjointed and increasingly difficult to contextualize (Morin, 2001). The de-contextualization of knowledge is extended by removing the learner from the production of knowledge. Learning practices are reduced to memorization of information, acquisition of existing problem solving procedures, and to the reproduction of it all in the exact form it was served to the students (Montuori, 2006), in other words, students are reduced to the role of course takers (Lovitts, 2005). In this assembly-line approach to education (hooks, 1994), the students' lived experiences, identities, and their social milieus play little to no epistemological relevance in the production of knowledge.

In contrast, critical and integral approaches to education produce knowledge that contextualizes and connects (Morin, 2001). Knowledge is situated in the knower, socially constructed realities, and in the process involved in knowledge production. Integral education recognizes the multidimensionality of human beings and social systems (Chaudhuri, 1977) as well as the complexity in which the parts are woven together (Morin, 2001). Critical pedagogical practices challenge regressive and oppressive social orders, and encourage embodied learning, critical thinking, participation, and dialogue (Shor, 1992; hooks, 1994, 2010).

In integral education, both the learning community and its individual members are understood as complex unities. Therefore, an integral approach to education can be conceptualized as a process that invites and incorporates the lived histories of students and educators while at the same time mediating the multidimensionality of the academic setting and pedagogical discourse. An epistemological assumption of critical and integral approaches to education is that the learner's subjectivity and social positionings play an essential role in the practice of inquiry and knowledge production. The intersection of the identities and experiences produced outside the academic context with those produced in the pedagogical praxis add to the complexity of an integral learning community.

As previously stated, we authors first came together as six graduate fellows and two faculty members of a teaching fellowship program that focuses on integral education, critical pedagogy, and liberatory teaching methods. As part of the requirements of the program, we engaged in a body of literature chosen by the faculty members to develop a shared theoretical foundation for the teaching fellowship experience. Of particular relevance to our discussion here is the reading selection “How Does Your Positionality Bias Your Epistemology?” by David Takacs (2003). In it, Takacs asserted that we educators must ask the title question of ourselves and must support students to ask it of themselves. In other words, “How does who you are shape what you know about the world?” Takacs further explained, “By respecting the unique life experiences that each student brings into the classroom...we empower all students as knowledge makers. We allow each student to assert individualized knowledge that contributes to a collective understanding” (p. 28).

Takacs’ assertion that positionality can play a central role in the co-creation of knowledge in the classroom has relevance to Freire’s critical pedagogy; students who bring their life experiences and individualized knowledge are not “empty vessels” waiting to be filled by their professors. This allows for the democratic, participatory education that critical pedagogy aims to create. Further, Takacs’ insistence that positionalities be brought into the educational process speaks to Chaudhuri’s (1989) work on integral education, “which is based upon the concept of the total man and education which is based upon the total human situation, the global situation” (p. 78).

Interestingly, Takacs did not provide an explicit definition of positionality, but provided some examples, such as “ESL student,” “young Mexican woman,” “army wife facing financial hardship,” “white students,” among others. Later in this article, we will delve deeper into positionality definitions and theoretical frameworks, but it is important to start here, where we authors started, in our initial collective inquiry into the epistemological relevance of positionality in critical pedagogy and integral education. Perhaps because Takacs did not define positionality for us, our group engaged deeply in our own co-creation of knowledge to better understand and collectively define what we mean by this term. When we were invited to facilitate an interactive session in the Symposium, we knew we wanted to engage this concept of positionality and its relevance to us as integral educators interested in critical pedagogy, but we had yet to define it.

The space left by the missing definition opened up an opportunity for our group to undergo this process of bringing individualized knowledge and perspectives to create a more meaningful collective understanding. It is also important to note that the involvement in the interactive session was strictly voluntary and outside of the scope of the fellowship program. This shift from the structure of the fellowship program to an outside, volunteer collaboration shifted our internal group positions and relationships. No longer were the two faculty members the facilitators while the six fellows were the participants. While within the fellowship program the faculty members attempted to create a more horizontal learning environment (and thus model a critical approach to pedagogy) by rejecting an expert-centered model of education, now in this new formation, our roles were as eight collaborators and colleagues. This will be important in our later discussion of positionality and positioning. For now, we will only note that our group dynamic shifted, allowing for more fluidity among the participants and the roles we played in our group.

We then began the important and challenging work of collaboratively defining our terms and designing our session. Through periodic meetings and email threads that were often long, sometimes confusing or frustrating, but fruitful, we set about our collective inquiry, posing questions, adding our perspectives, affirming and challenging one another.

Theoretical Frameworks on Positionality

In the review of the literature for this article we came across two distinct but overlapping theoretical frameworks on the concept subject of position. The first, positionality theory grew from postmodern feminist theory (e.g., Harding, 1991, Alcoff, 1988, Collins, 1986). The second, positioning theory emerged from social psychology (e.g., Davies & Harré, 1990, Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991). Both theories attempt to critique the essentialist construction of subjectivity and the deterministic view of social participation. Specifically, contributors of positionality theory challenged the essentialist views of identity as fixed, on-going, and rooted in dominant individual and group characteristics (Kezar & Lester, 2010). They claimed that individuals occupy multiple identities, fluid and dialogical in nature, contextually situated, and continuously amended and reproduced (Alcoff, 1988). The positions from where we make meaning of—as well as engage with—the world are informed by our identities and lived experiences. Applied to our inquiry at hand, the traditionalist would view the student's (or the educator's) identities as independent of the learning environment and constant across contexts. In contrast, positionality theory would suggest that student's identities vary across contexts and inform as well as are informed by the individuals' positions in the learning environment. As such, “positionality theory emphasizes the position of or situatedness of identity” (Kezar & Lester, 2010, p. 166).

Positioning theory emerged in part as an alternative to role theory in an attempt to better account for the complexity of human participation in social settings. Davies and Harré (1990) critiqued the dramaturgical model of social psychology in which “people are construed as actors with lines already written and their roles determined by the particular play they find themselves in” (p. 52). Positioning does not reject social roles altogether, in fact, on one end our positions are informed by the duties and expectations particular to the roles and social discourses we inhabit. On the other end, positioning allows for the subjective histories of individuals—identities, personal attributes, experiences, as well as preconceived narratives and understandings of our social locations—to play a critical function in the production of interpersonal behavior (Harré, R., Moghaddam, F., Cairnie, T., Rothbart, & Sabat, S., 2009). In other words, positioning theory suggests that we are not simply actors of predetermined scripts, but also agents and authors in our social participation.

Other Models of Positioning

When we think about our “position” in the world, and more specifically about our position in society, we reflect upon the different roles that occupy us in our lives. In other words, when we inquire into the different ways in which we participate in our various communities: in our family, in our neighborhood, in our work, in our school/classroom, in our informal gatherings and in our formal gatherings alike, we come to the realization that we are in fact multifaceted individuals; we adopt different stances as we navigate different communities of interaction.

Our position in the world, according to the above definition of positionality, is radically shaped by our interactions (or, intersubjectivity). Disciplines in the social sciences, more specifically Sociology and Anthropology, have a tendency to describe human beings as “inherently social” – and this is to a large extent accurate (and debatable in other contexts). We agree that the social and cultural spaces we navigate are shared; that the lives that we lead are at once individual and collective, and that the shaping of our social world/s happens in collaboration with others (whether such collaboration is willful or enforced). In short, social relations shape the way in which we understand ourselves as individuals and, from that understanding, how we perceive and interact with others.

Virtually, no human interaction occurs outside of a shared social context. Meaning-making is one of the most fundamental social processes impacting our communal lives; as an embodied social phenomenon, it affects our very bodies as well as the perceived “reality” of the different human groups marked oppressively by “undesirable” attributes (e.g., poor, Latino/a, woman, disabled, immigrant, and fanatic). French semiotician and philosopher Barthes (1978) identifies language as an institution of power. Speech, he argues, serves as a key instrument in social stratification processes in as much as “once uttered, even in the subject’s deepest privacy, language enters the service of power” (as cited in Kearney & Rainwater, 1996, p. 366).

Other social theorists and philosophers such as Foucault (2005) concurred with Barthes: “in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures...” (p. 216). Additionally, in *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures au Collège de France*, Foucault (2008) argued that individuals are historically subjected to different forms of social inclusion and exclusion and are meticulously boxed into different categories and subcategories of being via discourse. He termed this set of procedures ‘biopolitics’ (or the administrative management of life), and he insisted that conceptual arrangements perpetuate operations of inclusion and exclusion through the reproduction of hierarchies of privilege and marginalization. The latter, in turn, shapes people’s experiences and positions in the world.

Conceptual stratification is often articulated around culturally assigned attributes such as gender, race, class, ability, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, political affinity, and religious/spiritual practice. These attributes are animated and brought into play in our interpersonal relations – in our relationship with our family, with our professors/students, with our employers/employees, and with people in the service industry; in the more macro-structural arrangements occurring in social institutions – our relationship with the law, and with the larger economic and political systems; and in the more overarching social sphere.

Because one of our tasks as integral educators is to explore and uncover shared social processes affecting the position of knowledge producers (especially those marked oppressively by race, class, gender, ability etc.), we wish to inquire into these processes from the “inside.”

We do so, to investigate into alternative pedagogical practices emerging out of more traditional contexts in education. Integral education is not necessarily modeled after dissident practices within traditional models of education, however we believe that an exploration of existing methodologies in traditional education can help to ground our understanding and

recognize the generative value of alternative practices in the classroom. One of our goals is to facilitate co-creative learning spaces, beyond the traditional university format, in a way as to re-imagine and integrate traditionally marginalized epistemologies in research design, curriculum, and teaching methods.

To this end, we follow on Collins footsteps to include an expansive notion of the “outsider within” status. On the function of this literary trope, Collins (1986) wrote: “this ‘outsider within’ status has provided a special standpoint on self, family, and society for Afro-American women [and other oppressed groups]” (p. 14). Although Collins’ claims are specific to the context of black feminist thought and its significance in “generating a distinctive standpoint on existing sociological paradigms” we briefly investigate into the implications of the “stranger” in traditional academic settings (p. 14). To introduce Collins’ ideas into the larger context of liberatory education, we touch on the theme of reflexivity in feminist research. We incorporate a handful of Chiseri-Strater’s ideas from her 1996 piece: *Turning in Upon Ourselves: Positionality, Subjectivity, and Reflexivity in Case Study and Ethnographic Research*. A thematic approach to Chiseri-Strater’s various roles/positions in the academy helps us to situate the topic of positionality in the context of integral education. To further illustrate this point, we look at the author’s integrative and interdisciplinary approach to research and education. Her role as a non-fiction writing and composition instructor enables her to establish significant connections between product (the finalized ethnography) and process (the ethnographer’s stance-position-location as well as the influence of subjective-contextual factors such as personal life story and experiences during the data collection phase). Chiefly, there are elements in Chiseri-Strater’s own situatedness (situation/awareness) as an instructor that emerge, out of experiential practice, as a teaching tool. In turn, her position as an instructor enables the author to speak critically to her own research methods.

The decision to include this piece as a part of our conceptual framework emerged out of a collective interest in exploring different approaches to positionality theory and praxis in cross-educational contexts. We are particularly interested in the ways in which Chiseri-Strater’s most compelling arguments and experiences translate into our view of integral education – especially as they prioritize non-traditional approaches to pedagogy (methodological disclosure) and alternative methodologies in ethnographic research (critical ethnography). As she put it, “my gender and training as a writing teacher positioned me to resist the non-interactive pedagogies—like antagonistic debate and strict lecture format—of other disciplines” (Chiseri-Strater, 1996, p. 122). She also shared that “the ethnographic researcher has to enlist the subjects of study as partners, as posers of questions, as people who can see and change their own experiences through interaction with ‘outside’ but politically interested teacher-researchers” (p. 123). This last point is of particular relevance to the kind of educational experience that we understand to be fully interactive, participatory, and therefore transformational.

Chiseri-Strater’s findings on gender differentials, expertise, and belonging speak extensively to the way socially assigned categories are not only embodied, but also performed in our day-to-day lives. Her remarks on the implications of biosocial elements, which are accepted as universal realities, but which are constructed, inform our own thought process and further solidify our critical stand as integral educators. We believe that there are real (embodied) implications of social stratification processes. These processes mark bodies as targets of exclusion, thereby

preventing them from fully participating of their immediate social and cultural words. We recognize that educational settings contribute to the process of social stratification, as they often times serve to “filter” through practices of knowledge-production. Historically, academic settings have been traditionally articulated around the creation and legitimization of “true” knowledge (following on the scientific method). As a result, many non-Western (ethno-communities) and Western communities of knowledge have been “denied entry” into the world of rational meaning-making. Colonialism in academia has and continues to marginalize particular groups and communities from contributing to the “collective” epistemological archive. These issues then, are not merely educational, but have a huge imprint in the way we conceive of education as a political matter affecting the lives of living-breathing human beings.

Because we believe in and practice an approach to education based on critical pedagogy and liberatory methods – giving special consideration to the work of intellectuals such as hooks, Lorde, and Freire – we see Chiseri-Strater’s non-traditional insights into education and literacy research through a shared lens. Some of her observations align with our own thought/writing process on this topic. One example of this synchronicity can be found in our understanding of education as a co-creative process, as opposed to the “banking system” model that Freire describes. In other words, we prioritize a framework in which different approaches to learning and different styles of teaching are integrated. Such methodologies are purposely situated in the context of integral education as “positioning” strategies; this concept will be further elaborated upon in a later section.

We have established above that a key point in Chiseri-Strater’s piece is articulated around the impact of cultural attributes (such as race, class, or gender) on the overall ethnographic process. More specifically, she examines the role of gender in shaping theoretical, methodological, and rhetorical approaches to literacy. The emphasis is placed on research strategy and includes the author’s own experiences as a woman in research practice. She does so by retrospectively situating herself with respect to her informants, her context of study, and her initial choices in research design. While carrying out research on the processes of literacy and composition in courses outside her discipline (more specifically in Art History), Chiseri-Strater remarked that, “while my role as a student allowed me to rapport with my informants, my status as a graduate student in composition marked me powerless from some of the professors who saw composition as a marginalized discipline” (p. 124). Similarly, her ethnographic notes on a Political Science class, whose professor she identifies as male, revealed that his spatial positioning in the classroom came across as rather territorial, and sometimes even unwelcoming. Lastly, the author’s (disclosed) field notes on a composition and rhetoric class, a field that she identifies as her own, reveal instances of sexism on the part of one of the male students, as well as emerging ‘gender battles’ among women and male informants.

Chiseri-Strater contributes important content to ongoing disciplinary dialogues around the issue of so-called objective and detached viewpoints (or, the view from nowhere). In addition, she opens up a space for co-reflection (one that includes the readership) in which the language of positionality (which shapes data collection, theory construction, methodological understanding to narrative voice) is understood as both rhetorical and “inherently connected with how the researcher is situated in the field, not just on the page” (p. 120). Second, and by implication, she endorses an approach to ethnographic fieldwork in which specific choices in research design are

a priori evaluated in tandem with the ethnographer's given attributes (race, nationality, and gender). As she noted, "providing methodological insights unavailable in the historical movements or legacies within the fields of composition and rhetoric where data is presented without the researcher's intellectual journey [...] demonstrates how the researcher negotiates personal and cultural preconceptions that shape scholarship" (p. 115).

Somatic and Spatial Positioning

In this piece, we have focused primarily on two types of positionalities, biographical positionalities and discursive positionings. Biographical positionings include demographic representations, such as age, gender, class, race... and some social roles like parent, educator, student, musician. Discursive positionings address how we position self and other in discourse: what kind of positionings are available within a discourse/context, how are they ascribed or 'taken on', who has the power to ascribe a position, how are positionalities challenged, and new positionalities created through discourse.

In addition to these we would like to emphasize two other components of positioning, what we call: (1) somatic positioning; and (2) spatial positioning. Somatic positionings can be conceived as bodily organizations through which we embody and enact our personal and sociocultural identities. We participate in multiple communities and contexts that support or inhibit ranges of bodily practices (Grand, 2012). Building on Bakhtin's concept of chronotope, Grand suggested that every cultural tradition or community has a particular repertoire of embodied practices, or as he calls it, somatic genre, where individuals must draw from (as well as contribute to) in the course of their participation. Conversations in our own group of Integral Teaching Fellows are a good example of negotiating and practicing somatic positioning. We deliberated on how to shape and use our bodies—how much to speak and when to speak, what to wear, where to sit, and how to carry ourselves—to fit the image and role of an Integral Teaching Fellow.

The production of social space involves spatial representations (how a space is imagined) and spatial practices (practices through which the space is lived) (Lefebvre, 1991). Our spatial positionings depend on the available spatial representations and spatial practices. One of the authors recalls that during his education in Albania "good" students typically occupied the front rows, whereas the back rows were a destination for "weak" students. Although certainly not an official rule, the spatial positioning based on academic performance was a common and generally accepted practice. That type of spatial organization created a binary identity production in the classroom as well as shaped pedagogical practices. As it has been stated already, positionings are not deterministic. In exercising agency, be that through improvisation or deliberately impacting the course of action (Holland, D. C., Skinner, D., Lachicotte, W., & Cain, C., 1998) we can create new possibilities of being and acting in the world. In the context of an integral learning community, the ideas of somatic and spatial positionings enable us to identify somatic organizations and embodied practices that are liberatory and support learning and classroom participation.

How are social discourse and our subjective worlds related to positionality? Bakhtin's (1981) concept of chronotope (time-space) is useful here. Bakhtin theorized that different literary genres

organize time and space in distinct formations that in return provide genres their particular characters and narratives. Similarly, our social interactions and lived histories are situated in different time-space configurations, each with a particular discourse and repertoire of representations. Leander (2004) proposed that certain types of positionings evoke particular chronotopes, and by doing so they call on the attributes, ideologies, practices, cultural narratives, and social identifications specific to each time-space configuration. For example, taking on the position of an educator in the classroom evokes privileges of power, however, the qualities and practices will differ if the educator is positioned in a traditional pedagogical context versus a liberatory pedagogical context, the first being more authoritarian and the second more horizontal. Another example (one which we elaborate later in the article), sharing personal stories of our names can evoke a series of time-space constructions, ranging from familial, to institutional, to ideological, to transnational. For our purpose, chronotopes can be theorized as containing personal and shared psychological, cultural, and social resources, and positioning as the practice by which these resources are utilized to make meaning, construct relationships, and shape action (Holland & Leander, 2004).

Positionality in a Learning Community

An integral approach to education invites the personal histories and imaginations of the students and educators in the process of knowledge making. The narrative worlds of the participants come in contact with classroom activities. Leander (2004) offered a useful distinction of time-space configuration to explain such contact zone of activity. Leander makes the distinction between an interactional chronotope (the immediate time-space of the interactants) and a represented chronotope (the imagined and the historical worlds of the participants). He went on to say, “when narrative scenes are marshaled in the interactive work of positioning, these narrative scenes carry with them forms of time-space that offer unique possibilities for identity and agency” (p. 189). Leander’s idea of positioning resonates with Alcoff’s (1988) concept of positionality. She wrote:

[T]he position that women find themselves in can be actively utilized (rather than transcended) as a location for the construction of meaning, a place from where meaning is constructed, rather than simply the place where a meaning can be discovered (the meaning of femaleness). The concept of woman as positionality shows how women use their positional perspective as a place from which values are interpreted and constructed rather than as a locus of an already determined set of values. (p. 434)

When coupled with awareness, critical thinking, and reflective practices, the activity of positioning can be more self-directed, strategically applied, and transformative.

We ground this theoretical discussion on the practice of positioning in an example from our own work. In a classroom exercise facilitated by one of the teaching fellows, students were asked to explore the concept of ‘borders’ and ‘belonging’. This exercise was linked to another learning activity in which students organized in five small groups of three to four each, based on a shared cultural community in which all the group members felt they were participants. Students were encouraged to investigate the concept of culture particular of their groups over the course of the semester. In this exercise, deep into the semester, students were asked to physically position

themselves as well as the representations of their cultural communities in the shared classroom space using colored ribbons to mark personal and group borders. Students were encouraged to evoke the characteristics of their group cultures, to call on reading assignments, and to be attuned to their personal, interpersonal, and intergroup experiences as they negotiated their locations and boundaries in the classroom space. What transpired was the authoring of a dynamic and contentious time-space formation. Students reported that their decision making process and the production of locations and borders were informed by their cultural narratives as well as by the interaction between individuals and groups. Some students reported that their newly authored positions shed new light on their explorative cultures and their participation in the learning community (e.g., a student linked her peripheral position in the exercise with the feeling of not being present in the classroom). In this exercise, the intersection of multiple layers of represented chronotopes (students' backgrounds of their group cultures) with the interactional chronotope (classroom participation) served as a medium through which students interpreted the concepts of 'borders' and 'belonging'. The practice of positioning was employed in the production of knowledge.

Challenges in Incorporating Positionality in Pedagogy

We identify two particular challenges in the integration of positionality in pedagogical practices. The first challenge is related to the increase of the learner's role in the process of knowledge production. Excessive emphasis on the function of the student's positionalities in the learning process can cultivate what Montuori (2006) has called a narcissistic approach to education. Narcissistic learning systematically privileges the learner's subjectivities, experiences and various self-positionings as sources of knowledge over academic standards or dialogical methods, an orientation that can lead to anti-intellectual stances and unchallenged self-positionings. The integration of student positionalities in the learning process needs to be accompanied by critical thinking practices (Brookfield, 1987) that encourage self-reflection, critical subjectivity, and examination of the student's situatedness in learning and scholarly communities (Takacs, 2002, 2003).

The second challenge of integrating positionality in pedagogical practices has to do with the increase in complexity of the learning community. By inviting positioning practices, a learning community becomes more pluralistic, multidimensional, and subject to new relationships and forms of functioning. As such, it must learn to embrace and cope with change. The success of a complex learning community is dependent on, among other things, the application of strategy, tolerance for the unknown, and the solidarity between its members (Morin, 2008; Schrader, 2004).

The Relevance of Theory to Practice

Neither positionality theory nor positioning theory originate in the field of education. While, as we have shown, both have been borrowed from other disciplines (adapted and, at times, conflated) for that purpose, no stable definition of "positionality" has emerged in the discourse. Like Takacs, many authors dodge the question of definition altogether while others reduced it to such traits as "race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ableness" (Taylor, Tisdell, & Hanley, 2000). Despite this ambiguity, the value of an anti-essentialist category of being that describes

positionalities and positions is evident and the term “positionality” continues to capture it for us. For the purposes of our Symposium session and this paper the term positionality has three factors: *identity*, *role*, and *power*. Identities and social categories (such as race, age, etc.) are multiple and intersecting formed by lifetimes of experience. Roles are always context specific and are either formal (student, teacher, etc.) or informal (expert, etc.) The dynamics of power and privilege are at play in terms of both recognized social categories and roles specific to the situation. Thus considering positionality in the educational framework provides an opportunity both for creating less hierarchical relationships and a greater sense of what each participant can contribute.

Our Interactive Session: Positionality as Knowledge: Taking the Pedagogue off the Pedestal

The interactive session, “Positionality as Knowledge: Taking The Pedagogue Off The Pedestal,” was structured around two exercises which all participants and facilitators were asked to join, two didactic presentations, and a substantial opportunity for participants to reflect on the exercises, the subject of positionality, and their learning. In advance, we identified three learning outcomes that we hoped to achieve:

- 1) Development of an understanding of “positionality.”
- 2) Deepening of our understanding of our own positionalities.
- 3) Exploration of what it would mean to create a learning environment that values each voice in the classroom.

True to the values of critical pedagogy we arranged the seating in a circle. To reduce the concentration of power in the circle, facilitators (also the authors of this paper) scattered their seating rather than sitting together. The purpose here is to signal to participants that we anticipate relationships in this context to be relatively horizontal rather than hierarchical.

The opening, given by one of the facilitators, was a brief overview of the subject of critical pedagogy and an explanation of the purpose of the workshop. The concept of positionality was briefly introduced along with the strategies we would be employing in the session to understand it further. The facilitators introduced themselves individually as well as collectively, positioning themselves both in their roles for the session and in their roles and ranks in the institution.

This was followed by a general group exercise in which all were invited to participate. In advance, participants were informed that the purposes of the exercise were twofold: to introduce all participants, bringing each voice into the room and to begin the process of understanding one’s own positionality. The exercise involved sharing not just one’s name, but also stories associated with one’s name. This was modeled by one of the facilitators. In the group we had origin stories (“I was named after...”), a story of the meaning of the name, what someone feels that a particular nickname says about themselves, and the histories of names changed (through marriage, personal transformation, or migration). Things were revealed or implied about the participants that are seldom discussed with near-strangers: family history, cultural situatedness, immigrant status, class, etc. This required some risk taking on the part of participants and created

a small sense of trust, if not intimacy. Participants learned something about each person's positionality.

With this experience as a foundation two facilitators provided a more theoretical foundation of what positionality is and how an understanding of the concept and one's own positionality can be applied in the classroom. Our purpose was to deepen our participants' understanding of the concept of positionality and to situate it in relationship with learning.

Personal Reflections on the Practice of Positionality in Research

Below are the personal reflections of two of the co-authors, who shared their own understanding of positionality at the symposium workshop:

It is not easy for me to describe my positionality in brief. As a person of color who grew up in the Chinese culture in Taiwan and migrated to the western culture of America, I have found my positionality is complex and in flux, constantly changing and moving, depending on which position I would like to take at the moment. I grew up in a traditional Chinese culture where obedience to authority and consideration of the goals of the group were considered the most valuable quality for being a student. In the classroom, there was no room for individual opinions; critical thinking and taking personal stands was not encouraged or allowed. However, as an Asian living and receiving higher education in the US, I was forced to learn to think and speak like a westerner, and sometimes I have to abandon or disregard the Taiwanese-Chinese side of me in order to fit in to this American education system to survive.

After learning and exploring my own positionality, I realize that mine is multidimensional and has different layers. I can either think and/or speak from a point of view of being a minority from the East who is marginalized and experiences the institutionalized racism of the American culture, or I can also think and/or speak from my higher educational background of the West, being assertive to discuss issues with my intellectual and rational mind. By being aware of this lived experience of "in-between", it makes me more cross-culturally sensitive. I have found that I have no choice but to be open-minded to whatever I see, hear, learn and experience both positively and negatively, because I started to understand that there is no single truth for anything in the world. When I accept the multi-facets of the truth, my view has widened, and empathy has naturally matured and deepened. Most importantly, I have become appreciative of my unique experience of learning as a source of knowledge and a contribution to community.

Let me begin with my position—my standpoint: I am a forty-year-old white woman who calls herself a feminist. I grew up in Oklahoma, the daughter of middle-class parents, and surrounded by conservative fundamentalists, which I call some of my dearest friends. I am a liberal-thinking Italian-American woman who is assertive when I believe an injustice against people and nonhuman animals has occurred. Growing up in Oklahoma offered me a chance to live outside my comfort zone, and because of that I had to learn how to get

along and rely on those who thought differently than I do. I moved from Oklahoma to San Francisco because I wanted to be in a bubble of like-minded thought, however I am vigilant about keeping one foot outside of this bubble. I believe that it is necessary for my own wholeness of being to have friends and family who differ from me politically, spiritually, and religiously. Of course there is much more to who I am, but this is the foundational lens in which I view the world, and this lens colors how I approach the work I do.

When I pick up a paper or begin to read a book the first question I ask is who the author is and what is their position. It is necessary to know this because it allows me to see how the research that I am reading is held. If I pick up an article about the causes of gun violence in teenagers and discover the author is a card carrying member of the NRA, I may find what I read to favor guns not being the cause of the surge in school shootings. In any article or book it would be hard to find an author who possess the power of neutrality; this is why positionality within a book or paper is so important. I need to understand the author's position so I can create my own theories and questions.

When someone reads my work I believe they need to know I use a feminist methodological standpoint, which incorporates my own experiences into the subject being explored. The use of a person's standpoint can offer the reader an alignment with the story being told. To explain this methodology further I look to the book, "Feminist Research in the Sociology of Religion" by Jones (2002), she wrote:

One uses standpoint theory when one reflexively analyzes one's own inquiry or another's experience by taking into account the dimensions of gender, race, and power. The use of standpoint theory demonstrates how these social variables inform all aspects of the research project, including the selection of research topics and the cognitive framework within which a research problem is interpreted. Using a feminist standpoint, researchers inquire into the subjective experience of groups often overlooked in traditional analysis, and, in the process, uncover a multiplicity of subjective truths. (p. 78)

I interpret this to mean that all my social variables are influencing how I examine and write about a subject. I believe it is impossible to not be biased when researching something I feel compelled to write about. Using the feminist research methodology, I am allowed to state clearly who I am and where I stand within the topic, which gives the reader valuable knowledge. In the essay, "Writing Feminist Research" by sociologist Charmaz (2012), she stated, "Authors who reveal their starting points and standpoints—and concerns and commitments—permit readers to assess both their approach and the quality of their content" (p. 477). By the author revealing their position it creates space for collaboration between themselves and the reader. I stop seeing the author as an expert and more as someone sharing information that I then get to add on to with my own thoughts and questions. Positionality starts by describing who you are and that in turn affects how you see the world.

Using my standpoint—my position, I show the reader who I am and why my work is important, the reader is seeing the whole lens in how the material is presented, not just

from an expert centered perspective. The reader can then create their own theories and use what I am giving them as a starting off point for their own possible research. Stating my standpoint humanizes me as the researcher and tells the reader that there are other angles in which to gain knowledge about the subject I am writing about—not just mine. Knowing the researchers background, I am privy to untold biases that may appear and I am then free to agree or disagree with their approach to the subject.

After two of the facilitators shared their personal understanding of positionality, we then moved into the next full participation exercise, our variation of the classic anti-oppression activity typically termed the Power Shuffle. In this exercise typically facilitators ask group members who fit certain descriptive categories or criteria to cross to the opposite side of the room, away from the full group, then stop, and turn to face the group they left behind. The two parts of the group are given a few seconds to observe one another silently and to notice their feelings. The facilitators then instruct those who have crossed the room to return to their original place with the full group. (Simms, Vasquez, & Sherover, 1992)

We adapted the structure to our needs in a variety of ways. Rather than form a line and step over and back, we elected to form a circle and as each category was described, those who identified with it stepped into the circle. Rather than step out of the group, participants stepped into the middle and made eye contact with each other. The instructions were: ‘step into the middle if you identified with a phrase, notice who is with you (in the middle) and who is not, notice how it feels to be in the center of the circle, and then step back to their original place.’ Having a circle rather than a line was intended to create a greater feeling of connection.

The original exercise had 41 categories, and we knew we did not have time for all them, plus we wanted to illustrate positionality in an educational setting rather than exclusively highlight power and privilege. So we started out by asking each of the seven co-facilitators to choose ten categories. Then the two co-facilitators of this exercise met to discuss which we wanted to include. We made sure to include at least two from everyone’s list, and either combined or modified those that were very similar until we had 21 remaining, to allow plenty of time for discussion and debriefing.

Our own positions and that of our co-presenters no doubt had an impact on our decisions of what to include or discard. For example, we were both from working class families, so we changed the original category “you were raised poor,” to “you were raised working class” and then added “you were raised with economic privilege” to have more of a balance. Another similar category we later added was “you have educational privilege” to which, not surprisingly, every single person stepped into the center of the room.

Sometimes we combined multiple categories into a more inclusive and broader category, for example “you identify as a person of color” rather than including the original eight specific racial or ethnic identifications. Then we made the category broader, changing multiple age based categories into a single “you feel like you don’t have a voice because of your age.” Also, we changed some of the language to be gender neutral, for example “you have been discriminated against because of your gender” rather than using language such as “you earned less than a man for doing equal work” or “you have ever been afraid of a man’s anger.” We left out those

questions which we worried could be too emotionality triggering in such a short exercise, such as those regarding sexual violence or physical abuse.

We started out the exercise asking for confidentiality and emphasizing that participation was voluntary. We made sure to build in plenty of time for the discussion questions afterwards and for group sharing as part of the closing. This was intentional, as a central part of integral pedagogy is the notion that students are not blank slates and that key aspects of the learning come from the participants themselves, rather than exclusively the facilitators. Allowing extra time for discussion was also important because the circle exercise was conducted in silence.

Having engaged the two exercises, and heard the mini-lectures and sharing on our subject, we provided a series of reflective questions for the group to engage. “What was your experience of this exercise? Did anything surprise you? What would it mean to view the diversity of life experience in the room as educational assets? What voices are still missing or that you would like to include?” We started with these open-ended questions, and made sure that everyone had a chance to share if they chose to. The discussion was lively and suggested that the concepts were understood.

We closed with one of the facilitators sharing a quote from a 1996 interview of Freire (LiteracyDotOrg, 2009):

If you asked me, Paul, what is in being in the world that calls your own attention to you? I would say to you that I am a curious being. I have been a curious being, but in a certain moment of the process of being curious, in order to understand the others, I discover that I have to create in myself, a certain virtue without which it is difficult for me to understand others. The virtue of tolerance. It is through the exercise of tolerance that I discovered the rich possibility of doing things and learning different things with different people. Being tolerant is not a question of being naive. On the contrary, it is a duty to be tolerant, an ethical duty, a historical duty, a political duty, but it does not demand that I lose my personality.

Summary/Closing

For us the concept of positionality is important in understanding the role of experience in the learning process. Positionality acknowledges complex differentials of power and privilege while simultaneously identifying the value of multiple ways of knowing and being that arise from our multiple identities. The goal of revealing individual and relative positionality is to de-center dominant ways of thinking and expose multiple ways of thinking as diverse assets for self-knowing and collective-knowing.

In our workshop we both shared this concept and engaged in the process for all participants to share their complex positionalities. The process was interactive and participatory in structure. We did not follow a standard lecture model; there was not one “expert” on stage and participants were not a passive audience. Participants and facilitators both spoke deeply and personally. We learned from the stories everyone shared, informed as they were by their unique perspectives.

We are not suggesting that participants walked away from our presentation with a sophisticated understanding of positionality, much less its pedagogical value. Nevertheless, we feel confident that by using personal disclosure, participatory exercises, group discussion, and action methods of teaching, participants were able to experience some of the complexity and importance of positionality in the context of integral education.

As we close, we feel that it is important to collectively reflect about our process of coming together as a team to produce this article; this is our summation: Before even considering the task of writing up the Symposium session, we had said goodbye at the end of the Teaching Fellowship. It seemed we all ended on a high-note. It was a busy semester and each of us relied on the others to make it through. It felt like each of gave a *resounding sigh of relief*, yet when the opportunity to further develop our symposium work came up, each of us *jumped* at the chance and agreed to do it.

However, in collaborating again it felt like we were trying to *put the band back together* and recreate magic that was once there. Scheduling problems, interpersonal and intellectual tensions, and deadline pressures caused conflicts. Also, there was a shift in all our positions — no longer were we Fellows and Faculty, now we were co-authors, and this was a role we had yet to explore with one another. What carried us through the rough patches was respect and trust, excitement in creating something publishable, growing through the challenges in working through tensions and shifting positions, and a commitment to be present. And once again, there is a collective *sigh of satisfaction* as we reach completion.

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Manifest Transpersonal Experiences: *Aṇimām* and *Laghimā Siddhis*

Robert V. Burke¹

Abstract: This article recalls with vivid awareness the Alex Gray like vision of infinitely small pulsating structures within my own body, and of bodily sensations of levitation I recalled when I read in Michael Murphy's *Future of the Body* the references to Haridas Chaudhuri's unpublished *Yogic Potentials or Siddhis in Hindu-Buddhist Parapsychology*. Along with Murphy's section of *Extraordinary Somatic Awareness Mediated by Internal Clairvoyance*, and within the framework of Ramamurti S. Mishra's *Textbook of Yoga Psychology* that provides context for Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, one sees as Chaudhuri explicates, how *aṇimām siddhi* of infinitely small somatic perception, and how *laghimā siddhi* of levitation are manifested. This article provides the notions, context and details of how such yogic potentials operate as transpersonal experiences of the body, mind and psyche.

Keywords: chittam, cryptesthesia, clairvoyance, extrasomatic, levitation, parapsychology, psi-gamma, psi-kappa, psychokinesis, sankhya yoga, siddhis, telekinesis, telergy, yoga sutras, yogic contemplation.

Introduction

Based on several extraordinary experiences, Murphy (1992) confirms in *Future of the Body* what I intuited: "that body awareness has extrasomatic as well as purely physical components" (p. 91). I have had several other experiences, but elaborate on the following two, *aṇimām siddhi* and *laghimā siddhi*, because they have had a most profound and transformative impact on my psyche. Haridas Chaudhuri in his unpublished paper: *Yogic Potentials or Siddhis in Hindu-Buddhist Parapsychology* defines siddhis as:

Supernatural powers inherent in the human psyche... They are extraordinary aspects of the human potential. Perceived as revelations of ultimate truth or reality, they are termed Vibhutes (that are manifestation of Divine powers). Perceived as fully actualized abilities or dynamic capacities, they are known in their totality as Aśvarya, i.e. spiritual wealth. (Chaudhuri, n.d., p.1)

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I have had direct experience of two of these *siddhis* that I discuss and examine below. Briefly, in the presence of my Guru, Sri Brahmananda Sarasvati, I experienced myself as a field of energy wherein I perceived every aspect of my body at the atomic level. Precisely, I experienced the pre-quantum vibrating strings level of my existence. I experienced the second while attending Mass as a Trinitarian Friar where I was overcome by powerful sensations of levitation. My monastic training prepared me for a mature encounter with these paranormal experiences so that I neither got lost in them, nor did I lose sight of the Self that was the focus of my seeking. In my monastic studies I was cautioned not to place emphasis on *siddhis*. Like my Spiritual Master, Fr. Damon, Huston Smith gives similar advice that I discuss later. I begin with an examination of the first experience.

Eastern Perspective: *Aṇimām Siddhi*

After reading Murphy's explication of *anudrishti siddhi*, *antara drishti siddhi*, and *aṇimām siddhi*, I referred to his reference to sutra 26 in chapter III, the *Vibhūti Pādah* in Ramamurti S. Mishra's (1963) *Textbook of Yoga Psychology* where he makes commentary on Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*. Mishra's commentaries that follow also refer to the following *siddhis*, or paranormal experiences that Murphy (1992, P. 91) defines:

1. *Anudrishti siddhi*—a term derived from *anu*, atom, and *drishti*, insight—refers to a yogic apprehension of small, hidden, or remote things, including somatic structures.
2. *Antara drishti siddhi* is said to produce an X-ray look into our bodily parts.
3. *Animam siddhi*, one of the eight famous powers referred to in several yoga sutras, also involves such capacity.

These terms apply to an experience I had in 1992 at a *satsaṅg* and meditation led by Dr. Mishra, then known by his *sannyās*, or monastic name, Sri Brahmananda Sarasvati, of what Murphy (1992, p. 91) categorizes as an *Extraordinary Somatic Awareness Mediated by Internal Clairvoyance: aṇimām siddhi*.

Haridas Chaudhuri's (n.d.) catalog of *siddhis* brought the three *siddhis* mentioned above to Murphy's attention. According to Murphy's (1992) footnote he states "Chaudhuri believed that the *aṇimām siddhi* has various aspects, among them internal clairvoyance by which we can perceive our body's cells, molecules, and atomic patterns" (p. 91). Murphy (1992) further elaborates:

All our capacities, whether normal or metanormal, somatic or extrasomatic, are subject to the limitations and distortions produced by our inherited and socially conditioned nature. And it follows, then, that some internally clairvoyant perceptions would be more accurate than others, less filtered by half-conscious or unconscious psychological processes, and could be improved by transformative discipline, as Sutra 26 of Book Three in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* suggests. Some, or perhaps all, of us might perceive our own body parts through occasional psi, but through a glass darkly, while with practice we might see them more clearly. (p. 92)

In the *Frequently Used Terms* section, Murphy (1992) defines *psi* as:

A term proposed by B.P. Wiesner and R.H. Thouless, which can be used as either a noun or adjective, to signify paranormal processes and causation. *Psi-gamma* stands for paranormal cognition, *psi-kappa* for paranormal action. *Expressive psi*, a term used by David Griffin is synonymous with psi-kappa, *receptive psi* with psi-gamma. The term *psi* is meant to suggest that various paranormal phenomena are aspects of a single process, which in its active or expressive (psi-kappa) mode is called psychokinesis, telekinesis, or telergy, and in its receptive or cognitive (psi-gamma) mode is called telepathy, clairvoyance, or extrasensory perception (ESP). (pg. 588-589)

At a *satsaṅg* with Dr. Mishra, I had an immediate and total, sensory and mental awareness of the *kāraṇa śarīra* or causal body, and of the *sūkṣma śarīra* or subtle body. Muni (1994) delineates the three *śarīra* bodies into five major *kośa* sheaths that cover the psyche or *ātman*. According to Grimes (1996) one definition of *Ātman* is “The Reality which is the substrate of the individual and identical with the Absolute (Self), according to Advaita Vedanta” (p. 68). Of these five I became intensely aware of two: the “*prāṇamaya kośa*, sheath of vital airs” (Muni, 1994, p. 196) and the *ānandamaya kośa*, or “sheath of bliss; first sheath or covering of the Ātman (individual soul) in Vedantic metaphysics; causal body” (Muni, 1994, p. 188). I was totally aware, saw, felt and perceived every atom of my body. This, I now relate to as a personal experience of *aṇimām siddhi*.

Siddhis are powerful and there is danger we may misperceive or misunderstand the experience, this is why Murphy refers to sutra 26 of the *Vibhūti Pāda* as a means of improving the unconscious psychological process of *aṇimām siddhi*. Because of its importance I am including Mishra’s (1963) full commentary:

Pravṛittyāloka-nyasāt sukshma-vyavahita-viprakrishta-jnānam

By *samyama* (the practices and three higher states of yogic contemplation: *dharana*, *dhyana*, *samadhi*) on the shining and radiating, effulgent light (I:30) one manifests intuitive knowledge of the subtle, the veiled, and the remote. The inner light, the effulgent light has been explained (I:36). It is the light of *sattva* (harmonious) substance, the principle of consciousness, which is clear, shining, radiating, and all-penetrating. When the light is perceived by a yogin, he sees things, which are very subtle and minute, such as elements and atoms. He sees things, which are veiled and concealed. He sees things, which are very remote, things, which are happening in a distant place. By performing *samyama* on this light, inner consciousness is revealed. It is beyond time and space and is all-inclusive. Hence a yogin obtains cryptesthesia. (p. 257)

George (1995) defines cryptesthesia as:

... literally, (a) ‘hidden sensation.’ Cryptaesthesia refers to information gathered by the senses that enters conscious awareness by some other form.

The waking awareness generates a narrative based on the sensory input it receives. Input deemed irrelevant is frequently ignored or stored for later within the mind. Sometimes, however, the mind recognizes the need for that information, typically for the survival of

the individual. In order to bring that information to the forefront of consciousness, the mind will transmit that material through sensory hallucinations (e.g. tactile, visual, aural) in an attempt to redirect and refocus the efforts of the individual. (pg. 57-58)

My experience of the *aṇimām siddhi* was not due to any yogic effort on my part. I was simply meditating, with approximately 80 students, in the presence of Sri Brahmananda Sarasvati. For me the experience was gratuitous, perhaps due to my attention on the Guru, but I do not recall any effort whatsoever. I was just sitting quietly. During the experience of *aṇimām siddhi*, when I checked in with myself, to affirm I was still in-the-body, I opened my eyes and noticed auras around other meditators, who I knew beyond a doubt, were having the same experience I was having. Actually the feeling of pulsations and vibrations around them were resonating with my own. I was feeling this gentle awareness of resonance and was absorbed in intense pulsations and vibrations, to the point of visualizing every atomic detail of my being; it was much more pronounced than awareness of the auras.

This was one of the most powerful transformative experiences in my life. It left me understanding without a doubt, that accounts of the essence and radiance of the Self emanating from other spiritual masters such as the Buddha and the Christ are true and verifiable in the presence of contemporary masters. This experience marks the culmination of the initial stage of my seeking. It affirms the reality of what I was seeking, and that the sought for was in me and I was in it too; however, I also understood that I still had and have more work ahead of me. Now, I see with greater clarity: the work that is happening by and thru me. I can feel it and confirm it by its gentle overwhelming sense of peace, tranquility, silence and love. At times though, I feel, there is nothing left to do. However, this feeling does not impede my participation in life.

Mindstuff is used synonymously as *cittam* by Mishra (1963), as a partial model of psyche based on the *Sāṅkhyā darśan*:

The total individual personality consists of three major systems. These are called *manah*, mind consciousness; *ahamkara*, ego consciousness; and *buddhi*, superconsciousness. The three systems form a unified and harmonious organization technically termed in Yoga, *chittam*. *Chittam* means the psychic mechanism which manifests *Chiti*, Consciousness. *Chittam* is the seat of consciousness. Consciousness is manifested in accordance with *chittam*. The whole world is *chittam* and the world is perceived according to *chittam*. From childhood to old age, *chittam* changes, so our experiences regarding the world also changes. Man is as his *chittam* is. This is the secret of all secrets. (p. 114)

Muni (1994) refers to what Mishra terms *chittam* as *antah karaṇa*, the “Internal Instrument of cognition composed of Chitta consciousness, Buddhi intellect, Ahankara ego, and Manas mind; *the core of an individual’s personality, the psyche*” (p. 188, *emphasis mine*).

In the Vibhūti Pāda, Chapter III, Sutra 26 above, Mishra (1963) refers to sutra 30, concerning purification and removal of obstacles occurring in the unconscious psychological processes of *aṇimām siddhi*:

I:30 Vyadhi-styana-samshaya-pramada-alasya-avirati-bhranti-darshana - alabdha-bumikatva-anavasthitatvani chitta viksepa-te-antarayah.

These are nine obstacles, distraction of mindstuff. These appear with fluctuations of mindstuff. A breach in concentration would result in retrogression even from that stage. An effort should be made therefore in such a way that when a yogin has reached samadhi, highest concentration, mindstuff should be stabilized there.

Concentration is a process of purification. It cleanses body and mind. During this cleansing process physical diseases, psychosomatic diseases, and mental diseases may appear if they are hidden in the unconscious or subconscious state of chittam. Concentration does not create mental or physical disease but if disease is latent and or dormant, it will be discarded by supra-electronic, tanmatric, concentration. One should not worry if one receives signs of disease because it is passing out of body and mind. If in the process of cleaning house one should discover a snake, one should not worry but should dispose of the snake and make the house clean and peaceful. Otherwise, if it were to remain undiscovered, sometime later it might attack one. If any disease symptoms show, one should not worry but should overcome disease and be rid of it forever.

Not all obstacles come simultaneously. Any of them may come according to one's mental and physical constitution. They will never come if they are not dormant in one. Practice of meditation does not produce any disease. On the contrary, it destroys diseases. (pg. 146 – 147)

After his review of obstacles above, Mishra (1963) states in sutra I. 36 that “ the mind becomes calm, serene, and free from sorrow by meditating on the effulgent light at the third eye center, and it experiences the explosion of the light of consciousness” (p. 396). Mishra (1963) further elaborates in his detailed commentary on the all penetrating effulgent light that is the radiating source of the *añimām siddhi*:

I:36 Vishoka va jyotishmatee

By meditation on the transcendental and effulgent light of Purusha, Brahman, which is beyond all sorrow, self-confidence is positively produced, and mind becomes firmly grounded in Reality.

By meditation on the effulgent light of the Supreme, chittam goes into higher changes. This personality change brings stability of mind and absolute confidence in Self.

When a yogin fixes his attention on the ajna chakram, center of the head, thalamic region, or on sahasraram, seventh chakra, comprising the entire cortex, an effulgent light originates. Gradually it becomes resplendent and radiating, filling every part of the universe like akasha, ether. Skillfully holding chittam on this effulgent light, one has extraordinary change in mindstuff. It is transformed into that effulgent light which shines like the sun. The sattva quality of mind stuff is purified. It comes to a state of balance in

Cosmic Consciousness with feeling of Cosmic Personality and becomes like a motionless ocean.

Pondering the immanent, transcendent, and subtle Self one comes into direct realization of this light with the same surety one feels about oneself when saying, "I am." This transcendent and effulgent state of chittam is of two kinds:

Vishoka Visayavatee, enlightening all the products of objective nature, prakriti.

Vishoka Jyotismatee asmita matra, feeling of cosmic personality and enlightening Purusa by means of which the mindstuff of a yogin gains a state of stability and self-confidence.

This effulgent light cannot be perceived by beginners. Hence they are advised to imagine this light either in the heart or the center of the head.

Imagination can be a creative or destructive force. Imagination which is creative force is helpful in any branch of knowledge. So beginners should imagine that effulgent light in the heart or head until they perceive it naturally. (pg. 152–153)

Western Perspective: Levitation

Levitation is also known to yogis as *laghimā siddhi* that Grimes (1996) describes as “one of the eight powers which enables one to rise up in the air (on the rays of the sun)” (p. 173). The following is a personal account of such an experience:

During the novitiate we learned techniques of meditation, and how to meditate with an open and healthy attitude—Meditation without pretense or expectations. Once, as we gathered around the altar during mass, I began to levitate; no one noticed. I begged God, ‘Please, not here; you’ll embarrass me in front of all my friends.’ Reflecting on the experience, I actually did not *see* my feet lift up off the ground, but ascribed to the experience a sense of *kundalini* rising up the spine. Also, novices were admonished not to pay too much attention to sensory manifestations of meditation including visions and other extraordinary phenomenon (siddhis). We acknowledged them, but did not dwell on them. The manifestations are not the goal, we had been told that they can detract us from our goal of unity with the divine.

Houston Smith (2003) confirms this in a dialog with Mishlove:

Mishlove: *So would you say there are some religious traditions that encourage the development and the cultivation of the psychic side of human beings more than others?*

Smith: It’s interesting. I’ll put it the other way, slightly differently. That is to say that most of them believe that these powers are there and that they do increase as spiritual advancement occurs. However, they also warn against it, and say if you make this the goal, why, you’re settling for too little. And also there are some dangers; for one thing, this is treacherous water where one is not totally benign, but also there’s a strong temptation, as these siddhis, as the Indians call them—

Mishlove: *Powers.*

Smith: Powers, yes. As powers become available to you, people's heads get turned, and they become egotistic in their abilities. And so in derive, that way it can be counterproductive to the spiritual quest. So the greatest teachers are quite unanimous in saying they come but pay no attention to them.

Mishlove: *But aren't there traditions— the shamanistic tradition, the Tantric tradition— which really emphasize these powers?*

Smith: That is certainly so. Now, I guess I tipped my hand a little bit in excluding them from the most profound spiritual masters.

Mishlove: *Perhaps you do have some preferences.*

Smith: Shamanism is immensely fascinating, and extremely important in the history of religion. But sanctity one does not associate with shamans. They have immense power, and it can be misused as well as used. I think on balance it's been used. So I value them, but they're neither— what shall I say?—saints nor philosophers.

Mishlove: *Well, perhaps we might liken the psychic abilities in this sense to musical ability, or to any other natural talent that could be used in different ways. And some religions cultivate music, I suppose, more than others.*

Smith: That's right, that's right. Most shamans are very much linked with the people, in helping them with practical problems of life. But the aspect of religion that has to do with virtues and compassion and loving-kindness, now, this kind of thing is when I speak of profundity, getting into those waters. The shamans, that's not their forte. They have a different role. (pp. 219 – 220)

I am grateful for the specific readings assigned in Murphy's work because it has capped off my understanding of direct experiences of the Self that included phenomenological responses. While I find such experiences comforting and assuring, I do not seek them. I maintain a steady practice of performing the Vedic Fire weekly at Brahmananda Ashram in San Francisco, and bring the teachings of Nisargadatta Maharaj, Ramana Maharshi and other Advaitins and nondualist masters to those who attend. It is the power and grace of this millennia old ritual of Lord Agni's that attracts seekers, and Guruji said that when one reads from a Master's work, this Master's presence is "required." To me it is like the encounter of the kerygma, the Self in the logos. This encounter is the terminating juncture of relative consciousness and cosmic consciousness. It is encountered in deep silence wherein one experiences wholeness and peace. This is my experience. My practice of *Ātma Vicāra*, feeling and being the 'I am' in every moment is the active meditation I carry throughout my waking state. Any deviation and I am instantly reminded to return and abide in the Self.

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The Restoration of Wholeness

Karabi Sen¹

Abstract: Wholeness is an innate state, a quality which is lost with our exposure to the world. Our life is spent in efforts to restore the state of wholeness in us. The world takes from us our tranquility and balance. Yet it is only from this giving of us that we can recover our lost self. That which takes also gives.

Integration is a process which takes place in time and space. It is a developmental experience that admits of degrees, failures and regenerations. The integral self is not a finished perfect product. The self is born in nature and to nature. As such, it can mature, shine and bring itself to fruition only through trials and tribulations. Without the loss of wholeness we would never even have a vision of what constitutes wholeness; nor would we aspire after its retrieval. Creation is an evolutionary process which travels a path with many perils and also rewards. The journey to integration is difficult when we separate ourselves from our fellow humans and other forms of life or see ourselves as different from the soil and air and water that make us.

Once we see ourselves in all that surrounds us and recognize them in ourselves uniting is not hard any longer. When we unite with the world we achieve a united, harmonious, whole self within as well.

Key Words: Integral Philosophy, Integration, Wholeness

Introduction

Integralism, as I see it, is a restoration of wholeness. It is a process, never a finished product. At birth, our wholeness is shattered. Yet the inner being retains its vision of wholeness, a sense of completion and peace that comes with it. Then begins the arduous journey that we call life, which is an unceasing attempt to restore to itself the wholeness that is lost.

To be born is to be exposed; exposed to the elements, exposed to rejection, to abandonment, to needs that must be attended to. Thus it is that the baby howls when it exits the mother's womb. The world invades it. The parents rush to give it what it is crying for, to restore to it the divine peace of satisfaction. They rock it to sleep, give it the nectar of milk that will quieten it, are overjoyed to see that innocent smile on its sweet face for the first time. They believe they have given the baby back its wholeness.

Two things have happened when this has taken place. True, the baby has been made to feel at peace with itself. Its face is blissful. But in the process of restoring the baby's wholeness, the

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parents have had to undergo the loss of their wholeness. Sleepless nights, unending feeding and changing of diapers, hardly any time to cook or grab a meal or take a shower, the piling up of dishes in the sink and filth on the floor, the fear of getting late at work, tension between husband and wife have taken a toll on father and mother. They are distraught. They have taken a chunk out of themselves and given it to the baby in order to arrive there where the baby has been restored to wholeness.

The disintegrated parents know that the baby's contentment is only temporary. They know that this search for wholeness will be a life-long process. Each time their child experiences loss of wholeness their own being will be struck and mutilated. Yet they know that wholeness can still be sought and restored back. They also know that they themselves will never be whole until their child is whole. So they develop strategies to repair the self, of those they love and their own selves. Those who do not have a strategy are wiped out by the strict Darwinian principle of struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest.

Integralism is such a strategy. It tries to ensure the preservation of the species. The system we are born with and into, our physical, mental and social apparatus and the environment in which they function, work as wholes do. A whole is made up of parts that must work in codependence to keep the whole in a viable and optimal condition. Any severing of the whole into disconnected parts will at once make it less survivable. In a competitive nature, the disabled system will succumb to further disintegration and dysfunction unless healing has restored it to the state of wholeness. A dismembered leg does not serve the purpose of running, walking or helping us to stand any more. If we replace it with an artificial leg, some wholeness is restored to the body, but if there is a need to run, the one with the artificial leg is more likely to meet an unkindly fate. Unless of course, there is help from a soul that recognizes the hapless one as a kin, perceives the basic bond between lives, and gives the disabled member assistance.

This sense of oneself as a unified whole made up of several members who belong together, the urgency to preserve it as such, the felt loyalty and the obligation to maintain the unit, observable even amongst roaches and ants, is programmed into our system. The gestures it generates are social behaviors which are geared towards preservation. Additionally, the ecosystems which constitute our environment in nature also function as wholes. Loss of balance in the environmental order makes our survival a questionable issue. Floods and cyclones are phenomena we must learn to work around until nature around us has regained a new transformed wholeness. As nature transforms, the beings it sustains undergo transformation. An awareness of the essential connectivity of all things that are, however rudimentary, is conducive to survival. It gives birth to traits like endurance, patience, hope, helpfulness. All of these qualities tend to promote continuation, regeneration and emergence of newer mutually supportive integral wholes. To abandon the sense of wholeness is to perish. Turmoil and disruption are meaningful only if they are seen as tools to bring in greater harmony. In the end, the team spirit assures a healthy and prosperous existence. It is common knowledge that self-expansion starts to occur from very early stages in our life.

We identify ourselves with our body, our room environment, our family, our schools, our towns, nations, the world and even the rest of the animate and inanimate world. We build bonds with the animals and have them as pets. We form associations with our homes, cars, furniture,

books, kitchenware, clothes etc. They can grow to be like companions to us. We leave, but they stay on. We see a relative permanence in them. Slowly this process of self-expansion can envelope the whole world. We can be trained to see the rest of humankind as our brothers and sisters, be hurt by their suffering, outraged by their dehumanization, to take pride in their accomplishments. When many or most of us have achieved this stage, it is reasonable to hope that world peace is not far away. The aspiration to unite and be whole once again can be nurtured to attain this stage.

The aspiration to unify presupposes the preexistence of wholeness and peace. Strife and unrest signal a loss to us. Hence it is that we see the creator, who precedes creation, as whole, peaceful. The process of creation disrupts the peace but at the same time unleashes the pursuit of recovery of wholeness and peace. Many religions play with the idea of the original One becoming two and then engaging in the game of multiplication as being of the essence of Nature.

This has been applied not just towards earthly forms, but towards divinity as well, as in the Hindu concept of *ardhanaariswar* according to which the one spirit divided itself into male and female deities and together they form a whole. They always coexist. The whole continues to be a value even though the bifurcation is considered a necessary step for multiplication. In spite of variety adding spice to creation, the memory of the original unity remains a constant. Indeed we are born with the capacity to perceive objects as wholes. The skill gets better and better as we grow. When we see a face, we do not see the eyes, nose, the ears, the head separately, but the whole face. The gestalt is embedded in our perceptive process. When our power to hold on to the whole is lost we lapse into a pathological condition and await healing.

On a larger scale, wholeness is achieved when we are able to see ourselves in others and the others in us. We are one with the waters, the hills, the meadows, the birds and all other creatures when we see them in ourselves, when we realize our environment nourishes us and is as precious as family. We are also able to see ourselves in them when we see them subject to the same laws of nature as we are: coming into being, growing and eroding, transforming into many shapes and existents. When we reflect on that, we are protective of nature. When we are able to see ourselves in all that is, there is no escape from feeling friendship and compassion for all. This inspires us to give of us to them in the same way that parents deplete themselves to fill the child's cup. There is a cost involved. Sacrifices have to be made. But in the end, restoring the whole in others always makes us whole again.

It is from this perspective that it is possible to say that no life has ever been given in vain and no injustice has ever been borne fruitlessly. It is in this sense that we can believe that Christ died on the cross an unfair death so that we could be in heaven. It is in this sense that Mahadeva is Nilkantha or blue in throat as he drank all poison so humankind could be spared its pangs. It is in this sense that the Lord Buddha was reborn numerous times so he could save suffering lives.

Wholeness cannot be bottled up but must be shared and the process of sharing involves giving, losing, creating and regaining of further wholeness, further spreading of well-being. Does this rise and fall of wellness take away from the value of the integral state of mind? The lack of finality is a negativity only if we see the unchangeable as the supreme value. The eternal, the

permanent has always had an attraction for us. But the permanent in itself really has no value. What would come of us if war, hatred, misperceptions were to become permanent?

Without change there would be no reform, no progress. Unity, wholeness, an integral self are unstable quantities, rendered so by the inherent weight of their qualities in interaction with each other. The mantra of integralism has a dynamic quality within it. It is never petrified. Even after the flesh and bone that housed the integral spirit find eternal Nirvana in the death of its earthly vessel, their words continue to generate new actions, create new turmoil and churn the elements of creation in the path of producing more integral selves.

Pain is real. Disorder is real. To deny that is to dishonor those who have experienced it. But the bleakness of failure can be transformed into a positive when we are able to see through the eyes of the pained and speak through the mouths of the tortured and promise betterment of conditions. Suffering can only be a means to an end, never an end in itself. To the extent that we function as but parts of a whole we will suffer and create more suffering. It is possible, however, to rise above the partitioned self. It requires work and often assistance and support from stronger selves. The Bhagavad Geeta's yogic self which remains imperturbable in weal and woe alike is of no value unless it can be put to use to raise more of its kind. If the yogic self is locked up in isolation to maintain its serenity, then its value is limited to itself. Either it must come out of its shell to actively distribute itself amongst others in need of it or it must allow others to come to it to draw from its radiating peace. Either way, the yogic self will have to lose some to give some and add to the value of life.

Philosophers Aurobindo Ghosh and Haridas Chaudhuri had made this issue to be a central part of their integral philosophies. Both philosophers had stressed that being contained within it becoming as an inherent mode. What is, tends to become all that it could be. The drive to self-realization pushes being forward and makes it seek to manifest all the possibilities its being harbors within itself. The coming into being of all existents appears like a manifestation of a great spirit moving forward to birth its infinite possibilities in infinite shapes and forms. At no stage can we say that the emergence of new possibilities has died, that fountainhead of newer vistas has exhausted itself. Thus there is always hope for the future to open up fresh paths, newer landscapes. We may usher into ourselves the wholeness that we sought to embrace but we do not get to make it a permanent resting place. We draw upon it, make it a part of our being and then move on to put our strength to work where it is needed. Transcending conflict and attaining wholeness is something we carry with us for future applications. As Chaudhuri aptly pointed out, transcendence itself must be transcended and the process of self-expansion is boundless.

The more we expand ourselves, the greater is the happiness as the hatred and hostility diminish in the same proportion as the increase in the feeling of affinity and compassion. With each step of self-expansion our being is transformed as it has merged with a new being. Only the principle of inclusion can stop collision in a world that is en route to endless multiplication. The expanding whole, if it is based on perceived kinship, sooner or later generates mutual friendship and allows existents to coexist within the new system. The expanding whole provides a more spacious platform to the beings concerned to consider all the players involved in the field and allow for exchange of their perceptions of ways to be in order to create an environment that is safer, more harmonious. Aurobindo Ghosh's Purna (Integral) Yoga had this rare vision as its

soul: that after I am a whole within, united in my body, mind and spirit, I remain in it and absorb it in myself and then descend again into the moving stream of Nature with my heightened strength to contribute as needed. United within and united without, integral within and integrated with the fellow existents is the core of Aurobindo and Chaudhuri's theory and practice of integral philosophy.

In this context it is important to remember three dimensions of all becoming:

Firstly, all change happens in the medium of time. The maturation of a seed to spring forth newness out of itself can only occur in time. Time is programmed into the being of all animate and inanimate objects, so much so that a seed can germinate even in the absence of several other environmental conditions necessary for a normal planting, as in beans and bulbs sending off shoots in early spring even as they sit on our kitchen shelves, drawers and even refrigerators, just because it was that particular time of the year. In inanimate nature, passage of time is recorded in events that take place cyclically, events that must occur simply because a certain period of time has gone by leading to certain formations or positions of earthly and other celestial bodies. Space and Time are partners entangled in the game of all becoming.

Secondly, since all change happens in time, degrees and steps are important marks in all becoming. Changes happen slowly, sometimes imperceptibly. This is of the essence of evolution. Even the cases we designate as emergents and mutants, their appearance may appear to be sudden leaps into creation, as unpredictable, as chance, but in reality they have causes of their own that lead to them. Their suddenness and unpredictability is a name for our own ignorance tied to our contemporary times and the specific spaces we inhabit. With the crossing of our specific time-space boundaries, we gain access to newer positions which grant us access to newer visions which in turn make possible newer understandings. If an expanding whole seems to be falling apart and the systems contained within it appear to be irreconcilable, may be in time they will slowly, by degrees, evolve a system which will allow for their integration, creating a habitat where several systems can function together. The possibilities are endless and so is the scope for hope. An individual's job is to keep hope alive and actively participate in the process of making the world a better place to be.

Thirdly, what are we to make of the merciless law of nature that life can survive only on life? Even if we turn to vegetarianism, we are plucking leaves and fruits off of living plants and depriving the young ones of cows and goats of their rights to mother's milk. Even the dry leaves on the ground serve some purpose in nature other than those of the human beings. How are we to defend the taking of antibiotics and the use of bleach to kill in our war on the deadly viruses? Are there some units that we cannot include in our self-expansion process? Here again, I think we ought to apply the principles of time and degrees. In each such crisis, we can hope that in future, either our own system or that of the hostile system will evolve features and forms that will render us less and less hostile to each other, that we will grow immune to the adverse effects we have on each other. After all, who can set the limits to the possibilities?

A study of integral yoga must take note of the significant difference between the yoga of Patanjali (Bryant, 2009) and that of Aurobindo (1999, 2005) and Chaudhuri (1965, 1977). In the Yoga Sutras Patanjali had defined yoga as *citta vritt nirodha* (sutra 1.2), which roughly translates

as the stopping of the natural propensities of the mind or building a dam to withstand the advance of the mind's natural inclinations. This prescription shows *vritti* in a negative light whereas linguistically and historically it is not so. *Vritti* has a secular and a positive connotation. It means the natural qualities or character of any being, those which enable the object to survive. The *vritti* of a being is its dharma, that which sustains the being or the pursuit of which makes the being survivable, makes it feel fulfilled. It is somewhat similar to what Plato understood by the concept of "function", that species specific function by performing which alone a member of that species could be contented and happy.

Like barking in the case of a dog. *Vritti* thus has a positive import. *Vritti* is also understood to mean livelihood which is essential for survival. A monthly pension is also designated a *vritti*. *Chhatravritti* means scholarship, that which enables a student to survive and excel. The mantra for worship of the mother goddess specifically says: *Ya Devi sarvabhuteshu vritti rupen samsthita namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai namo namoh* (Our salutations to the Devi who is instilled in each creature as its way to live, Devi Mahatmya, Chandi, Devimantra (stotra 21). *Vritti* is what mother nature has equipped us with for survival in the struggle for existence. To exercise *nirodha* or preventive control against *vritti* would be to cripple the being. It would be an act of aggression against mother nature. Derivatively, *Vrita* is understood to mean someone who has been accepted as an honorable person. *Vriti* means *varana* or welcoming. It further means that which surrounds a being to protect it, like a fence or the outer skin of a flower. *Vritta* means circular or a mandala. *Vrittastha* means *prakitistha* or encircled, safely lodged in one's own nature and normal, natural. To be drunk or be grief-stricken would be to be *aprakitistha* or not acting normally as the person has been confused or dislodged from the natural self.

Thus Patanjali's definition of yoga as *cittavrittinirodha* takes the shunning of nature as its point of its departure. Yoga is seen as a relentless and uninterrupted long practice that cultivates *vairagya* (detachment) and *vitrishna* (cessation of longing, recoil, a natural abhorrence or loathing) towards our natural propensities. *Vairagya* or dispassion/detachment is defined as *drishita* (seen)-*anushravika* (heard) *vishaya* (objects) *vitrishnasya* (repugnance) *vashikara* (taming, subduing) *samjna* (definition) *vairagyam* (dispassion, detachment) (sutra 1.15). It aims at rooting out the nature-given nature and replacing it with a being that we have made to be our second nature. We are ordered to stay in this new self, be grounded in it. From *Vritti* (nature) via *abhyasa* (practice of) *vairagyam* (detachment) to *savija samadhi* (meditative stage still pregnant with seeds or samskaras or imprints of nature) to *nirvicara* (void of discrimination, non-dual, devoid of multiplicity or diversity, sterile oneness) *adhyatma* (spirituality) *prasadah* (taste of divinity) is the route of Patanjali's yoga (Sutra 1.47). For him, truth and wisdom lie only here: *Ritam* (truth) *bhara* (filled) *tatra* (there) *prajna* (wisdom) (Sutra 1.48).

By contrast, integral yoga seeks not to eliminate nature from its path of integration. It is inclusive of the earthly and the sensory world that is Nature, of *Maya* (illusion) and *Leela* (play) as divine forces at play in creation. It thinks of conflict, pain and turmoil as essential ingredients in the process of transformation of being. It is not a journey towards a non-dual, distinction-less self-sameness but it is set upon achieving unity in the middle of diversity. It finds wholeness to be the original, natural state of being and aims at restoring the balance whenever it is off. It treats turbulence as a natural, necessary condition of the process of self-development and hence it treats every conflict, every error with care, compassion and reverence as a stage in the self-

manifestation of the spirit of Nature. It is more in tune with the twenty eight stotras of the Devi Mantra in Devi Mahatmya which enumerate all of the following (stotras 7 to 26) as a seat of the Devi:

Table 1: Twenty Eight Stotras of the Devi Mantra

<i>cetana</i> or consciousness	<i>buddhi</i> or the intellect	<i>nidra</i> or sleep/rest
<i>kshudha</i> or hunger	<i>chhaya</i> or shade	<i>shakti</i> or strength
<i>trishna</i> or thirst, craving	<i>khshanti</i> or forgiveness	<i>jati</i> or multiple species
<i>lajja</i> or modesty	<i>shanti</i> or peace	<i>shraddha</i> or reverence
<i>kanti</i> or form	<i>Lakshmi</i> or grace, prosperity, wealth	<i>vritti</i> or livelihood, dharma
<i>smriti</i> or past impressions, memory	<i>daya</i> or compassion	<i>tushti</i> or contentment
<i>matri</i> or the mother	<i>bhranti</i> or error, confusion, lost, disoriented	

In the end the mantra celebrates the Devi as residing in all of our senses (*indriyanam adhisthatri*) in the form of ever-present consciousness (*citirupen*). The Devi Mantra is recited in the Durga Puja which is an inseparable part of the Bengali Hindu tradition. Both Aurobindo and Chaudhuri were sons of Bengal. No wonder they carried within the core of their being the reverence for Nature.

Searching the roots of the word ‘integral’ takes us back to the sheepherder days of Europe and the times of the emergence of the tango dance. The opposite of integrate is often said to be segregate, which means to set apart from the flock. Sheep are gregarious animals; they tend to live in flocks, which are integrated wholes. Greg (stem of Latin grex) means flock. So when a sheep is lost, it is segregated, torn apart from its flock. The sheepherder tries to reunite it to its flock. It was whole to begin with, then it loses its wholeness and the task ahead is to restore it to its wholeness.

A study of the history of tango reveals some thought processes that can be of interest to students of integral philosophy (Denniston, 2007). In Spanish *tener* and *tengo* mean to have and to hold in one’s hands, the Latin being *teneo*. *Tangere* means to touch. “*Noli me tangere*”, meaning “Touch me not”, are the famous words ascribed to Jesus as being said by him to Mary Magdalene when she recognized him after resurrection and proceeded to touch him. Many have felt that there is something forbidding about touching. Touching may be seen as violating privacy, as going against conservation and preservation, as a denial of one’s basic right to be left alone. The phrase ‘*Noli Me Tangere*’ subsequently was borrowed by the notable Filipino nationalist author Jose Rizal as the title of his novel *Noli Me Tangere* (Rizal, 2006) in which he protested the Spanish colonization of his country. A colonizing people take away from the purity and wholeness of the original state of the country and its inhabitants when they establish their own invasive settlements. Rizal got his inspiration for writing the book from Harriet Stowe’s novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* which illustrated how the white colonizers stripped the African slaves of their natural state of wholeness.

Tango as a form of dance involves partners holding hands and holding each other in close proximity. There is something about touching that has been held to be impure in many cultures. In India one had to take a bath if one inadvertently touched a person of a lower caste. Hence the term “untouchable”. The fear of impurity traveling via touch was so much that one had to wash oneself even if the shadow of an untouchable was traversed. This fear is reflected in words like “contagious” (“*tag*” meaning to touch” in Latin”) which indicate that some germs spread through touch so precautions against such diseases include avoidance of touch. It is pertinent here to mention that *Noli Me Tangere* was also used to refer to cancer of the eyelid to state that the eye is not for touching. Jose Rizal was an ophthalmologist who was aware of this disease of the eye and the phrase *Noli Me Tangere* must have come readily to him. Even today, eye ailments and drugs use “Do not touch me” as a catchy phrase for their advertisements.

The idea that touching was morally impure had thrived in Europe until as late as the early and mid-nineteenth centuries. Prior to the introduction of the tango, dance in Europe was mainly *contra-danza*, in which partners stood facing each other, making lineal movements and only occasionally touching each other’s hands. It was similar to English country-dancing. There were circular forms of dancing as well which too involved no touching. The introduction of *Waltz* was the first advance made towards dancing that involved close holding of partners. It was around 1850 that the Opera of Paris first introduced *Waltz* as a risky venture but it turned out to be successful. *Waltz* was followed by *Polka*. The European elite was gradually relenting upon its idea that social touching while dancing was not morally condemnable. During the introduction of the tango in Argentina around 1880, men often had to dance with men to avoid social stigma or the unavailability of socially acceptable women in Argentina at the time. Such male and male partnership had nothing to do with homosexuality. It was the avoidance of morally impure and socially unsanctioned behavior by men and women towards each other. Tango involving men and women as partners was danced mostly in brothels in the early days. By 1930, however, tango had gained respectability and the rich Argentinians had introduced it to Europe as an acceptable and enjoyable dance.

Why was touching considered to be not desirable? It was not simply because touching could spread germs. It was also because touching could “take away” from things as well as “give” to things. If we touch a delicate flower or a lettuce leaf frequently, it will noticeably wilt. If we hold a baby for long periods of time it may interfere with the baby’s free growth. Perhaps our body heat takes something away in such cases. Perhaps it is like sleeping on a sofa where the free movement of one arm is impeded and the body does not feel fully rested after the sleep. Touch does take away from wholeness in some cases and in such instances wholeness is seen as the natural condition. But touch also gives. It gives comfort, it nourishes. It expresses caring. Yes, it can arouse improper sexual arousal in men and women, but where sexual closeness is desired by the partners, touch can be deemed divine. Thus touch has restorative and creative qualities as well. If what was whole has been made to be less than whole, touch can restore it back to wholeness. Thus it can act as an essential ingredient in the process of integration, in the creation and preservation of integral lives.

The word ‘integrate’, though used as the opposite of ‘segregate’, unlike the latter, does not have its roots in “greg”, which means group or flock. It is broken down to in (in the sense of no,

non)-tegr(touch)-ate(to cause). It means to cause not to touch. That would be a way to preserve the natural state of wholeness of the object concerned.

Tangere, teg, tegere, tag, tect, tact, texi are related words that can mean touch, feel, hold, try, reach, handle, evaluate, estimate, measure etc. in different contexts (Morwood, 1998). They refer explicitly or implicitly to the skin. The Sanskrit word for skin is *twak*, showing how ancient the concern is about touch. It is curious to note that *teg* and *tect* can also mean protective cover, like a shell enclosing a nut to keep it whole or a shell protecting a tortoise. A million other instances can be found in nature of how covers are intended to protect the pristine quality of things. Hence to pro-*te*ct is to work for the preservation of the cover enveloping the original wholeness of things and to de-*te*ct is to take away the cover and expose it to the outside world.

The prefix “in” too can have not just a forbidding import but may also mean to preserve something in its essential state. It has an inclusive and an exclusive sense. Hence in-tegr-ate can also mean to cause something to remain protected in its original state of wholeness. Do not touch or play with the cover for it sheaths the essential quality of the object, that which makes it viable, its sacred soul, that is. In this context Bahman Shirazi’s words appear very relevant. In his article *Integral Education: Founding Vision and Principles* (Shirazi, 2011), he remarks that balance and harmony are the ultimate laws of life. The observation can be made into a very pursuable goal in life if we remember that only harmony can bring balance in any given situation. However, it is also worth its while to remember that while harmony is an important goal to pursue, balance, on occasions may not be so. In matters of love and compassion, we can on occasion witness grand extravaganza. Aurobindo Ghosh spoke of Leela or playfulness as the source of the bursting forth of all creation. Leela, the divine’s pleasure, the delight the divine takes, in endlessly expressing itself in multitudinous forms is also termed *Ichchha* or the creator’s pleasure. It applies also to the child’s play, the sheer delight a child takes in playfully releasing its energy and create objects of fantasy out of its limitless imagination. Hence the word *Leela-khela*; Hence also the name *Ichchhamayee Tara* for the Goddess and the name *Ichhamati* for the ever-flowing river at the border of West Bengal and East Bengal (Bangladesh). Its dharma is to flow on and on and make its path and bring life to the elements that form its bank. It knows not what it does, cares not what pitfalls may arise on its path. Absorbed in its creativity it continues to flow. Perhaps this is what Aurobindo meant when he thought of the Infinite losing itself in the finite, leaving itself concealed in the finite that it generates out of itself. Perhaps it is not appropriate to call the created finite. For each finite conceals within itself the imprint of the infinite which gives it its original wholeness the loss or impairment of which stirs in it the unrest causing it to launch upon the journey to restore its wholeness to itself. Shirazi also states that people have an innate potential for wholeness and an urge to attain it. He maintains that all human beings have a right to be whole because wholeness is at the core of all human beings and that therefore healing can occur only if wholeness has been restored to someone suffering. I could not agree more with these forceful assertions. Only, I would like to extend the area of these affirmations from the human realm to all that is, to being as such. *Sat* or simple being transforms into *chit* or consciousness which in turn rises to the experience of *ananda* or joyfulness.

To believe in integralism is to be dynamic. It is not to be locked away in an eternal state of stagnation. It is to believe that wholeness is a natural state of all that is, that which makes being, be at its best. However, it also looks upon losing of wholeness in the process of creation and life

playing itself out as equally natural. It further believes that the restoration of wholeness is dharma for disintegration is the darkest hour and must be turned around to be productive of new integration. This is of the essence of Faith and Hope. This is made possible by the sharing of wholeness by those who have attained it, by self-erosion, by self-exposure, by giving of oneself at the cost of losing oneself. This is what Charity is. Fortunately, such self-giving not only restores wholeness to others, but also leads to regaining it for oneself.

*If I were an incense stick,
I must burn to give off fragrance.
If I were a lamp,
I must be lit and have to burn to give light.*
—Rabindranath Tagore (1967)

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Individuation, Cosmogenesis and Technology: Sri Aurobindo And Gilbert Simondon

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Abstract: The turn of the 19th/20th centuries saw a number of philosophers of conscious evolution emerging from different cultural backgrounds. This paper argues that this phenomenon, which has sometimes been seen as a philosophical consequence of Darwin's evolutionary theory in the life sciences, is more importantly related to the enhanced scope of human subjectivity made possible by technology at this time. Yet technology remains the "unthought within the thought" of its times, an ambiguous presence, derided for its alienating effects and praised for its enhancement of human capacities and comforts. A later generation of thinkers, belonging to the post World War II era renews the thought of conscious evolution, now in engagement with new technologies of a planet spanning scope. This essay considers the ideas of these two generations of thinkers, focusing on Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) from the earlier generation and Gilbert Simondon (1924-1989) from the more recent era, questioning the consequences of contemporary technology in their thoughts, goals and practices. In developing the historical continuity of ideas, it tracks the question of technology from the earlier to the later generation, highlighting the understanding of both its promise and its ills and engaging with it the possibilities of conscious evolution.

Key Words: Conscious Evolution, Cosmogenesis, Cosmogenetic Individuation, Gilbert Simondon, Henri Bergson, Marshall McLuhan, Sri Aurobindo, Technology, Teilhard de Chardin.

Cosmogenetic Individuation

The turn of the 19th/20th centuries saw an implementation of what has been called the Second Industrial Revolution marked by universal electrification, mass production and the birth of the world market. This brought the post-Enlightenment episteme into the properly modern phase of its actualization, the practical horizon of a global humanity. For the first time in human history the assumption of a species identity for all humans and the yoking of all humanity in a common global life made itself a ubiquitous anthropological possibility. The ontological consequences of

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such an epistemic change were dimly grasped by the leading thinkers of the time, in their varied ramifications. These included ideas which projected a global expansion of human subjectivity, read retrospectively back to cosmogenetic processes.

It should be noted that Enlightenment philosophies had already arrived at a formalization of an evolutionary ideology in Hegel's philosophy of history, which saw an involved rationality in Matter and a cosmic Time Spirit (*zeitgeist*) working out its experiments in synthesizing opposites towards the emergence of the Logos as free thought in social and political life (Hegel, 1975). It is important to note that creature agency is undervalued in this process, the progressive experiments of the *zeitgeist* leave their results culturally fossilized moving on to other "races" (an east-to-west drift) and human subjectivity remains bounded within predetermined limits.

Nietzsche's refusal of ideological truths on the grounds of their being historically contingent and politically established and his exaltation of human agency as an effect of a cosmogenetic will to power was largely a reaction to Hegel's deterministic evolutionism. The new evolutionary philosophies which arose through the last decades of the 19th century and over the first half of the 20th century were closer, in this regard to Nietzsche in positing immanent forms of evolution in which creature/human agency played a key part and human subjectivity underwent radical change/expansion. It should also be noted that such philosophies arose in the wake of Darwinian evolution, but whereas the latter was restricted to morphological change based on anatomico-functional adaptations in which agency or consciousness played no part, the new philosophies recognized changes in consciousness underlying evolutionary processes and resulting from immanent ideas actualized through acts of will.

Three such thinkers of this period are the two Frenchmen, Henri Bergson (1859-1941) and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) and the Indian, Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950). In looking for a common key to describe the works of these thinkers, I would use the phrase "cosmogenetic individuation." "Cosmogenesis" is a term used by Teilhard (1959) to refer to a process of increasing complexity, self-organization and self-awareness of the cosmos. "Individuation" seems more common in its usage but deceptive due to its varied connotations and inflections. Presently, this term is more usually associated with C. G. Jung (1971), a psychological emergence of singular personhood out of the amorphous Unconscious and its movement towards universalization. Though such a process could have practical similarities with individuation as theorized by more recent philosophers like Gilbert Simondon (1924-1989) (Simondon, 2005; Scott: 2014) and Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) (Deleuze, 1995), these latter include an ontological foundation to individuation which is absent in Jung. Bergson (1988) uses the term to refer to creative differentiation of instances, and Teilhard and Sri Aurobindo, though they don't explicitly use the term, refer to ontogenetic processes akin to individuation. Teilhard (1959), for example, writes of hominization, personalization, anthropogenesis and christogenesis, as roughly synonymous terms to a becoming-individual of the cosmos, while a similar evolution towards universalization of the person-element (*purusha*) in the cosmos is envisaged by Sri Aurobindo (2005, pp. 922-952) in what he calls psychization.

Metaphysics of Conscious Evolution

In Teilhard (1959) and Sri Aurobindo (2005) a cosmic/transcendental principle (*noosphere* or Supermind respectively) is immanent in all entities in the cosmos, and seeks to individuate itself through them. In the case of Bergson (1988), a creative immanent consciousness in the cosmos and all its creatures, the *élan vital*, multiplies diversity and pushes towards an increasing complexity that can be intuited and be the source of knowledge and action in each of its creatures according to their orientation and capacity. However, though such an ontogenetic foundation evades the hubris of anthropocentrism, it empowers the individual, variously locating the evolutionary will as creature agency.

This is where these thinkers differ from philosophers of deterministic history, such as Hegel, for whom cosmogenetic agency, even when immanent, can be said to be located in a transcendence within the immanence. In these thinkers, one finds both these dimensions of transcendence and immanence assuming active potency, along a gradient in which Teilhard can be seen as slanted closer to the transcendence and Bergson towards the immanence. Thus all these thinkers can be thought of as panentheistic in various ways. Of the three, Sri Aurobindo, while acknowledging an immune transcendence, yet posits two other forms of self-perception of this transcendence, an objectified self-perception (Matter as cosmic immanence of the Subject); and a self-multiplied prospection as every individual possibility within this immanence, or in other words, the complete immanence of conscious Being (Brahman) in every particle of the material cosmos, thus representing individual agency in conjunction with cosmic agency (Sri Aurobindo, 2005, pp. 309-335). While individual agency has been secondary to cosmic agency ("Nature") prior to the appearance of the human, individualized consciousness in the human represents a new level of independence from cosmic agency and thus able to determine its own destiny superseding Nature's will (Sri Aurobindo, 2005, pp. 856-879).

Sri Aurobindo's theological metaphysics has profound correspondences with Teilhard's Christology, founded on an exile and redemption mythos. In Teilhard's mystical Christology, the "redemption" is not "completed" by the historical personage of Christ, but this historical event becomes a symbolic promise for its multiplied realization in human individuals leading to a cosmic "return" through Christogenesis in the individualized collective realization of the "Omega Point" (Teilhard de Chardin, 2001). The separation from Origin implied in a mythos of exile is also present in Sri Aurobindo, though, founded in the Vedic theme of Sacrifice as expressed in the Purusha Sukta, such a separation is not an "act of Evil" burdened on the human and thus requiring redemption, but rather an "act of God" on the body of God, and thus a self-sacrifice, leading to an ontology of Separation in which, nevertheless, the One becomes self-multiplied as monadic immanence (Sri Aurobindo, 1999, p.106; Alfassa, 1977/2004, p.74). Similarly, instead of "redemption" then, the evolutionary drift of such a cosmic condition would be a recovery of cosmic and transcendental Oneness through identification of each individual with the fullness of Purusha, reconstituting its sacrificed Body in a collective manifestation which Sri Aurobindo referred to as a "divine life" on earth (Sri Aurobindo, 2005, pp. 1051-1108).

However, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, individual agency coexists with cosmic agency in Sri Aurobindo's metaphysics. This implies a theology in which the Vedic Sacrifice of Purusha is accompanied (in fact, preceded) by the Sacrifice of Prakriti, creating the substantial

and operational cosmic condition of Inconscience in which the fragmented dismemberment of Purusha may seed itself (Sri Aurobindo, 2012, p.17). This cosmic latency of Consciousness self-constrained as Inconscience becomes the basis for the evolution of Nature. According to Sri Aurobindo, all evolution is accomplished through the double process of memorial aspiration (ascent of consciousness) and responsive Grace (descent of consciousness) (Sri Aurobindo, 2012, p.3; Sri Aurobindo, 2005, pp.730-753). The stirrings of the memory of Consciousness within the Inconscient turn into an ascending aspiration which invokes the "descent" of successive gradations of Consciousness, each with its characteristic properties marking its difference in kind. Such a successive gradation of Consciousness in Nature (Prakriti) based in the Inconscience of Matter affords increasing possibilities of freedom and self-manifestation (*swayambhu*) to the individualized immanence of Purusha in each of its dispersed units. Thus the evolution of Prakriti affords the evolution of Purusha (Sri Aurobindo, 2005, pp. 272-274).

Evolution and Psychological Praxis of Sri Aurobindo

The Purusha is present in the particulate appearance of Matter as physical or material purusha; in discrete Life forms as vital purusha and with the appearance of Mind, as mental purusha. Each of these successive forms of purusha is more "awake" than its predecessor, better able to experience its freedom and sovereignty from its constraining bounds of prakriti. In the human, the co-existence of physical, vital and mental prakriti implies the triple presence of physical, vital and mental purushas, a compound existence in which the freedom of the intelligence (*buddhi*) from the rest of the human constitution enables a higher degree of potential freedom of the mental purusha amounting to the possibility of a transcendence of Nature (Sri Aurobindo, 2005, pp. 856-879). Such a possibility of purusha's freedom in one of the constituents of prakriti results in what may be called an anthropogenesis, a new form of ontogenesis (it should be noted that ontogenesis and anthropogenesis are terms more common to Teilhard than Sri Aurobindo; nevertheless, I have used these terms since I feel them to be appropriate). This anthropogenesis is the birth of personhood, described by Sri Aurobindo in terms of the appearance of a new and more centralized dimension of immanent purusha in the human, capable of integrating the physical, vital and mental purushas and called by him "psychic being" or "soul personality". At this point, Purusha's evolution is capable of taking an independent turn, no longer dependent on the evolution of Prakriti but able to transcend, master and transform Prakriti (Sri Aurobindo, 2005).

Being free of the burden of guilt, Sri Aurobindo's evolutionary monadology may be seen as an individualized "adventure of consciousness and joy," and in this respect closer to Bergson's (and Nietzsche's) personal exercise of a cosmic creativity (*élan vital*). It is also in this respect, that such an exercise of personal creative will has been theorized by Sri Aurobindo as a praxis discursively continuous with long traditions of Indian yoga (Sri Aurobindo, 1999, pp. 41-52). Thus, of these three thinkers, Sri Aurobindo provides the most developed methodology for a cosmic and transcendental expansion of (post)human personhood, based in the capacities of the source of individuation, the psychic being, to integrate the personality, identify itself with cosmic being (Overmind) and finally transcend cosmic existence in an identity with a transcendental source, the Supermind (Sri Aurobindo, 2005, pp. 922-952). Sri Aurobindo refers to this process as "the triple transformation". Yet, as one can see from the above, such a process is intensely

psychological, a "practical psychology" (Sri Aurobindo, 1999, p. 44) as Sri Aurobindo terms it, which seems to minimize or invalidate any concern for social or cultural conditions.

Such an appearance, however, is misleading and arises due to the disciplinary specialization of discourse as an epistemic aspect of modernity. We have noted how Sri Aurobindo's metaphysics involves relationally, the evolution of universal conditions (prakriti) and individuation of consciousness (purusha). This relationality does not disappear with the emergence of the human. If the practical psychology of the triple transformation is concerned primarily with ontic evolution of the Purusha as outlined in Sri Aurobindo's philosophical (*The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo, 2005) and "yogic" (*The Synthesis of Yoga*, Sri Aurobindo, 1999) works, Sri Aurobindo's social and political texts delineate the continuing evolution of prakriti at the level of human society, moving towards global conditions of human unity, a trajectory fraught not merely with promise but danger, needing political and ethical negotiation through its relationship with human agency (Sri Aurobindo, 1997). But the implications of such ethical and political agency are easily lost sight of, due to the above-mentioned separation of his social and psychological texts and the privileging of the latter over the former.

Social Praxis and Technology

This continuing evolution of prakriti at the level of human society and civilization in its varied relations with human choices (evolution of purusha) can be elaborated into a critique of modernity, something Sri Aurobindo himself undertakes to some extent in his social and political texts (Sri Aurobindo, 1997, pp. 15-221). He presages a phase of globalization led by capital, and outlines the dangers of "economic barbarism" and fascist politics (pp. 44-54; pp. 73-81). He predicts the eventuality of a world government and analyzes the struggles of individual and subcultural agency in the face of homogenizing or hegemonizing tendencies (pp. 279-578). He stages the opposition of superpower politics and federalist participation (pp. 505-547). He sees the importance of promoting the forces of fraternity and internationalism over the ideological investments of state controlled planning or aggressive nativism or religious fundamentalism (pp. 548-570). At the microsocal level of the individual and the community, he promotes increasing autonomy with direct individual participation in shaping the communitarian life moving in the direction of a spiritual anarchy. Yet, as I discuss in the next paragraph, the ubiquitous mediation of technology as the sign of contemporaneity, emerging after his time, is not independently addressed by Sri Aurobindo.

While a comparative study of these three thinkers would be very interesting (and has been attempted in part by several scholars) what concerns me in this essay is the contemporary relevance of the paradigm or episteme that finds form in these thinkers. In this regard it is the unthought within the thought, the obvious medium of existence that often makes possible the perception of an idea but remains invisible or imperceptible, and concretizes itself over time demanding a new engagement. Such is the place of technology in the articulation of these thinkers. One may say that the question of human subjectivity and its transformations (the "who") accompanies the thought of post-Enlightenment modernity from its inception as part of its anthropological project. But it is tied to the question of the transformation of the world (the "what") as it arises from its knowledge (science).

This project of world transformation is attributed to the application of science; i.e. technology—and thus the appearance of new assessments of the relation of human subjectivity to the cosmos with the advent of new technologies is almost to be expected. Yet the possibilities opened up by the new technologies on human consciousness are elided in the new philosophies of conscious evolution and/or the evolution of consciousness. To be fair to these philosophers, it isn't as if they ignore the advances of science and technology. Along with other humanistic thinkers of this period, they hold an ambiguous view of technology, part critique of its alienating and destructive effects from/on nature and part admiration for its productive and world-uniting possibilities. But technology does not receive a systematic treatment in relation to the possibilities of human consciousness from any of these thinkers.

Heidegger and the Question Concerning Technology

Indeed, it is only after the passing of this generation of thinkers and more properly from the 1960s that technology becomes increasingly addressed with reference to consciousness, due to its ontological ubiquity. Perhaps the first serious and systematic consideration of this kind was Martin Heidegger's essay "The Question Concerning Technology" published in 1954 (Heidegger, 1982). In this essay, Heidegger seeks out the "essence of technology" and finds it not in technology itself but in the kind of revealing it makes possible. Heidegger relates technology, in its essence to fabrication, a "making" which is "indebted" to four kinds of "causes"—the earth as a provider of raw materials, a form of self-disclosure and gifting in relationship to the human (material cause); the history of cultural forms, related to the function it serves (formal cause); the larger contextual goal or terminal function within which the fabricated object serves its function, ultimately a sacralizing or sacrificing to a transcendent realm or order (final cause); and the human fashioner who addresses all these causes and shapes the functional object (efficient cause) (Heidegger, 1982, p. 6).

Attention to all these causes or "obligations"/"debts" makes the work of technology (*techne*) equivalent to a work of art, or invoking Heidegger's Greek term, *poiesis* (Heidegger, 1982, pp. 8, 34). Modern technology, Heidegger avers, does not respect the material cause or final cause. It challenges and sets itself upon the earth and it ignores the sacralizing function of aspiring for the Transcendent (pp. 9-10). Heidegger uses two terms, "enframing" (*gestell*) and "standing reserve" (*bestand*) to describe the alienating and violent form of disclosure involved in modern technology (Heidegger, 1982, pp. 11-13), marked by information exploitation, ordering all subjects and objects in the cosmos as static resources always available to be put to one's bidding.

This alienation from the temporality or seasonality of the earth and its power to disclose the self-manifestation of Being; as well as its rupture from the sacred sphere is the chronic malaise of our times, the epistemic violence of modern technology. Enframing thus refers to an attempt at a spatial reduction of cosmic contents, a mode of existence in which all things are objectified as resource, shorn of the mystery of temporal disclosure. Standing reserve is another way of addressing the status of beings or subjects thus reduced, objectified, commodified and exploited. As a mode of existence therefore, modern technology is seen by Heidegger as modernity's episteme, utilizing the methodology and systemic objectifying descriptology of science to "gather" reality into a single flattened frame so as to order its contents at will (Heidegger, 1982, p.17).

Such an ontological critique of technology puts us in view at once of both the globalization and alienation of our times. An abstract absolute description of the world usurps the place of the world. Modern and contemporary continental philosophy leans heavily on this insight of Heidegger. It becomes the basis for Habermas' "colonization of the lifeworld" (Habermas 1984), and of Jean Baudrillard's "virtual reality" (Baudrillard, 1994). Looked at in terms closer to us, in the key of contemporary technology which Heidegger was not privy to, one could say that what Heidegger describes here is a mode of existence where reality is perceived as an omni-database with all entities classified and organized in terms of their relations and properties, waiting to be "harvested," "utilized" or "exploited" by whoever had power to access this construct. Undoubtedly, such a view seems bleak, holding little comfort or positive potential for human subjectivity.

In relation to the philosophers of conscious evolution I started with, if human subjects are brought without exception under a regime of objectification and potential exploitation, they have little wriggle room to expand subjectively and the promise of an integration and cosmization of the human subject would seem an impossibility. Of course, such an ontology would also be uneven affording degrees of freedom and privilege in access and exploitation of the "standing reserve." But under an universal ontology, even such subject positions of privilege in power and capital would be constrained to the maintenance of the ontological order. Heidegger's appeal is a return to *poiesis*, respect for the four causes or debts that human beings find themselves embedded in all their fabrications (*homo faber*) or technological undertakings (*techne*). This would need a "wresting" of agency from the established order of our times and the re-establishment of a more "authentic" mode of existence in the individual and the collective, the creation of a new "I" and "we" that resists the automatic gravitation of slippage into the "they" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 415).

Apart from this foregrounding of technology as the epistemic ontology of our times, in situating beings existentially within a temporal horizon constituted by the self-disclosure of Being, Heidegger created a language that folded interiority in historicity, thus articulating simultaneously the realities of individual and society. The wresting of *poiesis* from an objectified *techne* is a praxis historically embedded within the modern horizon of Being. Such a praxis can be related to the practical psychology of yoga, a revolutionary transformation of subjective consciousness making possible a new horizon of Being's self-disclosure. This overcoming of the disciplinary specialization and separation of psychological and sociological studies marked a departure from the considerations of an earlier generation, like that of the philosophers of creative evolution we have considered, such as Sri Aurobindo, whose works had been produced in disciplinary isolation, as mentioned above, much to their detriment. Continental philosophers, such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Pierre Bourdieu and Gilles Deleuze, who have followed in the wake of Heidegger, have continued an articulation that undercuts such disciplinary boundaries.

Heidegger's originality and break with the past may also be seen in his rejection of metaphysical idealism in favor of an ontology grounded in phenomenology. This turn in Heidegger may more properly be credited to his teacher, Edmund Husserl, the father of modern phenomenology, who felt that the modern domination of epistemology by science could no longer be overlooked by philosophy, which needed, in response to refuse metaphysical

speculation but also to eschew science's privileged objectification. Heidegger takes one step further in overcoming the subject-object dualism through his ontology and thus inaugurates a trend in which the critique of and break with metaphysics is treated as final.

Thinkers such as Foucault and Derrida, following in the wake of Heidegger and largely in continuation of his work, have shied away not only from metaphysics but also from ontology as a result, more concerned to situate ontology in historical and political determination. Among this generation of important late 20th century continental thinkers, only Gilles Deleuze, influenced strongly by Bergson, has continued to address metaphysics and ontology, but from a vantage of empiricism and ontogenesis. As a result, Deleuze can be constellated in important ways with our philosophers of evolution. However, I am not including a consideration of his ideas here, except where relevant, because though he has commented on technology in our times, this is not one of his primary concerns. On the other hand, he was profoundly influenced by a contemporary of his, Gilbert Simondon, who engaged deeply with the question of technology, and in this essay I wish to relate the ideas of conscious evolution to Simondon's thinking on ontogenesis and technology.

McLuhan: Media Technology and Consciousness

However, before that, in thinking of a later generation who have engaged the ideas of the philosophers of conscious evolution with the ubiquity and ontology of modern technology, one must consider the Canadian philosopher of media technology, Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980). Both McLuhan and Simondon may be seen to have direct links to the philosophers of conscious evolution—McLuhan to Teilhard de Chardin and Simondon to Bergson. Though McLuhan did not directly reference Teilhard, the cultural critic Tom Wolfe (2011) has pointed to the pervasive influence and substructural presence of Teilhard's ideas in McLuhan's insights on media. McLuhan is responsible for a large number of neologisms that have become current in contemporary popular culture, three of his most well-known phrases being "global village," the distinction between "hot and cool media (McLuhan, 1964, p. 22)" and "the medium is the message," later further finessed as the book title *The Medium is the Massage* (McLuhan & Fiore, Q, 1967).

Regarding technology both as an exteriorization and amputation of human organs and capacities, such as the nervous system or the memory (McLuhan, 1964, p. 11), McLuhan articulated many of the ideas that have led to contemporary posthumanist thought. In seeing new technologies as amputations of human capacity, he was echoing Plato's concerns with "writing" as a technology leading to the attenuation and eventual loss of human memory (*Phaedrus*), but this was counterbalanced, for McLuhan, by the global expansion of collective consciousness made possible by technologies of communication, transportation and exchange. Yet, though the gains of collective consciousness were promising, the natural attenuation of individual capacities and the subjection of the individual to mass determinants were problematic consequences of technology that McLuhan was much concerned about all his life.

He saw and wrote of the subject altering powers of media arising from new equations and engagements of the human sensory system (McLuhan, 1962, p. 41), and reinflected this idea more powerfully in terms of ontological subjection in the tweaked variant "the medium is the massage." One can easily see the extended mileage of this idea in contemporary posthumanist

thought, as in Katherine Hayles' books *How we Became Posthuman* (Hayles, 1999) or *My Mother was a Computer* (Hayles, 2005). McLuhan was developing his ideas in a world dominated by television, and died in 1980, prior to the emergence of the desktop computer and long before the appearance of the World Wide Web. Yet, his pronouncements predict a world characterized by these developments in the 1960s. He discussed the ontological changes related to transitions of dominant media from print through film and television to multimedia and interdependent computing, coining the phrase "global village" to describe the last phase. In his text *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*, (McLuhan, 1962) he describes the promises and dangers of such a society:

Instead of tending towards a vast Alexandrian library the world has become a computer, an electronic brain, exactly as an infantile piece of science fiction. And as our senses have gone outside us, Big Brother goes inside. So, unless aware of this dynamic, we shall at once move into a phase of panic terrors, exactly befitting a small world of tribal drums, total interdependence, and superimposed co-existence. [...] Terror is the normal state of any oral society, for in it everything affects everything all the time. [...] In our long striving to recover for the Western world a unity of sensibility and of thought and feeling we have no more been prepared to accept the tribal consequences of such unity than we were ready for the fragmentation of the human psyche by print culture. (p. 32)

One can see here the recovery of a collective human unity, now extended to a global dimension, out of the fragmentation implied in the complexification of tribal culture with the ascendance of civilization, marked as per McLuhan by print media and its subjective correlate of individualism. But at the same time it is a return of subjective inundation by mass behaviors and instincts (tribal drums), lowest common denominators of consciousness (terrors) and surveillance and control by corporate or ideological authority (Big Brother). Behind this global culture one may intuit the cosmogenesis of Teilhard, a materialization of a cosmic consciousness or noosphere mediated by technology. Yet, for Teilhard, such a collective dimension could only be a stage in anthropogenesis, a precursor to christogenesis, or the generation of a cosmic and transcendental individual in each person. McLuhan could perceive the dangers and difficulties towards this eventuation, its easy derailment under the powers of subjection conditioning individuals more ubiquitously than ever before.

In response, he sought ways to maximize creative expression under these circumstances, indicating conditions and practices enabling agency, engagement and the autonomy and expansion of subjectivity. It is in such a context that, in his text *Understanding Media* (McLuhan, 1964, p.22), he distinguished between "hot and cool media," media which enabled consumption and disabled participation (hot) as against those that were intrinsically interactive (cool). Interestingly, he classes movies as being hot and television as cool, due to the latter needing more mental and emotional interactive response than the former. Today, such a distinction seems odd in the context of television, to which we more commonly attribute the function of producing "couch potatoes." However, the distinction could be seen as valuable in general for our consideration. McLuhan was not blind to the relative scale of these terms and displays his prescience once again when he compares television and multimedia computing:

The next medium, whatever it is—it may be the extension of consciousness—will include television as its content, not as its environment, and will transform television into an art form. A computer as a research and communication instrument could enhance retrieval, obsolesce mass library organization, retrieve the individual's encyclopedic function and flip into a private line to speedily tailored data of a saleable kind. (McLuhan, 1995, p.221)

When compared to Heidegger, we see that McLuhan does not subscribe to the former's unrelieved pessimism, though he is not naive about the detrimental effects of conditioning and state or corporate control implied by contemporary technology. Instead he opens the possibility of achieving a Teilhardian vision of collective noogenesis through new technologies. This promissory note extended by McLuhan has informed a number of contemporary techno-optimists, who feel that the World Wide Web in conjunction with other global telecommunication technologies, has inaugurated a new utopian age for humankind. In Gilbert Simondon, we will see another late 20th century contemporary of McLuhan who holds out similar horizons for the human future, albeit with greater nuance and further reach. The question of human subjectivity inaugurated by Heidegger in terms of modern ontology remains, however. To what extent are human beings available to realize such a promise, or are they all the better transformed into fodder bereft of agency within enormous global systems of surveillance, classification, control and use, conditioned to believe that they are happy and free through technologies of persuasion and invisibility, as predicted by Gilles Deleuze (1992) in his *Postscript on the Societies of Control*?

Simondon's Ontogenetic Metaphysics

Gilbert Simondon (1924-1989) is undoubtedly the most sophisticated of the late 20th century philosophers of technology, who have continued in the wake of the early 20th century philosophers of evolution. As mentioned before, he was influenced by Bergson, whose idea of creative evolution and inventive fertility of becoming receives an updated treatment contemporary with a constellation of more recent concepts associated with modern science such as immanence, emergence, systems theory, chaos theory, information theory, cybernetics and self-regulating systems (Barthélémy 2005). This is not to say that Simondon drew from these concepts, rather he represents a milieu of thought in which such concepts were emerging and have since become current. As per my characterization towards the beginning of this article, the central idea in Simondon's oeuvre could be delineated as "cosmogenic individuation." In keeping with the post-Husserlian dictum in philosophy to keep away from idealistic metaphysics, Simondon does not develop an elaborate theory grounding becoming in a transcendent principle or choice, as does Teilhard or Sri Aurobindo. Rather, he positions the structures of becoming within becoming itself, proceeding empirically to verify and describe his ontogenetic processes. In this however, he is not too far from Sri Aurobindo, whose metaphysics is based in a praxis of transformation which can be equally made an empirical basis for participation in a "cosmogenic individuation."

Simondon's process metaphysics deals with a pure immanence of becoming. In his thought, a stable unitary Being would remain transcendent and be incapable of manifestation. On the other hand, a purely unstable being would lead to a chaotic manifestation. Instead he posits a "metastable" Being, "more than a unity and an identity," in other words marked by a radical

excess, which can double itself through a phase-shift (referred to by Simondon as "disparation") and thus generate gradients of exchange between two heterogeneous series, which are problematic fields of becoming (Simondon, 1989/2007). Each solution to such a problem would be a singular individuation, that would remain in metastable equilibrium with the larger field or problematic (the milieu) and the totality of the metastable being (preindividual being). Though relatively stable at the point of individuation, each individuated being and its milieu would remain capable of further individuation due to its continued metastability in relation to preindividual being.

Such further individuations may push an individuated being into another order of solutions belonging to a different problematic gradient, expressing new properties and degrees of freedom and agency. The information exchange along each gradient of becoming would be modulated by the properties of the medium of exchange, thus determining commonalities, degrees of variance and boundaries of each order of individuation. Simondon referred to these information transfers leading to resolution and individuation as "transduction." Thus individuation remained an "open" and ever-unfinished process, representing a negentropic tendency of Being generating ever higher orders of cosmogenetic individual and collective becoming.

Orders of Individuation: Simondon and Sri Aurobindo

Simondon identifies three such orders of individuation, the physical, the vital and the psychic. Physical individuation pertains to entities of material nature, vital individuation refers to the order of living beings and psychic individuation is of mental subjects (human beings). As discussed each of these individuations occurs at the levels of the individual and the milieu. One may bring to mind here the evolution of purusha and prakriti along the modalities of physical, vital and mental consciousness in Sri Aurobindo. The evolution of prakriti along each of these levels can be related to the individuation of the milieu, while the evolution of purusha corresponds to the individuation of the individual. One may also note that Sri Aurobindo includes the evolution of the psychic being, which expands into the triple transformation and leads to the cosmogenesis and beyond of the individual.

While Simondon's "psychic individuation" is not elaborated to this degree, it is articulated further in terms of "collective individuation" or "transindividuation," a universalized collective socius enabling an open-ended diverse individuation in individual and collective. Collective individuation, in the case of Sri Aurobindo, forms the milieu of the "divine life." Theorized by him more in terms of a universal philosophical anthropology in his philosophical and psychological texts, in his social and political texts and in practice in the habitus of his ashram in Pondicherry, the relationship between the psychic and the collective developments included a cultural dimension pertaining to global or planetary unity. In 1968, after Sri Aurobindo's passing, his spiritual partner and collaborator, Mirra Alfassa aka The Mother, founded the city of Auroville, as a "planetary city" and a "site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual human unity." She also coined the term "collective yoga" to refer to the relational extension of the individual yoga at the collective level, open to a planetary culture. In 1973, the year of her passing, the Mother gave a New Year message which tied the goal of psychic evolution to a collective yoga at the planetary level: "When you are conscious of the

whole world at the same time, then you can become conscious of the Divine" (Alfassa, 1973, Para 1).

Transindividuation and Collective Yoga

What is meant by being conscious of the whole world at the same time? It seems to me the preparation of a psychic subjectivity identified with the subjective life of the world and its preindividual excess. How can one prepare oneself to be conscious of the whole world at the same time? For the followers of Sri Aurobindo's yoga, who have privileged his yoga texts, this might mean the expansion of individual consciousness through meditation and union with a cosmic consciousness. But those who read his social texts or who have been privy to the Mother's texts on collective yoga or her words related to Auroville may say, through the evolution of prakriti and psychic engagement with the cultural history of the world. For Simondon, this would be the preparation for the planetary transindividual:

All individual ensembles have thus a sort of non-structured ground from which a new individuation can be produced. The psycho-social is the transindividual: it is this reality that the individuated being transports with itself, this load of being for future individuations. (Simondon, 1989/2007, p.193)

Such a preparation would bring to light the history of technology for Simondon. If the major part of Simondon's doctoral thesis at the Sorbonne was titled "Psychic and Collective Individuation," his minor paper, which got published first both in the French original and the English translation, and for which he is better known is "The Mode of Existence of Technical Objects." Following the anthropologist Leroi-Gourham, Simondon sees the human being as co-constituted by technology. Human extension into the preindividual excess and his transindividuation are facilitated by technology. But as a mode of existence, technical objects, though conceptually and functionally bound to human becoming, also represent an order of independent individuation. The evolution of lineages of technical objects, Simondon shows, follows like other forms of individuation, a transductive process leading to an efficient stabilization of elements, that has its own life outside of individual inventors, manufacturers or commercial interests. Simondon sees the individuation of technical objects following three orders related to three historical phases of human individuation—the premodern agrarian phase marked by artisanal manual tools, the modern industrial phase marked by thermodynamic engine driven machines and the postmodern and postindustrial phase marked by information processing.

If the human relationship with technology during the preindustrial phase was one which involved physical skill and implied a harmonious relationship between human, technical object and nature; the modern industrial phase has been one of increasing alienation between these three. Modern industrial machines have an enormous footprint, consume huge quantities of natural resources, disturbing the earth's ecological balance and depleting her reserves; mass produce enormous quantities of finished products, for which large industries of persuasion must be formed so as to manufacture desire for consumption; and excrete tremendous quantities of waste which must be disposed, poisoning the earth and the habitats of the underprivileged. To produce, operate and maintain these machines, human beings must subject their bodies to the

movements, speeds, temperatures, pressures and other unnatural properties of large-scale thermodynamic machines and their ensembles.

Simondon sees these conditions of human-machine interaction as an unpleasant phase in their mutual transduction, resulting in the alienation that humanists have attributed to the machine. However, even in the 1960s, Simondon foresaw the overpassing of this phase and its replacement by a new postindustrial phase of information processing, where the individuation of microprocessor based information processing machines and computers would tend towards physical miniaturization and wireless communication, becoming networked ensembles that would provide universal access to all of the earth, all sources of knowledge and all material and cultural handling capacities through versatile terminals. Indeed, like McLuhan, Simondon was seeing these visions of the future in the 1960s. Freed from subjection to industrial complexes, human beings would be able to interact creatively with nature and world through a mostly invisible layer of the being of technology individuated collectively in relation with human transindividuation.

Utopia or Dystopia?

Is this the inexorable future utopia towards which global humanity is moving today with its p2p smart phones and other networked digital prosthetics and bionics? Is the experience of "being conscious of the whole world at the same time," announced by the Mother as the distant goal of an arduous spiritual development just a form of cheap purchase universally bestowed upon humanity through the transindividuation of technology? Was Heidegger's ontological subjection by the new mode of Being's disclosure through technology, seen as modernity's episteme, but a mistaken identification of a passing phase for the noons of the future?

Simondon's brilliance has been acknowledged by many major thinkers of his and our times. One of his greatest contemporaries, who reviewed his thesis with unreserved praise and borrowed heavily from him in his own work, was Gilles Deleuze; and one of the great philosophers of our times, who continues to be indebted to him and thinks using his concepts of psychic and collective individuation, is Bernard Stiegler. Writing in the 1980s, Deleuze (1992), in his *Postscript to Societies of Control*, warns about the mutations of capital from the industrial to the postindustrial age. If the ubiquitous presence of the machine extended an era of biopolitics related to the disciplining of human bodies in keeping with the needs of industry in the age of thermodynamic machines, our age of information processing sees a new kind of subjection. The miniaturization and invisibility of the machine hides its versatile and flexible control over human lives. The enhanced flexibility of work and movement, increased plethora of choices and extended reach over time and space present a commodified freedom and happiness, within which capital controls human lives, denying true creative engagement with preindividual being, which would make possible new individuations. Similarly, in our own times, Bernard Stigler has warned about real-time corporate and governmental profiling and targeting, fragmentation of subjectivity through chronic technologies of attention capture and the remaking of public memories through mnemo-technics.

What Simondon saw as the promise of a new utopian phase of human-machine transduction/transindividuation leading to an individual and collective cosmogenesis is not a

given that will arise automatically through the press of new buttons. Looking at the yoga of Sri Aurobindo, the arduous subjective disciplines necessary for "the triple transformation" needs a milieu dedicated to inner development for its habitus, something less and less possible in our present age globally networked for corporate interests of production, seduction and consumption. Yet, Simondon's vision is not without its possibilities; but what it would need is the development of subjective technologies to free the consciousness of conditioning and render it creative to transindividuate using technology.

Similarly Sri Aurobindo's expansion of consciousness can perhaps be better achieved in creative engagement with a global culture made available through transduction with ubiquitous information machines. New milieus for transindividuation, new forms of McLuhan's "global village" dedicated to perpetual cosmogenetic individuation may be possible through an enhanced subjective discipline of psychic and cosmic individuation moving towards the self-making of new subjects "conscious of the whole world at the same time" in engagement with co-individuating ensembles of information networks and machines. This is the promise of the future but it needs human agency and a subjectivity that can measure itself against the objective materialization of the cosmos in the form of real-time information networks controlled by capital.

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Unfolding Toward Being: Etty Hillesum and the Evolution of Consciousness

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Abstract: The 'unfolding' of Etty Hillesum's developing consciousness is considered from an integral and 'evolution of consciousness' perspective. In the introductory section some parallels and similarities between aspects of transformation of consciousness and personality in integral yoga psychology and the work of A.H. Almaas and Karen Johnson, the developers of the Diamond Approach, is drawn upon to set the stage. This path combines Eastern teachings and practices with the concepts of Western depth psychology and sees development as occurring in spiraling and overlapping stages. Etty's spiritual and psychological journey is examined in the context of these stages. Her evolutionary process is informed by the Diamond Approach's method of inquiry, which is similar to Etty's process of "hineinhorchen" or "hearkening" to herself. This exploration will offer a contemporary yet ancient perspective that tracks Etty Hillesum's own radical evolution of consciousness that we glimpse in a mere 'moment' in time, that is, indeed, timeless.

Keywords: A.H. Almaas, Diamond Approach, Etty Hillesum, Evolution of Consciousness, Haridas Chaudhuri, Integral Yoga, Karen Johnson, Psychospiritual Transformation, Sri Aurobindo.

Introduction

*I want to unfold
Let no place in me hold itself closed,
for where I am closed, I am false.
I want to stay clear in your sight.*

—Rainer Maria Rilke (1996, P. 67)

The intention of this study is to locate the 'unfolding' of Etty Hillesum's—a young Jewish woman who died at Auschwitz, leaving behind a journal—developing consciousness in the field

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of study called the evolution of consciousness. In the introductory section, I will draw on some parallels and similarities between aspects of transformation of consciousness and personality in integral yoga and psychology and the work of A.H. Almaas to set the stage. It should be noted here that these two bodies of psychospiritual knowledge and practice have different historical roots and there are specific differences in the details of the processes of transformation between them that would warrant a separate exploration altogether. What is of relevance to this study is the key emphasis put on the role of the soul in the overall context of transformation of consciousness and personality that is not explicit in other integral models of evolution of consciousness such as those of Jean Gebser (1949/1985) and Ken Wilber (1977, 2000). I will then engage Almaas' Diamond Approach to explore in detail Etty's processes of unfoldment and transformation.

According to Haridas Chaudhuri (1965), the founder of the California Institute of Integral Studies, and student of Sri Aurobindo, the integral perspective of being consists of three factors: (1) union with the nondual ground of existence, (2) development of the deepest human potentials, and (3) participation with the evolutionary force of Being. The integral perspective involves the different levels of body, heart, mind and spirit (Sri Aurobindo, 2007, 1990), and for this paper's exploration it will be important to add the cultural and historical context as well. Etty's spiritual and psychological journey is examined in the context of these stages. Her evolutionary process is informed by the Diamond Approach's method of inquiry, which is similar to Etty's process of '*hineinhorchen*' or hearkening to herself. This exploration will offer a contemporary yet ancient perspective that tracks Etty Hillesum's own radical evolution of consciousness that we glimpse in a mere 'moment' in time, that is, indeed, timeless.

In the Diamond Approach, *essence* is central to the process of the soul's inner journey to development and liberation. From the perspective of the relationship of the soul to essential presence, the inner journey of realization can be divided into two major parts: the '*journey of ascent*' and the '*journey of descent*'. The journey of ascent has three phases: the journey to presence; the journey with presence; and the journey in or as presence (Almaas, 2002, p. 44). Almaas likens the journeys to climbing a ladder. In the journey of descent, the soul climbs back down the same ladder that it climbed on its way up to reality or true nature, but this time the soul integrates the various dimensions she has passed through in her ascent. In the ascent the soul moves inward, while in the descent is moving outward where it retains its conscious awareness within manifestation (Almaas, 2004). In this regard, The Diamond Approach is similar to processes of Psychic and Spiritual Transformation in integral yoga which comprise two aspects of the Triple Transformation process in integral yoga.

In his metaphysical magnum opus, *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo (1971, pp. 889-918) discusses the Triple Transformation in the following way:

there must first be the psychic change, the conversion of our whole present nature into a soul-instrumentation; on that or along with that there must be the spiritual change, the descent of a higher Light, Knowledge, Power, Force, Bliss, Purity into the whole being, even into the lowest recesses of the life and body, even into the darkness of our subconsciousness; last, there must supervene the supramental transmutation,—there must take

place as the crowning movement the ascent into the supermind and the transforming descent of the supramental Consciousness into our entire being and nature. (p. 891)

The soul plays a central role in the transformation of consciousness in Integral yoga and psychology. Besides Atman, the transcendent aspect of the soul which is part of the eternal spirit, or Brahman, there are two more components that are key to understanding the soul in creation. One of these, *Jivatman*, is better known in the traditional Indian spiritual teachings and yoga psychology. It is the unique line of individual connection to Atman. In other words, Atman which is eternal beyond time and space, becomes individually manifested in existence as Jivatman. Another aspect of the soul is the Psychic Being which descends into the material plane and is the agency of evolution of consciousness in matter. Working behind the scenes, both Jivatman and the Psychic Being are responsible for maintaining the individual existence of the human being.

According to Neeltje Huppes (2005):

The soul is our individual self, each soul is unique yet eternal. The psychic being is the *evolving* soul, which grows around the soul. In other words, the psychic is evolutionary, it goes through a development, it grows. This development starts from a psychic presence or a small entity. This presence is granted to all human beings, it is there in each of us. This entity can develop into an individualized Psychic Being by its action on our surface nature; changing it from ordinary nature to divine nature. Through self-observation and an aspiration for a life, first influenced, later guided by divine consciousness, a human being can enhance this process. (Para. 23)

According to Sri Aurobindo (1971):

At the beginning the soul in Nature, the psychic entity, whose unfolding is the first step towards a spiritual change, is an entirely veiled part of us, although it is that by which we exist and persist as individual beings in Nature. The other parts of our natural composition are not only mutable but perishable; but the psychic entity in us persists and is fundamentally the same always: it contains all essential possibilities of our manifestation but is not constituted by them; it is not limited by what it manifests, not contained by the incomplete forms of the manifestation, not tarnished by the imperfections and impurities, the defects and depravations of the surface being. It is an ever-pure flame of the divinity in things and nothing that comes to it, nothing that enters into our experience can pollute its purity or extinguish the flame. (p.922)

According to the Mother:

The soul and the Psychic Being are not exactly the same thing, although in essence they are the same. The soul is the divine spark that dwells at the center of each being; it is identical with its Divine Origin; it is the divine in human beings. The Psychic Being is formed progressively around this divine center, the soul, in the course of innumerable lives in the terrestrial evolution, until the time comes when the psychic being fully formed and wholly awakened, becomes the conscious sheath of the soul around which it is formed.

And thus identified with the Divine, it becomes a refined instrument in the world. (Alfassa, 1972, p. 247)

The Psychic Being is also referred to as the psychic personality or evolving soul, which “passes through a slow development and formation” (Sri Aurobindo, 1971, p. 894). The soul contacts the surface personality through the mind as an intermediary, or through the heart which is in close contact with the emotional being in us.

[I]t is consequently through the emotions that it can act best at the beginning with its native power, with its living force of concrete experience. It is through a love and adoration of the All-beautiful and All blissful, the All-Good, the True, the spiritual Reality of love, that the approach is made; the aesthetic and emotional parts join together to offer the soul, the life, the whole nature to that which they worship. (Sri Aurobindo, 1971, p. 936)

This process which is known as *psychic transformation* is described by Sri Aurobindo as cracking of the outer nature and breaking down of the walls of inner separation. The

... inner light gets through, the inner fire burns in the heart, the substance of the nature and the stuff of consciousness refine to a greater subtlety and purity, and the deeper psychic experiences, those which are not solely of an inner mental or inner vital character, become possible in this subtler, purer, finer substance; the soul begins to unveil itself, the psychic personality reaches its full stature. (p. 907)

The process of psychic transformation is typically the first stage of the process. It is similar to Almas' journey of ascent in the sense that our egoic consciousness reaches ‘up’ to soul consciousness. The three phases of ascent: the journey to presence; the journey with presence; and the journey in or as presence may be considered as phases of the process of Psychic Transformation in Integral Yoga. Here it is the soul that reaches to the surface consciousness (cracking the outer nature), in the journey to presence. The unveiling of the soul is analogous to journey with presence, and the psychic personality reaching its “full stature” constitutes journey in or as presence.

Almas' “journey of descent” is parallel to Aurobindo's second type of transformation—the *Spiritual Transformation*. Sri Aurobindo describes this process as

... a free inflow of all kinds of spiritual experience, experience of the Self, experience of the Ishwara and the Divine Shakti, experience of cosmic consciousness, a direct touch with cosmic forces and with the occult movements of universal Nature, a psychic sympathy and unity and inner communication and interchanges of all kinds with other beings and with Nature, illuminations of the mind by knowledge, illuminations of the heart by love and devotion and spiritual joy and ecstasy, illuminations of the sense and the body by higher experience, illuminations of dynamic action in the truth and largeness of a purified mind and heart and soul, the certitudes of the divine light and guidance, the joy and power of the divine force working in the will and the conduct. (Aurobindo, 1971, p. 908)

Integral yoga also involves another type of transformation, the Supramental Transformation, which aims at total transformation of embodied existence. Briefly, Sri Aurobindo describes this process as a highest spiritual transformation

... that must intervene on the psychic or psycho-spiritual change; the psychic movement inward to the inner being, the Self or Divinity within us, must be completed by an opening upward to a supreme spiritual status or a higher existence. This can be done by our opening into what is above us, by an ascent of consciousness into the ranges of overmind and supramental nature in which the sense of self and spirit is ever unveiled and permanent... (p. 910)

Almaas suggests that *The Personal Essence* allows us to see the meaning and the potential of a fulfilled human and personal life, a life of truth, love, dignity and harmony, which includes the usual human concerns of work, family, creativity, accomplishments and enjoyments of all kinds (Almaas, 1988). One of the few teachers who has seen this possibility and given it its due importance is Sri Aurobindo, who was not satisfied with the transcendent and impersonal states of enlightenment alone, and who worked towards the actualization of a liberated human life. Writing about Sri Aurobindo and his work, one of his students says:

It is not enough for us to find our individual centre without the totality of the world, or the totality of the world without the individual, and yet less to find the supreme Peace if it dissolves the world and the individual—"I do not want to be sugar," exclaimed the great Ramakrishna, "I want to eat sugar!" And without the individual what meaning would all the marvelous realizations have for us, for we are no longer them. (Satprem, 2008, p.177)

What we know from the lived experience of Etty Hillesum and other human lives born into times of significant trauma, hatred, and destruction, is that living one's truth and liberation of consciousness is possible for some. The Mother would concur that 'waking up' is the purpose of our evolving soul's journey. She says:

But generally, having come to this stage, it remembers all that has happened to it and understands the great necessity of coming to the help of those who are yet struggling in the midst of difficulties. These psychic beings give their whole existence to the Divine Work. (Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, 1989, p. 83)

As we will see in the pages ahead, Etty Hillesum would give her entire existence, and leave us her words for our development and evolution.

Etty Hillesum: A Brief History of Her Life

Etty Hillesum, a young Jewish Dutch woman, found an inner path to liberation and union with the 'nondual ground of existence' in the face of the annihilation of the Holocaust. Etty was born on September 15, 1914 in Middleburg, the Netherlands, with her family moving several times, finally ending up in Deventer. Her father, a Dutch Jew, taught classical languages and was a scholarly, quiet man with a sense of humor. Etty's mother was a Russian Jew who had escaped to the Netherlands following a pogrom and is described as passionate, chaotic and domineering.

This marriage of opposites created a tempestuous relationship and household, and Etty admired her father and was critical of her mother. Her two younger brothers were intellectually gifted, one a musician, the other a physician, and though did have severe psychological difficulties, and were hospitalized at different times for schizophrenia (Hillesum, 2002, p. xi).

Etty went to Amsterdam in 1932 to study law at the University of Amsterdam, and then went on to study Slavic languages, psychology, and Russian language and literature. She had a number of private pupils for Russian language lessons. During her university years she was involved in left-wing, antifascist student circles. In 1937 Etty moved into the household of Hans Wegerif, an accountant, as his housekeeper. After some time Etty developed an intimate relationship with Hans, and seemed to derive some sense of warmth and stability from that relationship. There were several members of the household that made up this 'family of five', including Maria Tuinzing, a nurse who became one of Etty's best friends (Hillesum, 1996, p. xvii).

Etty met Julius Spier, a chiropodist and former student of Jung, in February 1941, and immediately became his student and soon after, his secretary. Spier was a psychologically gifted and charismatic figure that gathered around him a group of students, mostly women, whom he lectured to and had individual psychotherapy sessions with. His psychological approach would be considered unorthodox today, as it often included wrestling bouts, and multi-role relationships. Etty became part of this group, or 'Spier Club', and as she wrote about Spier, "I fell under the spell of the inner freedom that seemed to emanate from him" (Hillesum, 2002, p.5). Etty's psychological and spiritual journey began to take off with Spier. She started a diary and wrote about her inner life and the life around her. Her relationship with Spier is the catalyst for her own growth, he is whom she tests and challenges herself against, and this struggle dominates her early journals. Spier and Etty resist a physical relationship for a considerable time, as Spier has a fiancée waiting for him in England, and Etty has a relationship with 'Pa' Han Wegerif. The relationship of Etty and Spier evolves through erotic obsession to a deeply transformative one for both.

As the Nazi reign of terror increased for the Dutch Jews, Etty's journals reflect this developing horror and her experience of it. She becomes an 'unofficial' member of the Jewish Council in July 1942, and soon after applies for a position to help the Jews at the Westerbork transit camp. She turned down offers to go into hiding and continued to travel to and from Amsterdam and Westerbork, becoming the 'thinking heart of Westerbork'. On 7 September 1943, Etty and her parents and brother were transported to Auschwitz. Her parents died immediately upon arriving at Auschwitz, while Etty died 30 November 1943. Before her final departure, Etty gave her diaries and a bundle of letters to her friends, in case she didn't return.

The Diamond Approach

The Diamond Approach is an original spiritual path toward self-realization. It is unique in combining Eastern spiritual concepts and practices with Western knowledge of psychological development. The teaching is a comprehensive approach toward the soul's realization of true nature, and is based on an understanding of the evolving nature of the human being and reality. Hameed Ali (penname A.H. Almaas) developed the Diamond Approach 35 years ago, after

arriving from Kuwait to California to study physics at Berkeley. As his teaching reached more and more students, it developed into the Ridhwan School, with two main Centers in the United States, one in California and one in Colorado. Presently there are branches throughout the United States and Europe, including Ety's home of Amsterdam. Almaas credits his studies of Sufism, Buddhism, Aurobindo's Integral Yoga, Tantra, Kashmir Shaivism, and Gurdjieff as important influences.

Karen Johnson has participated in the development of the Diamond Approach with Hameed Ali since the 1970's. She has been teaching in the US and Europe for 35 years. She has an MA in Psychology, and trained as an artist and dancer. She has an interest in the true spirit of scientific investigation based on the love of the truth. The underlying truth that manifests through the beauty and order of the physical and spiritual universe has been a motivating force in her life.

At the core of the Diamond Approach lies the tenet that psychological growth is a necessary concomitant to spiritual evolution. In fact, one cannot evolve spiritually until one works through the psychological blocks that obscure the spiritual path. Spiritual bypassing, well known in our times, is the danger of many a path that neglects the psychological aspect of human development, including the boundless dimension. While the Diamond Approach has incorporated into its understanding the wisdom available from many branches of psychology (particularly Freudian, object relations theory and ego psychology) it is still considered a spiritual teaching and path. Where psychology typically stops, the Diamond Approach continues on to a boundless spiritual level. The primary approach to spiritual awakening and liberation is exploring and understanding immediate experience. Everyday life is the arena where this work is done; and in our relationships, work and reactions to the world around us we attempt to live a deeper, more spiritual life, but various blockages arise and we are filled with our fears, pain, and doubts instead of realizing our true nature. However, in directing our awareness and curiosity to our reactions we are led to what our defenses were covering. As one faces into the pain and emptiness in the moment one can develop deep understanding and move naturally into a greater sense of spaciousness, presence and freedom.

This is a process that we read about innumerable times in Ety's writings that she calls "*hineinhorchen*", or "hearkening to herself". She may start with a mood, or words of Rilke, or an interaction with Spier, and in her characteristic style she seeks the truth behind the experience and dives through all the emotions and thoughts to arrive at a deeper understanding of her true nature and an ever growing freedom.

In the Diamond Approach, Being is considered the true nature of existence. It is the ground and the expression of all manifestation and is both diversity and unity. True nature is "Being without any distortion by our personal history" (Davis, 1999, P. 146). It is not a construction of ours, and when we can penetrate the subjective distortions that obscure it we are truly aware and in touch with the mystery. Being and its qualities are a natural and central part of the potential of the human being. This potential naturally opens up and develops as part of an individual's maturation. When this unfolding does not occur, psychological and epistemological blocks are often the cause. According to Almaas, these barriers consist primarily of fixed beliefs about oneself and reality in general, deeply held attitudes, inner positions, and compulsive patterns of

reactivity and behavior (Almaas, 2002, pp. 10-11). With touching sensitivity, Davis concludes his description of true nature:

True nature gives a texture to our experiences. The more we are in touch with it the more we find our experiences to be flowing, beautiful, full, clear, and pure. There is a sense of mystery. We become aware of the world, and our awareness is luminous, radiant, and delicate. We feel that everything is majestic and real. When we move deeply enough into any experience, it reveals its deepest characteristic and its true nature. True nature is not a state of consciousness; it is the ground of all consciousness. (Davis, 1999, p. 147)

The Diamond Approach considers the soul as individual consciousness and the portal to experience. The soul is fluid and dynamic and is influenced by the ego and personality as well as its true nature. The soul is not only awareness but also the locus of our awareness and the experience of our self. It is the perceiver and the perceived, the observer, the doer and the site of all experiences. In short, when we say ‘inner experience’ we are talking about the soul. The evolution of individual consciousness is focused on the soul and its development, maturation, and refinement. As it develops, it reveals increasingly deeper levels, each disclosing true nature and the ultimate ground of all Being.

The true nature of the person or their soul is called their essence. Essence is our nature unconditioned by ego or personality. Being is the essence or true nature of the soul, as it is in all manifestation. Essence is the specific experience of Being in its various aspects when it arises as the true nature of the human soul (Almaas, 2002, p. 8). We experience ourselves as essence if we experience ourselves as free, unfabricated, and spontaneously arising—not conditioned by the past or by mental images or self-concepts. It is the truth of our very presence. Different spiritual traditions give it different names: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Spirit; Buddhism: Buddha Nature; Taoism : the Tao, Hinduism: Atman/Brahman. In sum, realization of essence is often considered to be the most authentic, innate and fundamental nature of who we are. The work of the soul is to open up to presence and let go of the conditioning and obstructions and blocks that prevent the soul from experiencing Essence (Davis, 1999, p. 11).

In a certain way, the spiritual journey, or the realization of Being is a process of recognition. Etty’s evolving consciousness toward Being over such a brief two and a half year period exquisitely demonstrates this growing recognition. How did such a profound shift occur in her over a relatively brief period of time? Was it Etty’s experience with Spier and his teaching, or did the tragic circumstances of the Holocaust accelerate her spiritual process? Both seem important catalysts, yet these two factors needed the fertile ground of her ‘Love of the Truth’. In the Diamond Approach this love of the truth, or the recognition of the flame of the truth, no matter where it leads, or what pain one feels in the discovery, it is the fuel that propels one down the spiritual path, and throughout Etty’s writings we can see her relentless search for and love of the truth. She was not to be deterred. Almaas speaks of the potential pain of the journey:

When you really get into seeing things about yourself, it’s very painful. You don’t like it, but something in you says “I want to feel this and get to the bottom of it.” nobody’s making you do it.” So in that moment what is compelling you? It is somehow your desire to see the truth. Seeing the truth seems to be fulfilling in itself, it seems to bring some

subtle pleasure and joy. So you want to see it regardless of how difficult it is. It is no longer a question of what is a true statement or perception or not. There is something more, and something more subtle. It is, in a sense, that the truth wants itself. And that's what is called the love of the truth for its own sake. In that situation, it is such a deep compelling desire that when it is there, nothing can stand in its way—not fear, not pain. (Almaas, 2000, pp. 96-97)

The Sufi's often quote the hadith (Quran) in which God says "I was a hidden treasure: I loved to be known, so I created all." God wants to know his nature, his possibilities, his manifestations. This love to know himself, the desire to know himself, appears in us as the love to inquire; for inquiry is not only openness to what perception presents, but a love of finding out what's really there. If you say, "I'm open to what's there," you're not dynamic yet. It is the love that brings in the dynamism: "Yes, I'm not only open to seeing, I'm going to get engaged in this. I'm going to jump into the middle of the experience with my hands and feet and dig, because I love to find out." We do not need to take the Sufis literally; that is we do not need to believe in a god that loves and wants. When we clearly see true nature, we see its dynamic force as a love that manifests; everything arises out of love and celebration. (Almaas, 2002, p. 18)

The Method of Inquiry

The primary method of the Diamond Approach is inquiry. This work is an open ended inquiry into the various elements of our experience and its patterns. The understanding that what the Diamond work cultivates is not intellectual or mental comprehension but a direct awareness and experience of oneself that is present, insightful, and clear. As Almaas says, "it is the clear discrimination of the truth of experience as an inseparable aspect of that experience. This understanding is the direct response of Being to sincere inquiry." (Almaas, 2002, pp.13-14)

Generally, inquiry means a questioning or investigation, a wanting to find out, and is an element of a number of teachings, not just the Diamond Approach. India's Ramana Maharshi and the esoteric Armenian teacher George Gurdjieff are both examples of well-known teachers who employed such a method. Inquiry is also the starting point of the scientific method, and this introspection into one's experience begins the process of empirical inquiry. At its heart, inquiry is an unknowing, one that often ignites a passion to discover, to learn, to understand.

As Almaas says:

It is as if something is tickling you from inside, saying, 'Look here, there is something here.' The flavor of unknowing...is how the unfoldment is arising. Something is coming up. Being is heaving up, presenting one of its possibilities, and that possibility is approaching your knowing consciousness. (Almaas, 2002, p.15)

Open inquiry begins by looking at our present experiences but it is a looking that must embody openness. Instead of taking our perceived discrimination as final, inquiry says "I know what I see, but I acknowledge that I do not know whether what I see is all." According to Almaas, "you cannot begin to inquire into a perception if you think you know all there is to know about it. The

moment you think you know, the door to inquiry closes.” (Almaas, 2002, p.17). So inquiry begins with a not-knowing, from recognizing and observing something in yourself that you do not understand.

It is well known to the EHOC (Etty Hillesum Research Centre) community that Etty was continually asking questions of herself, others and ‘God’. Rainer Marie Rilke, one of her main influences, employed inquiry as a guiding philosophy. Etty responded to questions of her own and those of Spier and others with a kind of immediacy that exemplifies this “direct response of Being.” The immediacy and openness in Etty Hillesum’s writing is characteristic of the presence of essence. It is an openness that she had to see things as they were as well as an openness for them to change, and for the change to reveal more of what was present. Etty’s open attitude of inquiry was the means of engaging not only the dynamism of Being, but the spaciousness or vastness that was the infinite possibility of her true nature.

The Diamond Work’s Basic Structure: The Journey of Ascent and Descent

In the Diamond Approach, essence is central to the process of the soul’s inner journey to liberation and development. From the perspective of the relationship of the soul to essential presence, the inner journey of realization can be divided into two major parts: the journey of ascent and the journey of descent. The journey of ascent has three phases: the journey to presence; the journey with presence; and the journey in or as presence (Almaas, 2002, p. 44). Almaas likens the journeys to climbing a ladder. In the journey of descent, the soul climbs back down the same ladder that it climbed on its way up to reality or true nature, but this time the soul integrates the various dimensions she has passed through in her ascent. In the ascent the soul moves inward, while in the descent is moving outward where it retains its conscious awareness within manifestation (Almaas, 2004).

The First Journey of Ascent

The first journey takes us to the beginning of experiencing our Being, as we have glimpses of our true essential presence. The recognition of essence as presence is the fundamental insight of the first journey. In this place the soul is dissociated from her true nature and living as the animal soul with the possibility of actualizing to being a human soul, a soul with heart. In the first phase we are earthbound and caught in inertia, and this has often been described as being asleep to existence. In this phase we are held captive by our conditioning to repeat the same unchanging patterns, with the same experiences, perceptions and knowledge. The same suffering and pain are re-experienced and often reinforced with addictive behaviors used to help numb us to the feelings, and Freud’s repetition compulsion is often in play.

The first phase of the Diamond work is to focus its teachings and experiential exercises on the essential aspects of our humanness. Almaas suggests that “this wish to be ourselves is the true motivation for inquiry” (Almaas, 2002, p. 252). In accordance with the Sufi tradition, he calls these first five of the essential aspects the *lataif*, and each one is associated with a color. They are Joy, or the excitement of curiosity (yellow); Strength, or the capacity to engage in one’s spiritual work (red); Will, the perseverance in the face of suffering, (white); Peace, or the ability to

perceive what one is experiencing (black) and Compassion, or the sensitivity to hold oneself gently (green). These aspects emerge in relationship to various basic needs that are touched in the beginning stages of one's inquiry practice. The other six essential aspects, according to the Diamond Approach, are more implicit but are important in forming the ground for inquiry: Knowing, Truth, Clarity, Focus, Personalness, and Intelligence. A.H. Almaas points out that the similarities to the Sufi understanding are limited, as the Sufi tradition is ancient and has its own system and teachings, and the Diamond Approach has come to manifest in the current age (Almaas, 2002, p. 253).

In this early phase our personality, typical patterns and feelings, and the conventional conditions of existence dominate, whether neurotic or normal. Even though one is stuck in the repetition of these patterns and conditions, this phase holds the potential to break the grip of conventional experience, exposing its limitations and opening one to the experience of true presence. An example of this process would be the opening to the presence of self-compassion that allows one to tolerate pain, and to explore and understand its origins, thus eventually reducing the pain and touching a greater presence and awareness of one's essence. At this point in the journey is where many in Western culture (based on privilege, education, and awareness) enter psychotherapy.

The Second Journey

The second journey, with presence, begins when one begins to recognize the presence of essence, the dimension of essential manifestation. Upon experiencing presence, one discovers the medium of the soul and the essence of what humanness is. It is here that an individual may have his or her first glimpses of strength without identification, solidity without the usual self representations. A spiritual teacher (rabbi, priest, guru, clergy, imam, spiritual guide, depth therapist) is often sought at this juncture to help one pay attention and discriminate the subtle and previously unrecognized aspects of experience that open the door to essential perception. The openness of Being transforms time and space. The soul's journey here is in company with presence, both receptive to it and guided by it.

The 'Pearl Beyond Price': Individuation based on true Personal Essence

Through the development of the ego the sense of self is maintained by the ego's attachment, object relations, conditioning and history. As the second journey unfolds and these attachments and conditionings are transcended and recognized as limiting for the soul, the building of a new structure needs to occur that provides a sense of self based on essence. This phase of the second journey is toward individuation and the realization of personal essence. This is what Almaas calls 'the pearl beyond price'. The 'pearl' functions as the essential structure that the soul develops and uses to integrate all her experiences of everyday life. This structure draws upon essence to mature and develop the soul's virtues, capacities, and faculties (Almaas, 2004). This personal essence, or 'pearl' gives the soul a sense of individuality and ability to function as a person in a fluid and dynamic fashion that is responsive to the environment. Throughout Journey two, the soul learns to depend less and less on the rigid ego structures for a self sense and functioning. One can be in the world coming from an authentic place, as the pearl has the qualities of autonomy, beingness, independence, yet contact with the world and others. In

developing the pearl we realize that who we really are is our essence, and not our attachments. As Almaas writes, having the pearl and touching true personal essence is "the experience of being oneself and not a response or reaction to something. It is not being something for somebody. It is, in a sense, complete freedom, the freedom to be" (Davis, 1999, p. 123). Almaas describes the Pearl as an "ontological presence", as opposed to the structured process of the ego. But the Pearl is personal, and not impersonal and detached. It has the capacity to make intimate contact with another human being and still be totally free and unconditioned. In fact, because of its freedom and basis in personal essence and true nature, the pearl is capable of more intimacy and connectedness than the selfish ego. As the second journey and self-realization continues the pearl becomes more deeply integrated with other aspects of one's personal essence, and then finally with the boundless dimensions.

The Discovery of Essence

As the development of the pearl is the process of individuation in the second journey, there is a second phase occurring in the second journey that involves the soul's maturation and the realization of true nature and essential identity. During this phase of the journey the soul experiences essence mainly as an internal phenomena that inspires, guides and supports the soul. This is still a dual experience as she recognizes essence as her nature and is with it but not identical to it. This experience exposes the ego as the primary barrier to identity with essence, as the soul is only beginning to construct the 'pearl' and is still more or less dependent on the ego for self-identity. Through the process of uncovering and working through the ego structures, the soul learns about the inherent narcissism of the ego. The Diamond Approach has come to name this process 'the point work' (Almaas, 1996). The transcendence of this narcissism is self-realization, or the soul's realization.

The Point Work

In the natural course of human development the infant initially is present to his or her immediate experience and true nature. As the self develops, the infant acquires memories and starts to lose this immediacy and begins to experience oneself through past impressions and the developing ego structures. Consequently, the soul loses awareness of its wholeness or true nature. Narcissism is the consequence of this loss of immediacy and lack of presence to one's wholeness. Narcissism manifests itself with self-centeredness, sensitivity to others' critiques, easily wounded by others' lack of empathy, defensiveness about one's mistakes or weaknesses and a need to be seen, admired and appreciated. All these narcissistic defenses cover a pervasive sense of being deficient and worthless, and a deep narcissistic wound caused by the alienation from one's essential presence. The development of the narcissistic wound was fostered by the significant people surrounding the child that didn't see or support the child's true self. This lack of support and love was intolerable to the child and consequently a limited false self was developed that was more acceptable. A sense of betrayal remains due to this lack of support, and not only toward others but also toward oneself for giving up the wholeness of Being. In the journey to self-realization this construction of a limited self needs to be torn down and the wholeness of one's Being laid bare.

The point work involves using inquiry to uncover and work through these narcissistic defenses to open the narcissistic wound and find one's true nature. During this process various emotions arise. First, comes dread as one approaches the great emptiness, and then shame and embarrassment related to one's sense of deficiency. Due to the betrayal, narcissistic rage can erupt both at ourselves and at the critical and rejecting others. These emotions are difficult to experience and the tendency of the ego is to turn away and cover up. In the point work one counters the ego and continues to face the pain and sense of worthlessness, using inquiry as a tool of discovery. This process takes a great love for the truth to bear the pain.

The uncovering leads to a dissolving of the sense of self and the experience of great emptiness. Sometimes the ego fills this emptiness with a narcissistic depression and hopelessness as a defense against the perceived loss of self. The way out of being stuck in this emptiness and depression requires a basic trust in the goodness of the nature of the universe. Inquiry into one's distrust ultimately can lead to a discovering of trust. Accompanying this discovery is accepting and surrendering to not knowing what to do, "for being is not a matter of doing anything" (Almaas, 1996, p. 342). Finding this trust in the rightness of the cosmos, and beauty, leads to compassion and loving kindness toward the self, and to the experience of universal love. Being present to this universal love transforms the emptiness into a luminous vastness that is peaceful and free of the constrictions of the self. The experience of this love allows the ego to stop its incessant, self-preserving activity, and let Being just occur. Empathic guidance from a teacher can be very important during the point work to help support the student in facing this painful material, and to model universal love.

Summary

The realization of personal essence and essential identity are two interdependent processes that have separate stages and different elements. Perhaps the most significant difference is that the realization of the personal essence is more of a development and construction, while the realization of essential identity is a discovery. The development of 'the pearl beyond price' enables the soul to mature and individuate, while the realization of essential identity involves the penetration of the false self and the discovery of one's true nature. Both the individuation process and realization of true nature are focused on dissolving the ego and its limiting narcissism, and at the end of journey two the soul begins to know her essence as her identity. The duality of soul and essence begins to be bridged and the soul moves into the third journey. "The soul recognizes she is the simplicity and exquisiteness of timeless presence." (Almaas, 2004, p. 224)

The Third Journey

This journey is entitled the journey in or as presence. It involves the development of and living through non-duality. The soul's experience becomes one with essential presence, and all the maturation and structures of the soul that were developed in the second journey now become integrated into this non-dual presence. This journey, like the second journey, has two interdependent or complementary phases.

The first phase is the essential development of the soul, what the Diamond Work calls the “essentialization” of the soul. It is the complete merging of the soul with essence, where the transparency of the soul to essence becomes so complete that the two become one. This non-dual soul is a dynamic presence that all experience arises from. When the soul is realized, she is totally inseparable from and transparent to the presence of love. She is not only love, says Almaas, but “she is loving in a complete and full way. She is a presence that expresses itself dynamically as loving action. The dynamism and the presence of love are inseparable, co-emergent” (Almaas, 2004, p. 225). This essentialization of the soul can include all aspects, such as intelligence, compassion, clarity, steadfastness, etc. It can be in the physical, expressive or mental realm. In this transformation, the soul has progressed from the stage of the human soul, the attainment of the second journey, to the stage of realized or essential soul.

The second phase of the development of nonduality is the discovery in presence of the boundlessness of true nature. True nature begins to reveal it is the ground and nature of everything, and that it transcends the limited boundaries of individuality or personhood of the soul. The soul now begins to experience herself “as a boundless and nonlocal presence that transcends all spatial extensions, as eternal ‘nowness’ that transcends all time, and as a mystery that transcends all determinations. She is all and everything, she is Reality” (Almaas, 2004, p. 225). In the third journey, one experiences true nature free from the limitations of separateness, and from particular forms and manifestations. As presence or human consciousness has gone beyond the individual soul and personal essence to touch boundless Reality, nonduality is now complete.

Journey of Descent

Now that the soul has journeyed into the mystery and transcended all limitations, it flows back into the multitude of forms and objects of the phenomenal world. As the soul does so, it maintains its connection to the absolute and true nature that it has discovered, but integrates Being into the manifestations of the phenomenal world. The journey of ascent was a movement inward, while the journey of descent is a movement outward into the world of forms and objects, which leads to integration and union with the whole (Almaas, 2004). This journey involves understanding the absolute not only as a transcendent truth but also as the immanent ground of Reality. Like the previous two journeys, this journey involves the two phases of self-realization and individuation. There develops a deeper understanding of the functional relationship between true nature and the individual soul, and the relationship between soul, Being or God, and the cosmos. In the descent the soul finds its place in the cosmic reality.

The journeys of ascent and descent are not separate linear processes, but are present simultaneously, co-existing and co-emerging. The journeys complement each other and are equally important. “Immanence, fullness, and the myriad forms of the world are one side of a coin; transcendence, emptiness, and the mystery of union are the other. Thus, the richness and beauty of the world are no more true, valuable or privileged than its emptiness, spaciousness and vastness”(Davis, 1999, p. 153).

Journey 1: Ety Hillesum

Since we have only two and a half years of Ety's words and experiences describing these four phases of the journey to the realization of true nature, the stages are compressed and overlap greatly, and are often not as distinct and differentiated as I am pointing out here. Most authors of Hillesum, however, recognize the gradual, yet dramatic change in the tonality of Ety's personality and life as she moves toward the unfolding of her Being. I appreciate the interwovenness and gradual shift in Ety's unfolding, even as I unpack the journeys to illuminate her process of evolution.

As mentioned, in the first journey we get glimpses of Being itself, the first recognition of our essence as presence. However, the soul is cutoff from her true nature in this stage. Earthbound, caught in survival and self-absorption, asleep to existence, we repeat the same patterns of perception and behavior that we have developed through our conditioning. Even though one is stuck in the repetition, the potential exists in this journey to break through conventional experience and reveal its limitations, opening one to true presence.

This is a phase where dynamics of family relationships come into full awareness. While little is known of Ety's childhood years, it is clear in her teenage and younger adult years she struggled intensely in relationship to her mother, while idealizing her father. She deemed her mother to be chaotic and smothering, and her father as accomplished, stoic, and erudite. These parental relationships do much to set the stage for the negating of her own personality and the tendency to merge with older men for security, love and learning. She shares the Russian sense of drama, emotionality and somatic complaints of her mother, yet identifies with the intellectual curiosity and capacity of her father.

Ety captures moments of insight and vulnerability without, seemingly, a staged self representation. Her budding transparency suggests an inner strength with striking immediacy. What is illuminating at this first stage is that her expanded self has compassion for this egoic, scattered, and immature personality. For example:

Here in this strange family, there is such a remarkable mixture of barbarism and culture that you are stripped of all your strength...In the past, my picturesque family would cost me a bucket of tears every night. I can't explain those tears as of yet; they came from somewhere in the dark collective unconscious. Nowadays I am not so wasteful of this precious fluid, but it is not easy to live here. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 83)

And again:

Mother's first words to me were, "I really do feel awful." It's so strange. Father has only to utter the smallest sigh and my heart just about breaks, but when Mother says with great pathos, I really do feel awful, I couldn't sleep a wink again", and so on, I remain basically untouched...

Stop whining, for goodness sake, you shrew, you nag, carrying on like that. Such are my inner reactions when my mother sits down to have a chat with me. My mother is someone

who would try the patience of a saint. I do my best to look at her objectively, and I try to be fond of her, but then suddenly I'll find myself saying, emphatically, "What a ridiculous and silly person you are." It's so wrong of me....

And again: Had a respectable conversation in Russian with Mother, who suddenly seems a spirited, decent person again. Then I am all at once dreadfully sorry for having had such ugly feelings and am sure that I have misjudged her, but a few hours later an exasperated little devil inside me suddenly riles against her again: You horrible cry-baby, stop all that rubbish, you're honestly quite mad, what a mad person you are." I think these thoughts very soberly and with a wry sort of humor, and love is far removed from me then. Etty, Etty, don't let yourself down like that! And isn't it high time you were asleep? (Hillesum, 2002, pp. 81-83)

As the entries indicate there is a forming of a relationship with herself that is reminiscent of a 're-parenting' of herself, opening to self compassion right along with her overwhelm, anger, guilt and regret.

In the first phases of spiritual or therapeutic work the use of a journal is common, as is the seeking of a teacher. It seems Etty was ripe for both as she went to one of Julius Spier's lectures, and asked to become his student. In a short time she became his secretary and assistant. We realize how much Etty is a natural seeker, and has begun a journey with a teacher, both psychologically and spiritually. Spier, known as S. in Etty's journal, was a chirologist and psychologist associated with C.G. Jung. What she saw in Spier went beyond his obvious personality conflicts and limitations. She wanted what he had: his spiritual presence, his deep wisdom and love of the truth and of the students he worked with, and his ability to see through things as they really were. He helped Etty to face reality, to be with whatever came up in her and allow it, and to inquire into it, just as Diamond Approach students would do. Spier and his 'magical personality' could be seen today from an Integral, eastern perspective as a guru, or a teacher of an older philosophical tradition, such as the perennial philosophy, including the ancient spiritual traditions of the east such as Buddhism, Sufism, Hinduism, as well as indigenous traditions, and mystical branches of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Spier's group of students could be like any "mystery" school, *sangha*, or spiritual community of any kind such as the Diamond Approach, called the Ridhwan school, with its teachings, transmission, and practices of dyadic inquiry, chanting, meditation and study.

We get a glimpse of what Etty was experiencing at the time of her choosing a teacher from this entry:

...Intelligent, incredibly wise, age-old gray eyes, which drew one's attention from the full mouth, but not for long or all together. I was awed by his skill, his ability to read my deepest conflicts from my second face: my hands.... And then there was his lecture. The impression was good. First rate lecture. A charming man. Charming smile, despite the false teeth. I fell under the spell of the inner freedom that seemed to emanate from him... (Hillesum, 2002, pp. 4-5)

It is here, in Etty's first letter to Spier, where we understand what she is addressing in her work with him, the base of the first journey. This entry, the first one in Exercise Book 1 is prescient of what is to come:

You know, yesterday, when I could do nothing but look stupidly at you, I experienced such a clash of conflicting thoughts and feelings that I was quite shattered and would have yelled out loud had I had even less self-control. I experienced strong erotic feelings for you, which I thought I would have got over by now, and at the same time a strong aversion to you, and there was also a sudden feeling of utter loneliness, a suspicion that life is terribly difficult, that one has to face it all on one's own, that help from outside is out of the question and uncertainty, fear and all of that too. A small slice of chaos was suddenly staring at me from deep down inside my soul. And when I had left you and was going back home, I wanted a car to run me over and thought, ah, well, I must be out of my mind, like the rest of my family, something I always think when I feel the slightest bit desperate. But I know again that I am not mad, I simply need to do a lot of work on myself before I develop into an adult and a complete human being. And you will be helping me won't you?

Well, I have written you a few lines now; they have cost me a lot of trouble. I write with the greatest reluctance, and always feel inhibited and uncertain when I do. Yet, I want to become a writer one day, would you believe it? (Hillesum, 2002, p. 3)

As mentioned, right away, Etty, unabashedly shares her erotic attraction and aversion to Spier, leading us to two of the most powerful energies for transformation: desire and repulsion. Initially, Etty prides herself on her skill and passion as a lover. As she says, "I am accomplished in bed, just about seasoned enough I should think, to be counted among the better lovers," yet her deepest commitment is revealed in the continuance of the same sentence: "and love does indeed suit me to perfection, and yet it remains a mere trifle, set apart from what is truly essential, and deep inside me something is still locked away." (Hillesum, 2002, p. 4E)

This tension will become a dynamic part of the second phase of her Journey, but for this first phase of her exploring, her 'gender questions', much like the younger Anne Frank, are very much on her mind and heart:

He said that love of mankind (sic) is greater than the love of one man. For when you love one person you are merely loving oneself. He is a mature fifty-five year old man and has reached the stage where he can love all mankind, having loved many individuals in the past. I am an ordinary twenty-seven year old girl, and I too am filled with love for all mankind but for all I know I shall always continue to be in search of my one man. And I wonder to what extent that is a handicap, a woman's handicap. Whether it is an ancient tradition from which she must liberate herself, or whether it is so much part of her very essence that she would be doing violence to herself if she bestowed her love on all mankind instead of one single man. Feelings of friendship, respect, and love for us as human beings, these are all very well, but don't we ultimately want men to desire us as women?Perhaps the true, essential emancipation of women still has to come. We are not yet full human beings; we are "the weaker sex." We are still tied down and enmeshed

in centuries-old traditions. We still have to be born as human beings; that is the great task that lies before us. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 69)

Another area Etty speaks about in the early phase of her journey is loneliness, indicative of depression, mania or anxiety. I would call it existential despair in its tone as well as a kind of cyclothymia in its biological characteristics. She says:

I know two sorts of loneliness. One makes me feel dreadfully unhappy, lost and forlorn, the other makes me feel strong and happy. The first always appears when I feel out of touch with my fellow men (sic), with everything, when I am completely cut off from others and from myself and can see no purpose in life or any connection between things, nor have the slightest idea where I fit in. With the other kind of loneliness, by contrast, I feel very strong and certain and connected with everyone and everything and God. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 82)

In these states of disconnection, the theme of Etty's personality struggle is one of feeling lost. So, when she says "I need to expose myself unreservedly to someone. And perhaps and above all I also want that someone to appreciate my full worth." We can see why Spier and his psychological and spiritual mastery become so important to her, even if his carnal struggle was in "full cry." Etty is becoming aware of herself and what she needs and wants in relationship. She is committed to record everything that is going on with her and realizes she can't capture all of it in words at this stage. Her agitation gets translated into the somatic complaints of headaches, stomachaches, or digestion problems. She has used metaphors of a "tightly bound ball of twine" the "cork that bottles her up again" to explain this inability to write or, "to say things, to express them in such a way that the words become transparent and the spirit behind them can be seen." It is very telling when Etty is in one of these cut off and alienated places, and when she hears from S. she comes back to center: "I regained contact with myself, with the deepest and best in me which I call God, and so also with you. A moment came in which I grew one stage further, in which many new perspectives about myself and my bond with you and my fellow beings appeared" (Hillesum, 2002, p. 83).

There are many points in this first journey where Etty's maturation becomes palpable:

A strong straight pillar is growing in my heart, I can almost feel it growing, and around it all the rest resolves; I myself, the world, everything. And the pillar is an earnest (symbol) of my inner security. How terribly important this is for me, being in touch with my inner self! I don't go on losing my balance or tumbling from one world into the next...Something is being consolidated within me, I seem to be taking root instead of continuously drifting, but it is still no more than the fragile start of a new and more mature phase. You must keep watching your step, little one, but I am well pleased with you all the same, your pulling through, truly, you are pulling through..." (Hillesum, 2002, p. 85)

Etty often mentions she wants to be a chronicler; one who sees, writes, records, helping others to see, to understand, to expand. This is her mission. She elaborates and underscores her curiosity, so familiar to the logos of the Diamond Approach as the fuel of the spiritual journey:

I want to live to see the future, to become the chronicler of the things that are happening now (downstairs they are screaming blue murder with father yelling, “Go then!” and slamming the door; that too, must be absorbed, and now I am suddenly crying since I am not all that objective really and no one can breathe properly in this house; all right, make the best of it then); oh yes, a chronicler. I notice that over and above all my subjective suffering, I have an irrepressible objective curiosity, a passionate interest in everything that touches this world and its people and my own motives. Sometimes I believe that I have a task. Everything that opens around me is to be clarified in my mind and later in my writing. Poor head and poor heart, what a lot there is still in store for you. Rich head and rich heart, you still have a lovely life, though, both of you. I have stopped crying. But my head still throbs. It is sheer hell in this house. I would have to be quite a writer to describe it properly. Anyhow, I sprang from this chaos, and it is my business to pull myself out of it. S. calls it “building with noble material; he’s a real treasure.”

As discussed, the method of the Diamond Approach is inquiry. To merely ask questions does not include the complexity and depth of the process; it actually has a great deal to do with being present to what arises throughout the process of inquiring, very similar to Etty’s process of “hineinhorchen” or “hearkening” to herself. Rilke was also a guide for her in this regard and she gave credit to Rilke and Spier for teaching her about the wisdom of suffering in the moment, not the idea of suffering. She describes the process of “hearkening” as:

Hearkening to myself, to others, to the world. I listen very intently, with my whole being, and try to fathom the meaning of things. I am always very tense and attentive. I keep looking for something but I don’t know what. What I am looking for, of course, is my own truth, but I still have no idea of what it will look like. (Hillesum, 2002, pp. 90-91)

These are actually three important parts of the Diamond work; hearkening or inquiring into experience, the love of the truth, and holding the reality of ‘not knowing’.

What becomes clear at the base of this split she feels within herself is a feeling of shame. Her struggle with her body and her view of the feminine instilled in her by nature and nurture and seems deficient to what she sees in the masculine. She reveals the difficulty she faces in realizing how all her physical symptoms, including strong fatigue and shifting moods, keep her off balance and stuck. She is embarrassed and tells us so:

I always think it is so humiliating that the mind should be impaired by a silly cold or by headaches or by whatever other physical complaints. I always feel ashamed about being unwell, I want to keep it to myself, struggle against it and, as a result, I feel twice as bad, a person without energy because the body has such a tremendous influence on one’s work and, more generally, on one’s whole psychological state. Do I still tend to despise the body? Does one have to stand by one’s illnesses, even the most minor, or should one resist them? This is still something of a problem for the girl who broods too much. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 91)

The final thing I would like to discuss in the first phase of Etty's journey based upon these journals is the beginning of a conscious relationship with what she is calling God. She says early on that God is what is the 'deepest and best' in her. She says that:

There is a really deep well inside me. And in it dwells God. Sometimes I am there, too. But more often stones and grit block the well, and God is buried beneath. Then he must be dug out again. (Hillesum, 2002, 91)

What becomes apparent is that Etty's religiosity is radically unconventional. In Holland today, says J.G. Gaarlandt (Hillesum, 1996, p. xv) Christians and Jews are claiming Etty as typically Jewish or typically Christian – "an unprofitable discussion as Etty chooses her own way." It seems to me that Etty chooses a way, an integral way, all inclusive of the world's deepest mystical traditions or the perennial wisdom of transformation. It seems that Etty's first attempts at being present, or praying, or meditation have something to do with surrender, as kneeling becomes a way and symbol of that surrender. She describes one of her first times:

This afternoon I suddenly found myself kneeling on the brown coconut matting in the bathroom, my head hidden in my dressing gown, which was slung over the broken cane chair. Kneeling down doesn't come easily to me, I feel a sort of embarrassment. Why? Probably because of the critical, rational, atheistic bit that is part of me as well. And yet every so often I have a great urge to kneel down with my face in my hands and in this way find some peace and to listen to that hidden source within me. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 103)

Gaarlandt, one of the early publishers of Etty, poses the question: "Was she a mystic?" and answers the question with "Perhaps." What strikes us as different about Etty in this regard is her 'crystal-clear honesty,' something important to psychological and spiritual systems such as the "Spier Club" or in my experience, the Diamond Approach. She insisted that "mysticism must rest on crystal-clear honesty, and can only come after things have been stripped down to their naked reality." Much like any of the non-dual, integral theorists, teachers and practitioners such as Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, Jean Gebser or, the more contemporary ones such as Ken Wilber, or A. H. Almaas and Karen Johnson, the 'work' is done in the world and not (only) in solitary contemplation. We will see in the next phases of Etty's life, the deepening, the deconstruction, and the love of truth. I agree with Gaarlandt when he says "her vision had nothing to do with escape or self-deception, and everything to do with a hard-won, steady, and whole perception of reality. Her God, in a sense, resided in her own capacity to see the truth, to bear it and find consolation in it" (Hillesum, 1996, p. xv).

Journey 2: Etty Hillesum

It's a slow and painful process, this striving after true inner freedom (Hillesum, 2002, p. 134).

As mentioned earlier, as the Diamond Approach's definition of the second journey, the personal essence or 'pearl' gives the soul a sense of fullness, individuality, and ability to function as a person in a fluid and dynamic fashion responsive to the environment. The pearl has the qualities of autonomy, beingness, and independence, yet has contact with the world and others. It

is about evolving maturation, with a certain lustre and fullness that you might think of as you imagine an actual pearl.

As Etty enters this next iteration of the journey, the second one, she becomes more determined to examine and assimilate her sensual obsession with Spier. She struggles with romantic notions of the ideal relationship, her own jealousy and possessiveness, while attributing this to the “illogical” nature of women. It is as if she is unwinding, at such an early age, ‘the inner ball of twine’, inch by inch as she explores gender and romance through her own experience.

Yes, we foolish, idiotic, illogical women, we all seek Paradise and the Absolute. And yet my brain, my capable brain tells me there are no absolutes, that everything is relative, endlessly diverse, and in eternal motion, and that is precisely for that reason that life is so exciting and fascinating, but also very, very painful. We women want to perpetuate ourselves in a man. Yes, I want him to say “Darling, you are the only one, and I shall love you for evermore. I know, of course, that there is no such thing as eternal love, but unless he declares it for me, nothing has any meaning. And the stupid thing is I don’t really want him forever or as the only one in my life, and yet I demand it of him. Do I demand absolute love from others because I’m unable to give it to myself? And I always expect the same level of intensity.... After all, I wouldn’t know what to do if somebody really was on fire for me all day long. It would annoy me and bore me and make me feel tied down. Oh, Etty, Etty! (Hillesum, 2002, p. 105)

These are the kind of struggles that suggest identification at the object relations level of development, where everything gets viewed from the original and primal need for love, with needs such as security, and the animal body’s physical and sexual urges as central. This stage is also rife with the deficiencies that surface based on personality fixations as well as parental deficiencies and modeling. The prevailing historical and cultural beliefs about gender add and reinforce to the conditioning. Etty reveals her wisdom when she reflects on these things and says that her need for Spier to desire ‘me alone’ and for ‘eternal love’ “are some kind of compulsion.” She begins to recognize this when she is feeling ‘extremely’ sensual, she obsesses about Spier, “his mouth and hands while everything else pales into insignificance...” As the above quote illustrates she is quite aware this is a compulsive fantasy.

One day later she gives us a sense of this ability to see, to assimilate, to metabolize as she says:

This has to be put plainly now once and for all – be a bit more sparing with your “once and for alls”, my girl, there’s no such thing in life. It seems so simple now, but there will always be minor crises. What are the facts, then? This afternoon I bicycled over to see him, completely wrapped up in things to do with his work, with no womanly feeling at all. The thought suddenly struck me, and I felt more serious about it than I usually do: I really want to work with him for a few years. I am getting very attuned to him, can learn a tremendous lot from him and can also do a lot for him. I was so pleased with him and our relationship. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 107)

What is striking here is that Etty is aware of her ups and downs, her recognition that: “there will always be minor crises”, and Spier was aware of this as well, as he said to her “Right now I happen to be the right friend for you.” While this turned out to be true in a much larger sense, the sexual forces between them would complicate their spiritual and psychological work. Etty lets us know that she ‘saw’ the whole of Spier and herself when she says, “I would like him to love me like that” (as this is how she idealized what love of a man would be for a woman), and she continues, “he is a good, dear, fascinating human being, and also volatile, temperamental and full of unexpected nonsense.”

While Etty realized at one level the dangers of being exploited by a teacher and therapist “wrestling” with his women students as an intimate practice, she would only later realize her deep vulnerability in this regard. In spite of Spier's deficiencies it was because of his influence that Etty came to see her life and strivings in non-dualistic terms, as she says “You taught me to speak the name of God without embarrassment. You were the mediator between God and me” (Hillesum, 2002, p. 516). Carol Lee Flinders captures this phase of Etty's relationship with Spier when she says so crisply, “mediator he may have been, but in effect, Spier threw almost as many obstacles in Etty's path as he removed. We could resent him more for this if those obstacles hadn't also been the making of her” (Flinders, 2006, p. 44).

Etty's relationship with Spier is what spans her second journey. This is the time that Etty's ‘pearl’ becomes more and more evident as she actually experiences what it meant to “repose in herself.” It is, of course, paradoxical that the pearl gains its lustre during the deepest parts of one's struggle. For Etty, it seems like it is the first conscious drive to awaken, not masked by mood swings or illness, and in fact the beginning of the way in to her origins. It begins with a true grappling with her demon of jealousy and possessiveness and surely a part of what Almas (1996) calls the ‘point work’ referred to earlier in this paper. It is the work of facing into the deconstruction of the ego's hold on self representation; the crumbling of the edifice and touching of the ‘abyss.’ Another way to put it in the language of the Diamond Approach is the cracking of the egoic shell and revealing not only the terror of annihilation, but the deepest human vulnerability without the layers of defense.

While beginning this section with her grappling with ideals about eternal or undying romantic love, she moves to the next layer that reveals what she thinks is another obstacle to Spier's love, his fiancé Hertha Levi. Etty's fear was that Hertha would come to Amsterdam to join Spier on an on-going basis.

I suddenly had the feeling that Hertha was coming back. My heart broke...several times over. I waged a heroic struggle and then took off for faraway Russia. After first having written him a heartrending letter to tell him I was but a frail human being who could not cope with him and Hertha combined. Nor did I want to have anything more to do with his work, and I suddenly puzzled hard whether I had not chosen the work for the man's sake rather than to the man for his work's sake. And though I knew I would never want to marry him, I could not put up with him having another woman. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 117)

Each of these obsessive fantasies, and the subsequent inner struggles that would ensue, would bring Etty back to her goal, which was that of learning to love another person unconditionally,

wholly, as a way of preparing her (and them) to love all human beings in a similar fashion, so the love for one would lead to the love of all. Spier had the same goal and also had his own way of backsliding. But this mission that they shared, had the power to transform both of them over time.

It becomes clear that Etty is maturing over time and is becoming more and more convinced that she is “no longer cut off from that deep undercurrent” within her. It is indeed painstaking work, and Etty rose to this challenge based upon her own drive for the truth. It was not evolved or so radiant to begin with, which is important for most seekers to know. It was a grind, like the grains of sand rubbing over the pearl, over and over again, to face the reality of her relationship with Spier, as if grinding the toughest kernels of corn into a soft pulp. As she says:

He was probably tired as well, absorbed in something or other. In the past that would have been a shock, I should not have been able to take that neutral conversation. This time, too, I felt for a moment how tired and over-excited I was, because the horribly sober tone he used made me want to let myself go completely for a split second, to burst into tears or something like that. But in another split second I had scolded myself for being so hysterical. In the past I would have been quite unable to reconcile his sober tone with my feelings toward him, and there would have been a head-on-collision. I would have blown the whole thing up out of all proportion. But this morning it suddenly hit me: its ebb tide again. And now I know that the flood tide will be coming back... And now just this bit more: when it suddenly struck me, again in the bathroom, that it can't always be flood tide in a friendship, and that the ebb tide has to be accepted as something positive and fruitful as well, then, life, too suddenly surged through me again with a calmer beat. (Hillesum, 2002, pp. 200-201)

This is the period that Etty's desire for Spier reached its peak, as she continually mentions its deepening in the form of “intensity.” As she says, “I am afraid of the full physical relationship, lest it fail to reach the same pitch as our intellectual relationship, and something gets spoiled. One should never force things but leave them to develop naturally and wait for the ripe fruit to drop. My desire is developing very slowly and ripening into complete surrender of a kind I have never known before” (Hillesum, 2002, p. 257).

We will return to Etty's ever growing and changing relationship with Spier, as this is the ground of this second part of her journey, just as it is the beginning of her awareness of the oppressive society of the Third Reich that was gathering around her. This is one of the first times that Etty addresses her direct experience with the Nazi machine:

Very early on Wednesday morning a large group of us were crowded into the Gestapo hall, and at that moment the circumstances of all our lives were the same. All of us occupied the same space, the men behind the desk no less than those about to be questioned. What distinguished each one of us was only our inner attitudes... When it was my turn to stand in front of his desk, he bawled at me. “What the hell's so funny?” I wanted to say nothing's funny here except you, “ but refrained. “I didn't mean to its my usual expression.” And he, “don't give me that, get the hell out of here,” his face saying I'll deal with you later.” And that was presumably meant to scare me to death, but the device was

too transparent. I am not easily frightened. Not because I am brave, but because I know that I am dealing with human beings and I must try as hard as I can to understand everything that anyone ever does. And that was the real import of this morning; not that a disgruntled young Gestapo Officer yelled at me, but that I felt no indignation, rather a real compassion, and would have liked to ask, “Did you have a very unhappy childhood, has your girlfriend let you down?” Yes, he looked harassed and driven, sullen and weak. I should have liked to start treating him there and then, for I know that pitiful young men like that are dangerous as soon as they are let loose on human kind. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 259)

This marks the very beginning of Etty’s attention to the impending threat. At the moment it is held at bay, and within this second part of her journey will she come to realize how dangerous ‘pitiful men like this’ are ‘as soon as they are let loose on human kind.’

Yet her personal essence grows as manifested through her grappling with relationship. During the first half of this stage, Etty’s desire was actually to ‘see through’ her stuckness, her impasses, her blocks, as well as her fear, in order to become internally free. We see she has reached a turning point with Spier, just past a year into their relationship, she reveals:

I suddenly knew for sure that I would be visiting a great many countries, see a great many people, write books, and leave him, ...and how I felt freer of him at that moment than ever before, yet also closer to him. And then I said No matter what happens between us, that feeling of freedom, of being a world unto myself, of having no claims on you, will always be with me, and that is why I have the courage to tell you everything all the time, the courage even to express my desire, since that doesn’t call for any ties. It is sheer desire, nothing more, and it longs for one part of you, and yet I am free of you... and I am walking this path right now—that became clear to me yesterday. I have turned my desire into our joint venture, and we shall no doubt cope with it together. (Hillesum, 2002, pp. 268-269)

Etty and Spier’s joint venture became her catalyst for transformation. What started as tempering their desire for the sake of their other relationships, Pa Han Wegerif for Etty and Hertha Levi for Spier, became for both of them a path of deepening love. In many ways this would resemble Tantric philosophy of the east, which uses sexual energy to fuel spiritual evolution. Etty’s struggle with possession, sexual desire, and jealousy began to expand to another dimension of love entirely. She says “That I can feel such great love! My inner state is blossoming forth in all directions, my love grows ever stronger and greater, I am learning to bear it better and better and no longer feel crushed by it” (Hillesum, 2002, p. 352).

Some of the relationships well known in the spiritual world, often beginning as teacher and student, evolved into a mutuality where the relationship became more of a mystical union, larger than and including both individuals. Jelaluddin Rumi and Shams of Tebriz, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and A.H. Almaas and Karen Johnson of the Diamond work all refer to the phenomena of such relationships being one consciousness in two bodies. Etty and Spier could be counted among their members. Karen Johnson and A.H. Almaas write about this divine eros in their book entitled: “The Power of Divine Eros; The Illuminating Force of Love in Everyday

Life.” In it they speak about the ‘two loves’ of human beings; one as the love of life and personal relationships, the world and its beauty and turmoil, and the other as the love of mystery, and complete inner freedom (Almaas and Johnson, 2013, pp. 34-35). These spiritual partners mentioned above seem to embody the ‘whole’ in their relationships, yin and yang, receptive and dynamic, feminine and masculine, inner and outer, two as one, all as one. As Karen puts it:

When we follow love to its source, we may feel the actual presence of love itself. Then love is no longer just an idea, a thought, or even an emotional affect. We are in touch with the underlying process of love, which has a feeling of an actual presence of light and fullness or a liquid soft presence...When we know the nature of love, we can begin to see that, in fact, our spiritual nature is what can embrace our personal relationships. (Almaas and Johnson, 2013, pp.38-40)

In a recent chapter written on the Diamond Approach in a Handbook on Transpersonal Psychology, Davis, et al (2013) write: “As the soul opens to her boundless nature, the personal essence integrates more and more dimensions of being, bringing these riches into the world through personal and human expression” (p. 571). We begin to see at this stage in Etty’s unfolding that it is possible for the soul to touch the boundless dimension and simultaneously express it in her unique way, through her personal essence. Etty gives us a glimpse of the continual freshness arising at the same time in this relationship:

It is as if I had never seen him before, as if I were having to get to know him from scratch. And that, I believe, is the great miracle of our relationship, at least for me: that over and over again he seems an entirely new person to me, having to be scrutinized and fathomed over and over again, that I still have to go on absorbing him, that he is material I shall not have finished studying for years. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 353)

This particular exercise book of Etty’s is coming to a close in April of 1942. Before the close of this segment of her journal, the “yellow star” was issued. While she says at this moment “I wondered again if I was so “unworldly” simply because the German measures affect me so little personally. But I don’t fool myself for one single moment about the gravity of it all.” Although she surmises that these measures do not affect her strongly, they are clearly influencing the unfolding of her being. Such as the thought “there will always be suffering, and whether one suffers from this or that really doesn’t make much difference. It is the same with love. One should be less and less concerned with the love object and more and more concerned with love itself, if it is to be real love” (Hillesum, 2002, p. 358). Given this realization, Etty has come to a place at the end of April where she wants to marry Spier in order to “get through these times together.” In fact, the following passage reveals her own ‘pearl beyond price’, personal and boundless at the same time:

I am so glad that he is a Jew and I am a Jewess. And I shall do what I can to remain with him so we can get through these times together...I am not really frightened of anything, I feel so strong: it matters little whether you have to sleep on a hard floor, or whether you are allowed to walk only through certain specified streets, and so on – These are minor vexations, so insignificant compared with the infinite riches and possibilities we carry within us. We must guard these and remain true to them and keep faith with them. And I

shall help you and stay with you and leave you entirely free. And one day I shall surrender you to the girl you mean to marry. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 355)

Etty's journal has a gap at this very point. Exercise Book 7 was never found, so we meet her again in the middle of May 1943, in Exercise Book 8, where it is clear that the final part of this second journey is brewing. The Diamond Approach would call this the Point work; facing into the empty void. Etty has been confronting painful wounds about the fear of losing love, and now the shell of ego identity losing its power to cover up insecurity and deficiency. Etty's additional confrontation with impending destruction is a multifaceted process: the loss of Spier, of future aspirations of being a writer, a chronicler, as well as facing directly into her own death and the annihilation of her family and her people.

At the end of May, 1943, she was quite reflective as the ever present squeeze of the Nazi's was getting tighter and tighter. The persecution accelerated with constant restrictions and it became clear to Etty that the Nazi machine was intent upon their destruction. Even so, it seems Etty is touching some kind of deep feminine receptivity that sustained her:

I went to bed early last night, and from my bed I stared out from the large open window. And it was once more as if life with all of its mysteries was close to me, as if I could touch it. I had the feeling that I was resting against the naked breast of life, and could feel her gentle and regular heartbeat. I felt safe and protected. And I thought, how strange. It is wartime. There are concentration camps. Small barbarity mounts upon small barbarity. I can say of so many of the houses that I pass: here the son has been thrown into prison, there the father has been taken hostage, and an eighteen-year old boy in that house over there has been sentenced to death. And these streets and houses are all so close to my own. I know how very nervous people are, I know about the mounting human suffering. I know the persecution and oppression and despotism and the impotent fury and the terrible sadism. I know it all and continue to confront every shred of reality that thrusts itself upon me. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 386)

Around the same period of time, she was continuing to face the ego's inherent deficient emptiness that her relationship with Spier laid bare, and what was evolving in relationship to the emptiness:

I used to be genuinely hysterical and desperate then. And would have felt betrayed and let down by his failure to console me in my emptiness and sadness. But now I was sitting there perfectly calm and collected, telling myself, you shouldn't be so ambitious, thinking you have to inspire a man every minute. You must accept the fact that you can be empty and tired and just want to get away from him...In the past I would refuse to acknowledge that sort of emptiness in myself, and then make forced attempts on all fronts, from the intellectual, to the erotic and sexual, to restore contact at any price, and if that failed, I would later have orgies of loneliness all on my own...In the past, I would have expected him, and other friends as well, to work miracles of solace. And now, I was bearing my own emptiness, and tiredness, and malaise, and that too was part and parcel of life, and there was no need to feel so forlorn. (Hillesum, 2002, 405)

There is something happening with Etty as she stares into the inner starkness, the emptiness, immanent destruction, and the failings of her own body. She begins to accept, and even embrace the very moment of her unfolding and finds that her ‘love of life has not been diminished.’ This seems to be an emerging non-dual experience as well as the human will’s defiance to the Nazi’s persecution. While with Etty, the illumination of the boundless dimension gets brighter and more spacious.

Etty’s imagery illuminates the struggle with her body at this time:

All sorts of things are going out of joint south of my midriff. This mental frame of mine is certainly in need of drastic repair...I really don’t know what to do about it. If I stop eating salt, the kidney may float a little less. But the homeopathic drops and the endless aspirins are of course constantly at loggerheads with each other, waging battle in my ‘earthly home’. Oh, yes, that body of mine: all at once I have an image of a battered old ruin, with white doves flying in and out of the holes in the walls –They are my thoughts, and they are more than thoughts; they are the comings and goings, and the movements made by my spirit; between the cracks new young flowers are growing, so touchingly fresh and young among the weathered walls. – and those are my feelings. That’s how I feel suddenly: like a battered old ruin. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 387)

As Etty moves closer and more deeply to the “point of her existence” and wrestles with ultimate questions, she comes to an evolving awareness about what she feels God is to her. It becomes her ongoing inquiry:

It means gathering together all the strength one can, living one’s life with God and in God and having God dwell within. (I find the word “God” so primitive at times, it is only a metaphor after all, an approach to our greatest and most continuous inner adventure; I’m sure that I don’t even need the word “God” which sometimes strikes me as a primitive, primordial sound—A makeshift construction.) And at night, when I sometimes have the inclination to speak to God and say very childishly, “God, things cannot go on like this with me” – and sometimes my prayers can be very desperate and imploring – it is, nevertheless, it is as if I were addressing in myself, trying to plead with a part of myself. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 440)

When Etty heard the latest news at the end of June, 1942, that all Jews will be transported out of Holland through Drenthe Province (Camp Westerbork) and then on to Poland and Auschwitz, she comes to the realization that God cannot help the Jews. As Patrick Woodhouse discusses, she arrives at the same insight as Dietrich Bonhoeffer writing to his friend from prison just months before he was hanged by the Nazis for attempting a plot to kill Hitler. As Bonhoeffer wrote of the God “weak and powerless” in the world, Etty also comes to the awareness that “God is not accountable to us, but we are to Him,” that what mattered to her was “not whether we preserve our lives at any cost, but how we preserve them.” And so, as Woodhouse summarized, “God becomes to her a vulnerable Presence, to be looked after and cherished in the human heart.” (Woodhouse, 2009, pp. 50-51)

While Etty had tremendous strength of will, as we see in her first response to the news of the transports, “I know about everything, and I am no longer appalled by the latest reports, in one way or the other, I know it all.” She acknowledges that “though her mind has come to terms with it all, her body hasn’t. It has disintegrated into a thousand pieces” (Hillesum, 2002, p. 456).

Etty now is up against and present to the abyss, death, in any numbers of forms. Her inquiry is fueled by fear, curiosity and love. She says:

Suffering is not beneath human dignity. I mean: it is possible to suffer with dignity and without. I mean: most of us in the West don’t understand the art of suffering and experience a thousand fears instead. We cease to be alive, being full of fear, bitterness, hatred and despair...And I wonder if there is much of a difference between being consumed here by a thousand fears or in Poland by a thousand lice and hunger? We have to accept death as a part of life, even the most horrible of deaths. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 459)

As mentioned in the Diamond Approach section, its primary method is inquiry, which opens one to the raw, concomitant feelings and experiences of vulnerability. While the defensive structures of the personality are worked through, there is a deep touching of the affect, and an impact on the body/soma that carries such vulnerability in the face of trauma (depression, anxiety, somatic illness). And the more feeling that is integrated, the more fullness that results. Curiosity can lead this process, as a strength that emerges that loves the truth wherever it will lead. Etty’s authenticity is revealed in her immediate response of unflinching strength in the face of overwhelming power and her vulnerable sharing of each disintegration that comes afterward, where the somatic level of her being is seriously compromised until the shock to her sensitive system is metabolized. Her continuous work of deconstruction and integration is the core of her process and that of the Diamond Approach, a system where psychological and spiritual maturity become inseparable. We can see from her poetic response to human suffering, above, to a much more personal response, shortly afterward:

Yes, I am still at the same desk, but it seems to me that I am going to have to draw a line under everything and continue in a different tone. I must admit a new insight into my life and find a place for it: What is at stake is our impending destruction and annihilation. We can have no more illusions about that. They are out to destroy us completely. We must accept that and go on from there. Today I was filled with terrible despair, and I shall have to come to terms with that as well. And perhaps, or rather, certainly, that is the result of yesterday’s four aspirins. Even if we are consigned to hell, let us go there as gracefully as we can. Why this mood at this particular moment? Is it because I have a blister on my foot from walking through the hot town, because so many people have had sore feet ever since they were stopped from using the trains...Because Liesl stood in a queue and didn’t get any vegetables after all? It is for such an awful lot of reasons, all of them petty in themselves, but all of them part of the great campaign to destroy us. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 461)

Later still:

I shall not be bitter if others fail to understand what is happening to us Jews. I work and continue to live with the same conviction that life is meaningful- yes, meaningful-although I hardly dare say so in company these days. Living and dying, sorrow and joy, the blisters on my feet and the jasmine behind the house, the persecution, the unspeakable horrors- it is all one in me, and I accept it all as one mighty whole. And begin to grasp it better if only for myself, without being able to explain it to anyone else how it all hangs together. I wish I could live for a long time so that one day I may know how to explain it, and if I am not granted that wish, well, then, somebody else will perhaps do it, carry on from where my life has been cut short. And that is why I must live a faithful life to my last breath: so that those who come after me do not have to start all over again, need not face the same difficulties. Isn't that doing something for future generations? (Hillesum, 2002, p. 461)

So it was, during this time that Etty's confrontation with annihilation prompted the need for the external confirmation of her identity to fall away. Almaas has often called this aspect the 'point', since it is often experienced as a timeless, dimensionless point of light (Almaas, 1996, P. 346). It is during this phase that Etty speaks about her inferiority complex and her perceived deficiencies falling away. She was also beginning to face the inevitability of losing Spier:

He leaned against the wall in Dicky's room, and I leaned gently and lightly against him, as I had done on countless similar occasions in the past, but this time, it suddenly felt as if the sky had fallen as in a Greek tragedy. For a moment my senses were totally confused, and I felt as though I was standing in the center of infinite space- pervaded by space but also filled with eternity. In that moment a great change took place within us, forever. He remained leaning against the wall for a little and said in an almost plaintive voice, "I must write to my girlfriend tonight, it will be her birthday soon. But what am I to say to her? I haven't the heart for it or the inspiration." And I said to him, "You must start even now and try to reconcile her to the fact that she will never see you again; you must give her something to hold onto for the future. Tell her how the two of you, though physically apart for all these years, have nevertheless been as one, and that she has a duty to carry on if only to keep something of your spirit alive." Yes, that's how people speak to one another these days, and it doesn't even sound unreal anymore. We have embraced a new reality, and everything has taken on new colors and new emphases. And between our eyes and hands and mouths there now flows a constant stream of tenderness, a stream in which all petty desires seem to have been extinguished. All that matters now is to be kind to each other with all the goodness that is in us. And every encounter is also a farewell. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 475)

It is quite clear from this passage that any of Etty's longings that came as a result of deficiency or fear of rejection, have melted into a love larger than what she has known, and in fact she becomes Spier's spiritual 'teacher' as he begins his own process of disintegration. Etty wants to give Hertha hope, and give them both, Spier and Hertha, access to that 'constant stream of tenderness.' This was theirs, Etty and Spier's joint venture, ultimately hastened by facing into annihilation, or 'death before death' as it has been called. We begin to see Etty's preparation for her separation from Spier while she continues to display a deep union of grit and grace, and the following passage reveals it:

A hard day, a very hard day. We must learn to shoulder our “common fate”; everyone who seeks to save himself must surely realize that if he does not go, another will take his place. As if it really mattered which of us goes. Ours is now a common destiny that I must shoulder myself in prayer... and that part of our common destiny that I must shoulder myself; I strap it tightly and firmly to my back, it becomes part of me as I walk through the streets even now. And I shall wield this slender fountain pen as if it were a hammer, and my words will have to be so many hammer strokes with which to beat out the story of our fate and of a piece of history as it is and never was before. Not in this totalitarian, massively organized form, spanning the whole of Europe. Still, a few people must survive if only to be the chroniclers of this age. I would very much like to become one of their number – . (Hillesum, 2002, p. 484)

Within this great strife, Etty is touching her essence, this deep capacity to hold the whole of her experience. Both to find ‘meaning’ as her personality covets the rational, analytic meaning making process, yet, we bear witness to the arising fire of her true nature, Being itself. Given the ‘extremis’ of her moment in human history, we can feel her increased calling “to beat out the story of our fate.” An important decision for Etty during this time was the one she made about going into ‘hiding.’ This decision is one that thousands of Dutch Jews had to make and the one the Frank family made at this moment on July 6th 1942, just three miles away from Etty in South Amsterdam. Within the following week the fifteen year old Anne would begin her diary in the familiar red plaid notebook. Etty, twenty-eight, chose not to go into hiding, a controversial choice with many of her friends, and has engendered multiple critiques since that time. She was clear about this decision, and in fact, was adamant about it, as is described in the story about Klass Smelik, a friend and former lover, and his daughter, Johanna or “Jopie” trying to kidnap Etty into hiding. Klass reports:

At a certain point, Klass grabbed her and tried to convince her to go into hiding. She wormed herself free and stood at a distance at about five feet from me. She looked at me very strangely and said “You don’t understand me,” I replied, No, I don’t understand what on earth you’re up to. Why don’t you stay here, you fool!” Then she said: “I want to share the destiny of my people.” When she said that, I knew there was no hope. She would never come to us,” said Smelik. Others also offered Etty a hiding place, but she steadfastly refused this. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 761)

What is this decision about to share the destiny of her people? As an assimilated Jew without a commitment to formal religious Judaism, and in fact a Marxist earlier in her life, Etty’s own evolution of consciousness takes her to this place as her soul’s wisdom and clarity intersects this moment in European history. This event in European history has also evolved as Gebser (1949/1985) might say, moving from the magical, to mythical, to the mental. This changed the fabric of human consciousness by moving beyond crimes of passion and dominance (magical, mythical) to the mental, scientific, systematic dehumanization and ultimate genocide of those not considered a pure race, an Aryan race. As Etty faces into this kind of annihilation, she is never far from ‘God’ or her own soul, the very sparks of that divine essence that she communes with, and, more importantly, *is*. At one of the darkest hours she says:

Dear God, these are anxious times. Tonight for the first time, I lay in the dark with burning eyes, as scene after scene of human suffering passed before me. I shall promise You one thing, God, just one very small thing: I shall never burden my today with cares about my tomorrow, although that takes some practice... I shall try to help you, God, to stop my strength ebbing away, though I cannot vouch for it in advance. But one thing is becoming increasingly clear to me: that You cannot help us, and we must help You to help ourselves. And that is all we can manage these days and also all that really matters: that we safeguard that little piece of You, God, in ourselves. And perhaps in others as well. Alas, there doesn't seem to be too much You Yourself can do about our circumstances, about our lives. Neither do I hold you responsible. You cannot help us, but we must help You, and defend your dwelling place within us to the last. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 488)

This protecting or 'safeguarding' of this cherished soul or essence or 'piece of You' in herself and others was Etty's destiny, and moved from a flicker to a flame and back again throughout this short time of her human existence. At the end of this exercise book 10, she was coming near to the time of going to Westerbork, the transit camp to Auschwitz, located in Drenthe Province. It is now her time to say goodbye to life as she has known it, which is the very heart of radical spiritual transformation. It will not be easy as she confesses that she feels

... that I am still tied by a thousand threads to everything I treasure here. I will have to tear myself away bit by bit and store everything inside me, so that when I have to leave I shall not abandon anything but carry it all with me. There are times I feel like a little bird, tucked away in a great protective hand. (Hillesum, 2002, P. 509)

And, tear herself away, she did. Etty was on her way to Camp Westerbork, a decision she made, as more and more Jews were being rounded up. Spier had recently been ill and she watched him beginning to deteriorate. She did not know, consciously, that he would be dying of cancer during her first six-week period at Westerbork.

When it became known that appointments to the Jewish Council could offer temporary protection from deportation, many people applied for work (Hillesum, 2002, p. 740). It seems likely that Etty, having received the 'normal' summons for Westerbork, had been urged to apply for work at the Jewish Council by Jaap and a certain Loopuit. She probably felt guilty about this and reported to the recently established 'Westerbork department', a sub-department of the Jewish Council in Amsterdam. She was officially appointed as stenographer; her field was 'Social Welfare for people in Transit' at Westerbork. And on July 30th, she arrived at Westerbork with the first staff members of the Jewish Council (p. 740). As she says: "Nothing can ever atone for the fact that one section of the Jewish population is helping to transport the majority out of the country. History will pass judgment in due course"(Hillesum, 2002, p. 511).

As her time with Spier was coming to a close, she has a profound experience of the power of divine eros:

On Sunday morning I was curled up on his floor in my big striped dressing gown, darning socks. Water can be so clear that you can see right through it and distinguish everything on the bottom... What I really wanted to say is: it suddenly felt as if life in its thousand details,

twists, and turns had become perfectly clear and transparent. Just as if I were standing before an Ocean and could look straight through the crystal clear water to the bottom. I doubt very much if I will ever be able to write – or shall I yet? It may take a long time before I can describe this moment, a high point in my life. You huddle in the corner on the floor of the room of the man you love and darn his socks and at the same time you are sitting by the shore of a mighty Ocean so transparent that you can see the bottom. And that is an unforgettable experience... (Hillesum, 2002, p. 512)

Etty was also having second thoughts about marrying Spier. As much as they spoke about staying together through the war, both came to the realization that marriage was not the purpose, it was love. Spier also felt he did not want to bind Hertha to him in this way (marriage), given his age. Etty, while speaking of this with Spier, thought to herself, “You look so ill, so terribly tired, and loving you as much as I do, the worst thing that could happen to me would be to sit by and watch you suffer” (Hillesum, 2002, p. 509). She begins to realize:

To put it quite soberly and bluntly the differences in our ages is too great. I have already seen a man (Han) change before my eyes in a few years. I see him changing too. He is an old man whom I love, love infinitely, and to whom I shall always be united by an inner bond. But “marry” what the worthy citizen calls marry, I must, in all seriousness and honesty, say finally that I don’t want to. And the fact that I have to go my own way all by myself gives me a great feeling of strength. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 511)

Around this time she asserts, “There is a vast silence in me that continues to grow. And washing around in it are so many words that make one tired because one can express nothing with them. One must do more and more without meaningless words the better to find the few one needs. And in the silence new powers of expression must grow” (Hillesum, 2002, p. 512).

Etty was preparing, or being prepared for the next steps in her evolution. She found comfort in the words of Rainer Marie Rilke, her poetic partner in transformation, as she says, “I read a bit more of Rilke and discovered the following passage; the words greeted me as if they were my closest family”:

And suddenly as if through clear tears, you have a vague inkling that, even as a lover, you need solitude, that sorrow, not injustice, is meted out to you and envelops you when, in the midst of an overwhelming urge to reach out to the beloved person, it suddenly dawns on you: yes, you can only develop and make complete even this apparently most closely shared fellowship, which is love, by yourself, separately; if only because in the union of strong affections you set up a current of pleasure that carries you along and finally casts you out; whereas if you are enveloped in your own feelings, love becomes a daily task performed on your own self and a constant series of bold and magnanimous challenges to the other. Beings who love each other in this way call up infinite dangers around them, but they are safe from the petty risks that have frayed and crumbled so many great emotional beginnings. Because they always hope for, and expect, the utmost from each other, neither can wrong the other through limitation; on the contrary they incessantly create space and breadth and freedom for each other. (Hillesum, 2002, P. 81)

It is here on the eve of Etty's first journey to Westerbork that the line will be drawn, however arbitrarily, between Etty's Second and Third Journey. Both the individuation process and realization of true nature are focused on dissolving the ego and its limiting narcissism, and at the end of journey two the soul begins to know her essence as her identity. The duality of soul and essence begins to be bridged and the soul moves into the third journey. "The soul recognizes she is the simplicity and exquisiteness of timeless presence" (Almaas, 2004, p. 224). It is to the third journey or that of the boundless dimension that we will now turn.

Journey 3: Etty Hillesum

Truly, my life is one long hearkening unto myself and unto others, unto God. And if I say that I hearken, it is really God who hearkens inside of me (Hillesum, 2002, p. 519).

From the frame of the Diamond Approach, the first phase of Journey Three is the essential development of the soul, and this is illustrated in the above quote of Etty's. The soul merges with essence so completely that the two become one. This non-dual soul is a dynamic presence that all experience arises from, and Etty's reveals her non-dual soul in the experience of God inside her. Her soul is totally immersed with the presence of love.

When Etty returned from Westerbork on leave to Amsterdam six weeks later, the world had turned yet again. Not only did she become ill with what she later learned was kidney stones, but she had to face Spier's imminent death. She saw him for the last time with some awareness on his part on September 11th and according to her friend Tide's diary, "Etty had returned from her visit to him, broken. Which is not surprising: he is no longer himself. At first he didn't recognize her. Later he did. He also said something: that she was not only a woman but also 'very clever'" (Hillesum, 2002, p. 750).

It is through this transition and the one of being at Westerbork that we see this explosion toward the increasing boundless dimension of Etty's being. The day of Spier's death is when she put pen to paper again after a six week hiatus. She acknowledges that "everything coming together like that was a little hard."

She goes on to say that:

I am a little numb and bewildered and helpless, but at the same time I am trying to scrape together what patience I have from all the corners of my being, and I shall have to find a new kind of patience to meet this entirely new state of affairs. I shall follow the tried and tested old method, talking to myself now and again on these faint blue lines. And talking to You God, Is that all right? With the passing of people, I feel a growing need to speak to You alone. I love people so terribly, because in every human being I love something of you....But now I need so much patience and thought, and things will be very difficult. And now I have to do everything by myself. The best and noblest part of my friend, of the man whose light You kindled in me, is now with you. What was left behind was a childish, worn-out husk in the two small rooms in which I experienced the greatest and deepest happiness of my life. I stood beside his bed and found myself standing before one

of Your last mysteries, my God. Give me a whole life to contain it all. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 514)

And, to Spier:

There you lie now in your two small rooms, you dear great, good man. I once wrote to you, "My heart will always fly to you like a bird, from any place on earth, and it will surely find you....And even if they flung me into a dungeon, that piece of heaven would still spread out within me and my heart would fly up to it like a bird, and that is why everything is so simple, so terribly simple and beautiful and full of meaning." I had a thousand things to ask you and to learn from you; now I will have to do everything by myself. But I feel so strong that I'm sure I'll manage. What energies I possess have been set inside me. You taught me to speak the name of God without embarrassment. You were the mediator between God and me, and now you, the mediator, have gone, and my path leads straight to God. It is right that it should be so. And I shall be the mediator for any other soul I can reach. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 516)

It is here that Etty suggests what has been happening all along, that she has moved from a possessive kind of love, to an idealistic one, to an integration and expansion of Spier's and her consciousness. At this part of her journal, the transmission from the page is palpable, and the reader is struck by the presence of Being as she touches it directly:

My love of life is so great and so strong and calm and makes me so grateful that I shall refrain from putting it into words again. There is such perfect and complete happiness in me, oh God. What he called "reposing in oneself." And that probably best expresses my own love of life: I repose in myself. And that part of myself; that deepest and richest part in which I repose, is what I call "God." (Hillesum, 2002, p. 519)

It was at this point that Etty's body has "called a halt" to her activity, as she says that she "must rest awhile "if I am to do what I have to do." She continues: Even if one's body aches, the spirit can continue to do its work, can it not? It can love and *hineinhorchen* – "hearken unto"- itself and unto others and unto what binds us to life. *Hineinhorchen* – I so wish I could find a Dutch equivalent for that German word. Truly, my life is one long hearkening unto myself, and unto others and unto God. And if I say that I hearken, it is really God who hearkens inside me. The most essential and the deepest in me is hearkening unto the most essential and deepest in the other. God to God. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 519)

These lines of Etty's reveal how her soul has completed the process that the Diamond Approach calls 'essentialization'. Her soul has now realized a nondual state that is loving in a complete and full way. The divine presence of her soul is able to see, touch, and love the divine in others. Her soul has a dynamic presence that expresses itself as loving action. This is the "thinking heart of the barracks", as she called herself in her two months at Westerbork. She continues with wishing to put it all into words:

Those two months behind barbed wire have been the richest and most intense months of my life, in which my highest values were confirmed. I have learned to love Westerbork.

Yet when I fell asleep in my narrow plank bed there, what I dreamed of was the desk behind which I now sit and write. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 520)

Etty describes Westerbork as a "new focus of Jewish suffering" as it is a "camp for a people in transit, great waves of human beings constantly washed in from the cities and provinces, from rest homes, prisons, and other prison camps, from all the nooks and crannies of the Netherlands, only to be deported a few days later to meet their unknown destiny" (Hillesum, 2002, p. 583). She gives some physical characteristics of the place, with the words: "There is mud, so much mud that somewhere between your ribs you need to have a great deal of inner sunshine if you don't want to become the psychological victim of it all." She makes sure to add the effects of "broken shoes and wet feet." The barbed wire, of course was another feature. "If the barbed wire just encircled the camp, at least you would know where you were. But these twentieth century wires meander about inside the camp, too, around the barracks and in between, in a labyrinth and unfathomable network.... Anyway, it is terribly crowded in Westerbork, as when too many drowning people cling to the last bit of flotsam after a ship has sunk..." (Hillesum, 2002, pp. 583-584).

As a prelude to the second phase of the Third Journey, Etty gives us a glimpse of her unfolding nondual filter through which she glimpses Reality:

The sky is full of birds, the purple lupines stand up so regally and peacefully, two little old women have sat down on the box for a chat, the sun is shining on my face – and right before our eyes, mass murder. The whole thing is simply beyond comprehension. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 602)

The second phase of the third journey is the discovery of the boundlessness of true nature. This can be seen in the second part of Etty's third journey as a 'seeing through' the limited boundaries of individuality, and of time and place to experience her soul as this "eternal newness that transcends all time and as a mystery that transcends all determinations." Etty's soul now experiences itself as boundless and transcending her individual perspective. This is best described in Etty's riveting words:

I once wrote in my diaries, "I would like to run my fingertips along the contours of these times." I was sitting at my desk with no idea what to make of life. That was because I had not yet arrived at the life in myself; was still sitting at this desk. And then I was suddenly flung into one into one of many flashpoints of human suffering. And there, in the faces of people, in a thousand gestures, small changes of expression, life stories, I was suddenly able to read our age – and much more than our age alone. And then it suddenly happened: I was able to feel the contours of these times with my fingertips. How is it that this stretch of heathland surrounded by barbed wire, through which so much human misery has flooded, nevertheless remains inscribed in my memory as something almost lovely? How is it that my spirit, far from being oppressed, seemed to grow lighter and brighter there? It is because I read the signs of the times and they did not seem meaningless to me. Surrounded by my writers and poets and flowers on my desk, I loved life. And there among the barracks, full of hunted and persecuted people, I found confirmation of my love of life. Life in those drafty barracks was no other than life in this protected, peaceful room.

Not for one moment was I cut off from the life I was said to have left behind. There was simply one great meaningful whole. Will I be able to describe all of that one day? (Hillesum, 2002, p. 526)

In reading Etty's words from the Diamond Approach perspective we can see "that co-emergent with these boundless dimensions is the constant upwelling, flow, and completely fresh experience of being in each moment" (Davis, J., Usatynski, T., and Ish-Shalom, Z, 2013, p. 572). The soul's journey of Etty Hillesum has been moving toward this realization throughout this brief account of her life. We experience many moments of this 'upwelling,' 'flow' and 'freshness' or immediacy in Etty's inner and outer discoveries. The further differentiations of the boundless dimensions that Almaas lays out include Divine Love, the Supreme, the Nonconceptual, the Logos, and the Absolute (Almaas, 2004). For the purposes of this paper, the 'Absolute' will suffice to convey the whole of all the aspects of this term, providing the basis of spaciousness, presence, nonduality and unlimited potential in all experience.

Journey 4: The Journey of Descent

Now that the soul has journeyed into the mystery and transcended all limitations, it flows back into the multitude of forms and objects of the phenomenal world. As the soul does so, it maintains its connection to the Absolute and true nature that it has discovered, but integrates Being into the manifestations of the phenomenal world. The journey of ascent was a movement inward, while the journey of descent is a movement outward into the world of forms and objects, which leads to integration and union with the whole (Almaas, 2004). This journey involves understanding the Absolute not only as a transcendent truth but also as the immanent ground of reality. Like the previous two journeys, this one involves the two phases of self-realization and individuation. There develops a deeper understanding of the functional relationship between true nature and the individual soul, and the relationship between soul, Being or God in Etty's case, and the cosmos. In the descent, the soul finds its place in the cosmic reality.

The journeys of ascent and descent are not separate linear processes, but are present simultaneously, co-existing and co-emerging. The journeys complement each other and are equally important. "Immanence, fullness, and the myriad forms of the world are one side of a coin; transcendence, emptiness, and the mystery of union are the other. Thus, the richness and beauty of the world are no more true, valuable, or privileged than its emptiness, spaciousness and vastness" (Davis, 1999, p. 153).

As Etty comes to the end of her recuperation in Amsterdam, and prepares herself to return to Westerbork, we see her soul's movement toward the realization of the boundless dimensions of the Absolute and its expression in the world. Etty faces moving back into one of the forms of the 'world': the concentration camps and debacle of the Holocaust. She prepares to go back, knowing that Westerbork will now be overflowing with people. The transports to Auschwitz will be much more frequent, in fact, speeding to their destination to beat the allies in these last 18 months of the war. Her preparation includes reflections about suffering, and how to free herself from the ideas of it. She says:

I know how to free my creative powers more and more from the snares of material concerns, far from the *idea* of hunger and cold and danger. They are, after all, *imaginary* phantoms, not the reality. Reality is something one shoulders together with all the suffering that goes with it, and with all the difficulties. And as one shoulders them, so one's resilience grows stronger. But the idea of suffering (which is not the reality, for real suffering is always fruitful and can turn life into a precious thing) must be destroyed. And if you destroy the ideas behind which life lies imprisoned as behind bars, then you liberate your true life, its real, its real mainsprings, and then you will also have the strength to bear real suffering, your own and the world's -. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 537)

This period of waiting to go back to Westerbork was one of her times of digestion and integration of all that has gone before and she finds herself in a poetic, boundless state of consciousness, right along with worry for her parents. She muses about poetry and feels that "there is no hidden poet in me, just a little piece of God that might grow into poetry." She continues to say that "a camp needs a poet, one who experiences life there, even there, as a bard and is able to sing about it." She remembers her first time at Westerbork and the women and girls that surrounded her plank bed who would often tell her that they did not want to think or feel, as they were sure to 'to go out of their minds.' She recalls an exquisite moment in the barracks one night:

I was sometimes filled with an infinite tenderness, and lay awake for hours letting all the many, too many impressions of a much too-long day wash over me, and I prayed, "Let me be the thinking heart of these barracks." And that is what I want to be again. The thinking heart of a whole concentration camp. I lie here so patiently and now so calmly again that I feel quite a bit better... . (Hillesum, 2002, p. 543)

This realization of the boundless dimension and her own true nature fortifies her essential strength, or the red essence, as well as her true will to persevere in the face of suffering, as the Diamond Approach would describe it, for this fourth journey or the one of descent. While the word descent is used to convey movement into the world with the realization of one's essential or true nature, or Being itself, in this particular instance descent could also convey a metaphor of descending into a hell on earth. Either way, this last part of her journey on earth, was consciousness itself witnessing the direct effects of this heinous destructive power of the human condition cut off from its essential nature.

When Etty arrived at Westerbork during the first week of June, 1943, she was struck by the desperate chaos of the place that she initially experienced as one of community and bonding with the staff and its 1,000 'citizens.' It now held 10,000 people living in gravely subpar conditions. Overall, Etty's continual concerns and struggles for herself, her family and the inhabitants had to do with exceedingly poor hygiene. Exacerbating these poor conditions for Etty was the sandy terrain and wind, with sand getting into people's eyes, food and bodies causing ever-present illness; the constant anxiety and terror of who would be chosen for the next transport to Auschwitz; and the role of working in the hospital as a person who both comforted and assisted people in touching something within themselves that would not/could not be crushed by this destructive force. She was also quite concerned about her parents' health and wellbeing and

managed the process of writing to friends asking them to send rations and occasionally small delicacies such as butter, cakes or chocolate.

On her first night back at Westerbork, she was greeted by an abundance of mice, crowding, and a new transport from Vaught, a concentration camp considered notoriously barbaric, which had come in that night and early morning. She relays the horror:

First of all, we underwent a lysol treatment, because so many lice always arrive from Vaught. From four to nine a.m. I dragged screaming children around and carried luggage for exhausted women. It was hard going, and heart-rending. Women with small children, 1,600 (tonight another 1,600 will arrive); the men had been deliberately kept back in Vaught....In Vaught, two or three children die every day. An old woman asked me helplessly, "Could you tell me, please could you tell me, why we Jews have to suffer so much." I couldn't answer. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 600)

One gets a further glimpse of this scene from one of the staff at Westerbork, Friedrich Weintraub, who wrote a book after the war, "Collaboration and Resistance, 1940-1945", and he describes the scene:

And Etty Hillesum arrived with her dispatch bag – couldn't speak a word, only cry. She sat on a chair between Weyl's bed and mine, with her face buried in a handkerchief. Loonstijn called out: "My good girl, for heaven's sake stop, we have troubles enough we don't need any wailing women around." This helped a bit and Etty started telling us what she had seen.... However Etty soon started crying again. We let her do so, and it did help – at least then you don't have to cry yourself. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 762)

Etty, over her short time at Westerbork, faced many people forced into desperation who did not have any inner reference point, whether very young, their parents, or the very old. She speaks about a young girl who was partly paralyzed, and has just been learning to walk again. The girl says to Etty "Have you heard? I have to go."

Etty describes the encounter:

We look at each other for a long moment. It is as if her face has disappeared; she is all eyes. Then she says in a level gray little voice, "Such a pity, isn't it? That everything you have learned in life goes for nothing. And, How hard it is to die." She looks at me for a long time in silence, searchingly, and then says "I would like, oh, I really would like to swim away in my tears." (Hillesum, 2002, pp. 646, 648)

And another:

She grabbed hold of me; she looked deranged. A flood of words poured over me: "That isn't right, how can that be right? I've got to go, and I won't even be able to get my washing dry by tomorrow. And my child is sick, he's feverish, can't you fix things so that I don't have to go?...Can't you take my child for me? Go on, please, won't you hide him; he's got a high fever, how can I possibly take him along?" She points to a little bundle of

misery with blonde curls and a burning, bright red little face. "...my child," and then she sobs, "They take the sick children away, and you never get them back."

God Almighty, what are You doing to us? The words just escape me. (Hillesum, 2002, pp. 646-647)

These excerpts let us know she was in full contact with her emotions and her strength was born of her vulnerability. In her letters to others we see her essential strength/will and get a glimpse of what she conveys to others, as if wanting to infuse them, then and there, with the spiritual will to refuse to succumb their soul's richness to the evil of this killing machine. As she stood at the tub one morning with a colleague, she says:

The realms of the soul and the spirit are so spacious and unending that this little bit of physical discomfort and suffering really doesn't matter all that much. I do not feel I have been robbed of my freedom; essentially, no one can do me any harm at all....Yes, children, I am in a strange state of mournful contentment. If I once wrote you a desperate letter, don't take it too much to heart; it expressed only a brief moment. It's true you can suffer, but that need not make you desperate. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 611)

The worst part of Etty's anguish was relegated to the care and responsibility she felt toward her parents as well as the continuous fear of them being placed on the 'next transport' to Auschwitz. She actually comes to "admire them tremendously" for the way they are coping with the misery of their situation. She particularly develops a connection with her father, someone she has always admired, and watches him give lessons to a few students in Greek and Latin, "reads a great deal, philosophizes with ancient rabbis and old student friends, and now and then strolls with his daughter through the dusty sand of the hospital grounds" (Hillesum, 2002, p. 625). "We chuckle together a lot", she says, "Father and I; you can't really call it laughing. He has a primitive sense of humor, which becomes more profound and sparkling as the grotesque process of his reduction to poverty assumes ever more wretched dimensions." Keeping her parents off the transport list became her focus in the last months at Westerbork. She writes to a friend:

Tense and stirring days behind us. Father was on the transport list. We were able to get him off once again. I must explain that the call-ups for the transports come in the middle of the night, a few hours before the train leaves. If people are still needed at the last minute to fill the quotas, then Jews are seized here and there at random from the barracks. And that's why the days before the transports are so nerve wracking. The day afterward I fainted twice, but I'm fine again now – until the next transport.... I have got used to the idea that I'll have to go myself one day. Above all else in the world I wish I could spare my parents and my brothers. But you can't play the ostrich here; a transport leaves every week, and the quota must be filled. Just a little while longer and all our turns will come. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 625)

Amidst all of this numbing chaos, Etty reflects on the totality of her experience in one of her letters:

All I wanted to say is this: The misery here is quite terrible; and yet; late at night when the day has slunk away into the depths behind me, I often walk with a spring in my step along the barbed wire. And then, time and again, it soars straight from my heart – I can't help it, that's just the way that it is, like some elementary force – the feeling that life is glorious and magnificent, and that one day we shall be building a whole new world. Against every new outrage, and every fresh horror, we shall put up one more piece of love and goodness, drawing strength from within ourselves. We may suffer, but we must not succumb. And if we should survive unhurt in body and soul, but above all in soul, without bitterness and without hatred, then we shall have a say after the war.... Life here hardly touches my deepest resources – physically, perhaps you do decline a little, and sometimes you are infinitely sad – but fundamentally, you keep growing stronger. (Hillesum, 2002, pp. 616-617)

And indeed her turn did come with a sudden order from The Hague. Her friend Jopie let her friends and family know that

... for Etty it was a complete surprise –she had decided that she was not going to travel with her parents, and would have much preferred to go through these experiences without the pressures of family ties. For her it was a slap in the face, which did in fact, literally, strike her down. Within the hour, however, she had recovered and adapted herself to the new situation with admirable speed. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 666)

Etty Hillesum's last words to her friend, Christine Nooten, and to the ages were written on a postcard thrown out of the train on September 7th, 1943, found by farmers outside Westerbork camp and posted by them. It says:

Christine,

Opening the Bible at random I find this: "The Lord is my high tower." I am sitting on my rucksack in the middle of a full freight car. Father, Mother and Mischa are a few cars away. In the end, the departure came without warning. On sudden special orders from The Hague. We left the camps singing. Father and Mother firmly and calmly, Mischa too. We shall be traveling for three days. Thank-you for you for all your kindness and care....

Good-bye for now from the four of us. Etty. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 658)

Etty Hillesum died on 30th of November at Auschwitz.

Journey Four ends with Etty's physical death. What became more and more clear is that Etty's life reflected the "unfolding and expression of the Absolute as it becomes manifest in the world" (Davis, J., Usatynski, T., & Ish-Shalom, Z, 2013, p. 573). The experience of the full realization of essence is rare, and when we experience it, as it seems with Etty, "we know what pure consciousness is, that it is beyond the sense of aliveness more fundamental than life" (Almaas, 2004, p. 128). We don't know the exact details of Etty's death, but we can well imagine that she died with the same courage with which she lived. Courage and strength born not only of her vulnerability, but the strength of her lived experience that she was free, that her

essence or soul was unfettered. According to a recent lecture on the 'Fear of Death' by Karen Johnson of the Diamond Approach, the continuous endings or cessations we experience in life offer us practice, the practice of befriending death, of walking with it, instead of opposing it. Each time we move into a ceasing of expression, in any number of ways, the ego experiences it as death. The practice is to keep working through the levels of cessation. "We die alone", says Johnson, "not separate" (Johnson, 2013). We can see in Etty's fourth journey, that she repeatedly experiences the wrenching of separation, loss and death testing her realization. She continuously had the experience of 'some elemental force' soaring from her heart, after each integration of suffering.

As we have seen from Etty's experiences in Journey Four, she not only has come back into the 'world' as an awakened being, but she has come back into an accelerated distorted, mechanized 'world' of transit and concentration camp destruction. In this world we are reminded of how much Etty has become realized, has indeed, unfolded toward Being itself. She became the light in the darkness or the "Thinking heart of the barracks" a presence who could hold the qualities of inquiry, change, cessation and love in one spacious whole.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to examine the unfolding or evolving of Etty Hillesum's consciousness through the Integral perspective lens. Etty has been placed in this field of study by the author as her journey of transformation is exemplary of the Integral systems that are inclusive of a non-dual ground of existence, development of the deepest human potentials, and participation in the evolutionary force of Being (Chaudhuri, 1965). Aurobindo and Gebser have served as the historical lineage of this perspective, while Almaas and Johnson have provided the current logos and practice of presence from which to delineate Etty's process.

Etty, as a self-realized chronicler, philosopher, therapist and teacher has become one of their numbers. As she said:

I shall become the chronicler of our adventures. I shall forge them into a new language and store them inside me should I have no chance to write things down. I shall grow dull and come to life again, fall down and rise up again, and one day I may perhaps discover a peaceful space round me that is mine alone, and then I shall sit there for as long as it takes, even if it should be a year, until life begins to bubble up in me and I find the words to be borne. (Hillesum, 2002, p. 540)

In terms of the Diamond Approach, Almaas has acknowledged that "no path can provide a full and final description of reality, and indeed, this view is expressed in the Diamond Approach's continuing evolution as a spiritual system" (Davis et al, 2013, p. 573). While no mystery can be encompassed by one spiritual path or tradition, as all paths or traditions are part of the largeness of Etty's consciousness, and why so many can relate to her vision. As A. H. Almaas concludes: "The Diamond Approach recognizes that all experiences, perspectives, and dimensions are co-emergent and always existing, at least in potential... Because it is so radically open, this view includes all other views of individual realization, enlightenment, mystical union, and liberation" (Davis, J., Usatynski, T., & Ish-Shalom, Z., 2013, p. 574).

He has called this all inclusive perspective the “View of Totality.” While we might also call this view Integral, or Wholeness, the implications of its potential, “both in daily life and the spiritual journey are limitless” (Davis, J., Usatynski, T., & Ish-Shalom, Z, 2013, p. 574). We can see and often experience through her transmission, Etty’s consciousness as Love, driven by the flame of Truth as her essential aspects that continue to glow today. Her essence impacts us, as unconditioned Freedom independent of context. She became a chronicler not only of the distorted contours of her ‘time’ but far beyond it.

*I live my life in widening circles
that reach out across the world.
I may not complete this last one
but I give myself to it.
I circle around God, around the primordial tower.
I’ve been circling for thousands of years
and still don’t know: am I a falcon,
a storm, or a great song?*

Rainer Maria Rilke (1996, p. 45)

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