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## Intimations of a Spiritual New Age: V. Socio-Cultural Bases of a Globalizing Neo-Shamanism and its Relation to Climate Crisis: Possibilities, Inevitabilities, Barriers

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# Intimations of a Spiritual New Age: V. Socio-Cultural Bases of a Globalizing Neo-Shamanism and its Relation to Climate Crisis: Possibilities, Inevitabilities, Barriers

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Extending this series of papers on a futural spirituality, and considering the numinous as an inherent human capacity for an awe that confers a sense of all-inclusive meaning, communality, and humility, the question arises whether, in the face of a secularization of traditional world religions, globalization of a techno/capitalist economy of perpetual commodification of planet and person, and a widening sense of loss of meaning and higher purpose, some collective re-newal of the sense of the sacred might be possible—or not. While Jung, Toynbee, and Sorokin regarded such a movement as inevitable, bringing forward to the degree possible the full spectrum of the numinous in an ordinary ur-shamanism, Bourguignon, Weber, and the later Heidegger foresaw its necessary blockage by the unique complexity and hyper-rationalism of a globalizing materialist economy. The further question becomes whether any such renewal would be constrained to the more “adjustive” movements of Stoicism/Neoplatonism and much of current New Age spirituality—as mainly mirroring the hyper-individualism of Rome and modernity. Or, might it open toward the more revolutionary impact of an early Christianity, and in the present as the futural neo-shamanism variously anticipated by Jung, Reich, Toynbee, and Heidegger? Could such a neo-shamanism, especially as energized by the collective use of now widely available entheogens, re-sacralize planet and nature in time to address this looming crisis of a human generated climate change and help to inspire its containment?

**Keywords:** *climate crisis, entheogens/psychedelics, numinous, Tremendum, Mysterium, awe, shamanism, vision trance, possession trance, Bourguignon Effect, universal state, universal religion, creative minority, internal proletariat, radical salvation movements, mysticism, propheticism, Ideational, Idealist, and Sensate eras, Protestant ethic, pseudo-morphic Christianity, schizoid dilemma, Nativist neo-shamanisms, syncretism, chakra/lataif externalization, shamanic nonduality*

*The modern economic order...is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production, which today determines the lives of all individuals who are born into this mechanism... until the last ton of fossilized coal is burnt...Material goods have gained an increasing and finally inexorable power...as at no previous period in history...No one knows whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise, or...a mechanized petrification... [that] imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before attained. (Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1904/1958, p. 181–182)*

*Care for the future of mankind is the overwhelming duty of collective human action in the age of a technical civilization that has become “almighty”... in its destructive potential...Mankind has become dangerous not only to [itself] but to the whole biosphere...It is moot whether, without restoring the category of the sacred, the category most thoroughly destroyed by the scientific enlightenment, we*

*can have an ethics able to cope with the extreme powers which we possess today...only awe of the sacred with its unqualified veto...It would require a new religious mass movement.* (Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility*, 1984, pp. 23, 136, 148)

*Alienation from nature and the loss of the experience of being part of the living creation is the greatest tragedy of our materialistic era. It is the causative reason for ecological devastation and climate change...I regard psychedelics as catalysers for...our spiritual essence. Psychedelic experiences... help our consciousness to open up to this sensation of being one with nature...It is my wish that a modern Eleusis will emerge, in which seeking humans can learn to have transcendent experiences with sacred substances in a safe setting.* (Albert Hofmann, at age 101, in *LSD and the Divine Scientist*, 2013, pp. 101–102)

*The climate movement has yet to find its full moral voice.* (Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything*, 2014, p. 464)

This is the final of a series of papers developing the work of a number of seminal figures, Wilhelm Reich, the later Martin Heidegger, and Carl Jung (Hunt, 2018ab, 2019, 2020) – all writing in the crisis years before and after World War II and envisioning a futural, potentially globalizing spiritual renewal. They sought to address the sense of spreading “disenchantment” (Weber, 1922/1963) or loss of any larger sense of spiritual meaning that had overtaken a secularized materialist West, with its technologically driven capitalism and its now globalizing commodification of persons, culture, nature, and planet itself. Each of these seminal figures envisioned a kind of answering renewal in the form of an abstract neo-shamanism: Heidegger (1935/2014; 1943/1949) with his regional re-sacralizing of earth, rivers, and sky, and our responsibility for their guardianship and “sheltering;” Reich (1949/1973) with his identity of inner bodily “streamings” with the outer energy flowings of nature and cosmos; and Jung (1931/1964, 1977) coming to understand his archetypes of numinous realization as based on an originally shamanic mirroring of deep non verbal levels of Self by the expressive physiognomies of earth, air, fire, and water. Of course none of these figures envisioned their worst fears culminating in a planetary-wide, human caused climate crisis, with its carbon deadlines of 2050 only a first stage in the reorganizations of economy, technology, and social justice necessary to sustain a livable biosphere (Klein, 2014).

It would not have surprised them, however, to find a wide range of voices (Hawken, 2007;

Jonas, 1984; Robinson, 2020) suggesting that only a similarly globalized spiritual/religious movement, re-sacralizing nature and planet with its “awe of the sacred” and “unqualified veto” (Jonas, 1984), could begin to support the reduced “enoughness” needed for any long term sustainability. In other words, only the non rational source of a collectively inspired numinous might counter the non rational ambition and “will to power” behind a runaway techno- capitalism, since if rationality were to have been enough, the now near impossible goals of 2050 would have been well underway in the 1980s.

To what extent could such a neo-shamanic resacralizing of the planet be possible as the numinously inspired collective movement needed? Here one encounters the clash of voices between those like the macro-sociologists Pitirim Sorokin (1957) and Arnold Toynbee (1957), the latter also inspired by Jung (Toynbee, 1954, 1961), who see an always renewable spirituality as an intrinsic human universal, and those like Max Weber (1904/1958) and the later Heidegger (1949/2012) who question whether the unprecedented “rationalization” of the modern economic order and its technological “commodification” of person and planet would not inhibit, deflect, or dissipate any such larger awakening.

So, it is of considerable interest, especially given the increasing democratization of psychedelic substances and their promise as a legalized, cost-efficient psychotherapy (Pollan, 2018), that the discoverer of LSD, Albert Hofmann (2013, 2019)

has called attention to its marked enhancement of a sense of identity with nature and pro-environmental beliefs, which along with its numinously mediated effects on personal openness, communality, and humility, has been confirmed in a growing body of experimental studies (Carhart-Harris et al, 2017; Forstmann & Sagioglou, 2017; Jungaberle et al, 2018). Metzner (1999) and Schroll (2013) have suggested that a neo-shamanic use of psychedelics, now widely re-defined as spirituality enhancing entheogens, with their deeply felt connectedness to animate and physical nature, offer support for both the philosophy of “deep ecology” (Fox, 1995) and the necessary social activism of an ecological movement. So far much of this link between transpersonal experience, whether psychedelically mediated or not, and ecological values has been more a matter of individual realization (Davis, 2011; Hoot & Friedman, 2011), than the collective movement to be addressed herein, but the question must then arise whether this pending wider entheogen usage, socially organized in terms of an emergent neo-shamanism directly responsive to ecological crisis, might come to support the larger optimism of Jung and Toynbee.<sup>1</sup>

What would be the possibilities for such a collectively energized neo-shamanism in curtailing this globally destructive hyper-materialism through the re-sacralizing of nature and planet? Could it have an impact analogous to that otherwise very unexpected transformation of an authoritarian Rome by a deeply antithetic early gospel Christianity? It happened before.

### **Numinous Experience, Metaphor, and Society**

To address such questions—psychological, sociological, and historical—requires a consideration of the nature, potential universality, and function of numinous or ecstatic experience (Otto, 1923/1958) and its relation to the structure of society—from hunter-gatherer shamanism to the “radical salvation movements” (Weber, 1922/1963) that have sometimes, and sometimes not, led to the more complex “universal religions” of Toynbee (1954, 1957) and the sacred or “Ideational” eras of Sorokin (1957). It becomes an exercise in predictive social science.

### **Numinous Awe:**

#### **Its Transformational Effects and Relation to Nature**

A connection between numinous experience and the dynamically expressive patterns of nature would seem to be intrinsic, not created but only enhanced by psychedelics. This is best illustrated by recent research on the psychology of awe as specifically evoked by actual or pictorial scenes from nature – forests, rivers, oceans, storms, and mountains rather than the straight lines of man-made settings (Bai et al., 2017; Keltner & Haidt, 2003; Piff et al., 2015).

Such feelings of awe and wonder are also accompanied by an increase in ratings of felt communality with others, altruism, and humility. Similar effects occur in the accounts of Thoreau (see Hunt, 2003), spontaneous peak experiences in nature (Naor & Mayseless, 2020), and childhood experiences of ecological activists (Hollis-Walker, 2000).

Some understanding of an intrinsic basis for this connectedness emerges from Marghanita Laski’s (1961) descriptions of the “quasi-physical sensations” of ecstasy, as its most immediate mediation and expression. These include the imageries of expansive heights, interior depths, spacious luminosity and color, energies of expansion and bursting, and liquities of dissolving and flow. These are also the expressive and emotionally mirroring physiognomies directly available in nature (see also Hunt, 2020). Whether initiated from inside or outside, their synesthetic embodiments also become the felt meanings of meditative multi-modal chakra/lataif patterns (see Hunt, 1995a, 2011, 2020), with Eliade (1958) even suggesting that such yogic practices originated in an urban/town based internalization of shamanic attunements that had originally been external.

The broader cross cultural context for this recent research on awe has been Rudolf Otto’s (1923/1958) full spectrum phenomenology of the numinous, as the spontaneous felt core of the religious, and which can also be seen as the primary reflection of a human capacity for intrinsic creative novelty and fascination (Hunt, 1995a, 2009, 2019). Otto distinguishes between the *Tremendum*—with its sense of contact with an absolute power, energy,

and will, sometimes including an uncanny dread; the *Mysterium*—with its sensed wonder, amazement, and gratitude; and a more personal sense of dependency, “creature feeling,” and humility.

While these dimensions are felt as “wholly other,” ineffable, and absolute, with their immediate mediation through Laski’s nonverbal metaphors, Otto was also interested in their more conceptual “schematizations” as myth and religious belief. The contemplation of the latter, as verbal expression and ritual, can also re-evolve their original numinosity, while, with Weber (1922/1963), gradual changes in their larger cultural and social setting can render them no longer adequate to that primary experience. The fuller spectrum of the numinous can also become narrowed into its separate dimensions, as in mysticisms of love, schematized in terms of Christian *Agape* or Mahayana compassion; mysticisms of knowledge, understood in terms of Creation, Tao, or the Absolute of Plotinus; and most important for what follows, mysticisms of power, will, and strength, variously expressed as omnipotence, majesty, and/or a pure energy of expansion and freedom.

Jung (1973) stressed the direct healing and integrating impact of numinous experience as “the real therapy” (p. 377). This becomes especially clear in recent research showing long term reductions in anxiety, depression, obsessionality, alcoholism, and post-traumatic stress, along with feelings of positive self realization, from single session exposures to psychedelic substances, including psilocybin, LSD, Ayahuasca, MDMA, and ketamine (Barrett & Griffiths, 2017; Griffiths et al., 2006, 2011; Grob et al., 2011; Kolp et al., 2014). Most important here is that although these effects are dose dependent, their primary predictor is the occurrence or not of a peak or fully numinous experience in the session (Griffiths et al., 2006, 2011). Indeed spontaneous numinous experiences in nature can have this same effect, though less intense, in inducing awe and so reducing stress, anxiety, and depression (Anderson et al., 2018; Hood, 1977). Such peak and mystical-like experiences seem to operate by increasing a felt connectness/communality with both others and the expressive dynamics of nature, along with a more abstract sense of identity with a larger cosmos (Krippner & Luke, 2009).

In cognitive terms these transformative effects can be seen as part of developmental process of “unselfing” or decentering of the typical emotional egocentrism of everyday social life. They move the individual, in a neo-Piagetian sense, towards a capacity for “formal operations in affect” that would be the core of a specifically human spiritual intelligence (Dale, 2011; Hunt, 1995b, 2016, 2019). Numinous experience has the potential for this accelerated maturation of a social-personal intelligence, culminating in spiritual realizations that become the natural “answer” and reconciliation for suffering. As a human universal, its context and potential will be both individual and societal.

### **Numinous Experience and Social Structure: A Developing Tension**

The most complete mirroring between this full spectrum of the numinous and social structure is found between the shamanic pattern of “vision trance” (Bourguignon, 1973) and the broadly egalitarian societies of the hunter-gatherer traditions—including those small village agrarian peoples who have maintained these traditions, such as the Northern Mexico Huichol (Furst, 1972) and Raramura (Merrill, 1987).<sup>2</sup> Shamanism, considered as a cross-cultural template (Bourguignon, 1973; Eliade, 1964; Furst, 1974; Tedlock, 2005; Walsh, 2007; Winkelmann, 2010), includes for each social group one or more shamans, trained in techniques of an individual vision trance, which is also sanctioned for widespread participation by others through ritualized vision quests, spontaneous archetypal empowerment dreams, sweat lodge and/or trance inducing dance, and often the use of sacred plant based entheogens. The shamans themselves are often qualified by undergoing visionary death-rebirth ordeals of initiation, and undertake both individual healing ceremonies and group guidance. In that context they often engage trance states for the guidance that will cross-translate the societal and supernatural in terms of the complex metaphoricities of nature organized within their mythological systems (Levi-Strauss, 1966). Note that this shamanic numinous combines what in more complex societies would be the bases for the separate mysticisms of power, knowledge, and love, as in its felt embodiments of the elemental patterns

of nature, soul journeys to witness the dream-time of creation, and hands-on healing for illness and soul recovery.

There is a direct coordination between this wide sanction for group and individual participation in direct experiences of the numinous—with, as above, its intrinsic individual transformation, enhanced communality, and humility—and the social values, in these more or less single class societies, of personal authenticity, “regenerative reciprocity,” “gratitude,” and “humility” (Kimmerer, 2013). Lest this sound too simply a social utopia, it is clear from Mauss (1966) how assiduously these peoples had to work on maintaining the reciprocities of gift exchange, Potlach, and dream sharing needed to sustain what was actually a tenuous social balance.

The completeness of this mirroring of a participatory experience of the numinous and the communal social structure of shamanic societies is further attested by what could be termed the Bourguignon Effect. This is the statistical finding of Bourguignon (1973), replicated by Shaara and Strathern (1992) and Winkelman (2010), of a steady decline in this cultural sanction for wide participation in trance as correlated with increasing socio-economic complexity, class structure, and role differentiation. Its first indication is the shift in longer established agrarian peoples, with their typical multiple social classes, land ownership, polygamy, and often slavery, to what Bourguignon termed “possession trance.” Here the increased levels of social conflict are reflected in the narrowing of trance to a smaller circle of healers, channelers, and sorcerers, with a more auditory and publicly expressed trance largely centered on the sources of social tension. It is the numinous under an increasing social pressure. Once at the level of primitive kingships, with their still more rigid class structures, an elite priesthood will generally hold broader participation to a secondary “charisma” of public ceremony, ritual, and schematized belief (Trigger, 2003; Winkelman, 2021).<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, and attesting to both an inherent function of the numinous to address emotional suffering, and the inevitability of historical changes in background social conditions, these cumulative tensions gave rise in more complex

civilizations to what Weber (1922/1963) termed the “radical salvation movements” of mysticism and propheticism. These are the “virtuoso” inspired “breakouts” of the numinous led by disaffected individuals and small groups. They are initially heretical within the established social and religious order, but with the potential to become what Toynbee (1954, 1957) termed the “universal religions” of newly expanding civilizations. Such movements became the origins of Zoroastrianism, Judaic prophecy, Hellenistic neo-Platonism, Christianity, Islam, Mahayana Buddhism, and Taoist Neo-Confucianism (Weber, 1922/1963).

Extrapolating from Weber’s typology, one could suggest that the form of vision trance in the person of the shaman re-emerges in more complex, class based civilizations as “mysticism,” for Weber individually practiced and tending to originate among a disaffected aristocracy, priesthood, and/or intellectuals – stereotypically, Buddha the prince (Weber, 1922/1963). Possession trance would develop toward Weber’s “ethical prophecy”—his propheticism/asceticism—which tends to originate among a broader middle class of tradesmen, skilled workers, and artisans—Jesus the carpenter. It often organizes into ecstatic sects that can become symbolically or politically pre-revolutionary (Lanternari, 1963; Knox, 1950).

Weber goes further in distinguishing inner-worldly and other-worldly forms of both propheticism and mysticism, differentiating “world rejecting/fleeing” movements that remove themselves from mainstream society to whatever degree possible—best represented by dissident Anabaptist sects, early Quakers, and the mystical Christian and Buddhist monasticisms—from the more “this-worldly” forms of the mainstream Protestant Reformation, early gospel Christianity, and, on the side of mysticism, in much of Sufism, Gurdjieff, and New Age groups such as the Ridhwan school of Almaas (Hunt, 2003).

Weber’s radical salvation movements, and the universal religions to which they may or may not lead, constitute a kind of Bourguignon Amendment, certainly in constant tension with their more material and/or traditional social orders, yet initially inspiring their wider membership to a direct numinous renewal and at least the potential for societal change.

Meanwhile the shamanic traditions, with their deeper congruence of numinous and social order, can be seen in Weberian terms as fusing the orientations of an inner-worldly mysticism and propheticism: on the one hand with a personally centered cultivation of trance, archetypal dreaming, and vision quest, and on the other with healing practices and group oriented ethical guidance. They integrate individual and group through a pan-entheism of a spiritualized natural world and its metaphoric imagery intrinsic to the fuller phenomenology of the numinous, but outwardly absent from the urban/town origins of Weber's more differentiated movements.

**Macro-Sociologies of the Numinous  
in Complex Civilizations:  
Toynbee, Sorokin, Weber<sup>4</sup>**

Whether or not a globalized crisis of climate in a world of unprecedented socio-economic rationalization could still be answered by a collective spiritual movement re-sacralizing nature and planet requires a further consideration of the development of the numinous in complex civilizations – and its potentially unique narrowing in the modern West.

**Toynbee on Universal States, Universal Religions, and Ur-shamanism**

Toynbee (1954) saw the appearance of what he called “universal states” – empires uniting diverse ethnicities – as inevitably giving rise to socially integrating “universal religions” –initially in the “axial” forms of Greek, Judaic, Vedic, and Neo-Confucianist spiritualities (Bellah, 2011; Jaspers, 1953), and later in the still more universalized religions of Christianity, Islam, and Mahayana Buddhism. These universal religions brought forward, to the degree possible, a primary shamanic template he understood as the ordinary form of human spirituality, and as

higher in terms of the spiritual standards of the higher religions than the religions of other... societies that were the superiors of these unsophisticated peoples in technology and social organization. (Toynbee, 1954, p. 760)

For Toynbee there is a level of spiritualization, as with Bourguignon, lost in the early agrarian civilizations, yet partly recovered within the “higher religions,” as shifting socio-economies allowed—only to be lost again in the “treacherous ladder of a modern

Western idolization of material progress” (Toynbee, 1954, p. 765).

The universal religions thus entail some titration of a wider spectrum of the numinous more present in the shamanic traditions, as also implied in Weber's typology of radical salvation movements, with the individual centering of the mysticisms leaving out a broader communality, and the more collective propheticisms valuing ethical and social significance over personal experience, and both, it can be added, as urban and town centered, leaving out a primary reciprocity with the deep metaphoric mirrorings of nature.<sup>5</sup>

Toynbee will also distinguish between emergent religions that are more “adjustive” and reconciling with dominant social values, fitting best with Durkheim's (1912/1961) original model of religion as mirroring the deep economics of society, and those movements that can be more “revolutionary” and “transfigural” in their impact—as with Weber (1922/1963) on “charisma” mediated social change. Thus for Toynbee (1954) the alienated “dominant creative minorities” of Greece and Rome generated a Stoicism and neo-Platonism that, however demanding as spiritual practices,<sup>6</sup> mirrored the extreme individuality of those societies. Meanwhile the disaffected “internal proletariats” created by conquest, as in Judaic propheticism, could give rise to an early Christianity whose communality, altruism, and humility could revolutionize the social and material hierarchies of Rome.

Significantly for what follows, Toynbee (1954, 1961) considered “universal religions” to be an emergent and *sui generis* “higher species of society.” They were a new social level—in Weber's (1922/1963) similar terms “congregational”—drawing its membership and primary allegiance upward from traditional kinship and downward from the political elite—a new level of social bond reflected in “churches” and spiritual schools. They become their own more abstract family of “brothers and sisters,” partly replacing traditional kin and class loyalties with a universal communality at least in principle extendable to all humanity.

The higher religions cannot be dealt with intelligibly simply as products or parts of particular civilizations. They [are] primary

phenomena that cannot be reduced to terms of anything other than themselves. (Toynbee, 1961, pp. 97–98)

Every higher religion is carried on a network of social relations of its own . . . . They have become separate systems of specifically religious culture, in a state of tension with the systems of secular culture with which they have parted company. (Toynbee, 1961, p. 307)

Note that this “congregational” pattern is the place in complex civilizations that comes closest to recreating the primary bond of spiritual communality and reciprocity of the hunter-gatherer traditions.

How might this apply to a revolutionary early Christianity? To list its neo-shamanic features: 1) a reciprocity ethics of the Sermon on the Mount instantiated in a communal sharing of meals and resources, 2) hands-on physical and spiritual healing, 3) forgiveness and humility as an abstract form of the gifting so central to Mauss (1966) in the mitigation of class based envy, 4) a symbolic death-rebirth central to shamanic initiation reflected in Crucifixion and Resurrection, 5) an element of vision quest, for Jesus himself in the temptation in the desert, and emerging in the rapid early appearance of the visionary desert monks and monastic communities.

At the same time one sees a narrowing of this fuller spectrum of the numinous in an increasingly “adjustive” Romanization of the early Church. First, while the reciprocity of spirit in the shamanic traditions re-appears as the sacredness and equality of individual soul, it is a communality of inherent sin and shared fallenness. Agapic Love and Forgiveness is based on an equality of suffering, rather than a reciprocal more existential dignity—an inherent suffering only redeemed—or not—in an after-life. Simone Weil (1949/2002) puts this most starkly as “God [becomes] the infinite equivalent of a Roman slave-holder” (p. 293), while for Ernst Troeltsch (1931/1960) an inherently ordained Fallenness, joined to Stoic Natural Law of a lost Golden Age, left unquestioned much of Roman inequality and even slavery.<sup>7</sup> Weber (1904/1958) would trace a later version of that divine justification for social inequity in the Protestant ethic of vocational success, potentially marking God’s Grace, as both

adjustment to and even augmentation of early capitalism.

Second, as with the other urban based universal religions, and excepting only early Taoism, the Judaic-Christian tradition explicitly de-sacralized the natural order. A dialogic reciprocity with earth, sky, plants, and animals is replaced by nature as post-Eden resource, commodity, and exploitation. Fully secularized and globalized as techno-capitalism, it would first entail Weber’s “iron cage” and now, rather astonishingly, a planetary climate crisis.

For Toynbee (1954, 1956, 1961) spirituality is a universal capacity for a sense of encompassing meaning and ethical purpose in human life, and its emergence and re-emergence—however titrated and channeled—is inevitable. This becomes true then for our present secularized “universal state” of a world-wide techno-capitalism, which for the later Toynbee (1961), also citing Jung, must eventually call forth its non adjustive and more revolutionary spiritual answer—asking what

might flare up again out of the [moral] wreckage as it had once burst out of the ruins of a Hellenistic world. (Toynbee, 1954, p. 554)

Whatever that might be, it would have to re-sacralize a nature and planet similarly under direct challenge by a dominant world order.

### **Sorokin: Ideational, Sensate, and the Fate of the Modern West**

Pitirim Sorokin, in his massive four volume *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (1937–1941) developed his own typology for the cyclic alterations between three distinct cultural eras within the major civilizations, of which Toynbee’s shift from universal state to universal religion would be one. Those eras Sorokin (1937, 1941, 1957) terms Ideational are organized around a dominance of the sacred and its institutionalization, wherein values are based on a sense of eternal Being, and its predominantly introverted truths are based on intuition and numinous revelation. They value community and connectness over individualism, a relative simplicity in conditions of daily life, and a sacred art that tends toward the abstract, geometricized, and mandala-like, as also documented by Malraux (1960). At the opposite extreme are the eras Sorokin terms Sensate, with their

more extraverted values of individualism, materialism, and sensual hedonism. Truth here is relativistic and perspectival, based on the quantitative and measurable, while its art is a naturalist depiction of secular life.

In between these extremes, Sorokin places his eras of the Idealist or Classic, where, as in classical Greece, and the European Renaissance, there is a temporary integration of Ideational and Sensate—with truth as an optimal synthesis of intuition and the senses, and a naturalized art still mainly depicting the themes of myth and religion. Toynbee's universal religions here become the Ideational eras of the higher civilizations emerging out of the chaos and conflict of Sensate empire expansion. It should be no surprise that for Sorokin the modern globalizing West reflects an historically unprecedented exaggeration of the cyclic Sensate, rather than any simple linear progress, and like Toynbee, he anticipates/advocates its futural Ideational rebalancing.<sup>8</sup>

Sorokin (1937, 1957) locates these eras in all the main historical civilizations, but finds them especially exaggerated in the West—in its progressing intensification of the Sensate. Thus, while he traces their forms through the art of Egypt, India, and China, these cultures remained largely centered within their founding Ideational pattern, alternating more between eras of relative stagnation and Idealist renewal. They show nothing to compare to the extremes of the West, from Homeric to classical Greece, Hellenistic Rome to early Christian, Feudal Christianity to Reformation, and Protestant Ethic to its techno-capitalist secularization. This question of the uniqueness of the West, less central for Sorokin, became the driving concern and anxiety for Weber in his comparative sociology of religions in relation to social change. Weber (1922/1963) was well aware that a unique tilt of the West toward individualism and materialism preceded his Protestant Ethic, which in its further development by Tawney (1926/2017) acts more as accelerant than direct causation of modern capitalism.

More recently some of these earlier antecedent conditions have become more clear. Trigger (2003) distinguishes between those earliest civilizations organized on what he terms a regional basis—such as Egypt, India, and China where one major center of urbanized power dominated

far-flung rural agricultural areas, and those like Mesopotamia and Greece, organized in terms of multiple, semi-autonomous, semi-rivalrous city states. The more extensive trade necessary to sustain the latter, along with their duplications of the same multi-class structures in each city state, encouraged a greater vocational mobility, not only crossing cities but the lines of social class and kinship. By contrast the regional kingdoms of China and India tended to freeze their extended kinship patterns, the very sinews and tendons of traditional societal communality, within class and caste boundaries—holding back the beginning values of individualism fostered by the city-state pattern.

Meanwhile, Carle Zimmerman (1947/2008), a student of Sorokin—and now augmented by the recent research of Henrich (2020)—aligned Sorokin's eras with shifts in the form of the family—from the clan or extended kinship patterns typical of (non Christian) Ideational eras, to the more narrowed domestic or nuclear family, with its tendency to “atomization” and de-stabilization at the extreme of the Sensate. Both Greece and Rome had begun the restriction of kinship loyalties in favor of a primary loyalty to state and citizenship, with the Roman Republic restricting marriage between second and third cousins as part of that subordination. Their resulting form of the modern nuclear family so succumbed to multiple divorce and individual hedonism that even before the reforms of Christianity, Foucault (2017) traces the efforts of the Stoics to establish both exclusive monogamy and the moral equality of marital partners.

The great and ultimately unintended irony of Christianity as the religion of Rome was its simultaneous extension of the ban on cross cousin marriage—thus further diluting the bonds of extended kinship—along with its new congregation enforced discouragement of “temptations of the flesh”—even within marriage—in favor of the spiritual development of the individual soul and church membership as primary social bond.

These gradually extending marriage restrictions, out to the level of fourth and fifth cousins in the feudal era, were not only understood at the time as increasing the power of a new congregational social bond, but as promoting marriages and unity

across the otherwise distinct tribal groups pushed together within a post-Roman Europe (Henrich, 2020). Henrich has shown a precise correlation between regional synods extending these cross cousin prohibitions and the order of development of the new post-feudal mercantile cities of Europe—with their guilds then structured like the Church as family-like “brotherhoods” and further conferring a primarily vocational, rather than familial, social identity. Here are the beginnings of an individualism finalized in spiritual terms as Weber’s Protestant Ethic, and then secularized, along with the dissolution of that congregational bond that had largely replaced kinship, as the individualized Spirit of Capitalism.

The result would be the unique mentality of the modern Western individual in contrast to non-Western extended kinship forms of personhood, as demonstrated in a series of studies by Henrich (2017) showing striking Western differences in standard psychological measures, traditionally not controlled for cultural differences, including resistance to social conformity, analytical vs. holistic thinking, independent ethical reasoning, trust for strangers, and greater differentiation/complexity of personality dimensions. Henrich summarizes the historical uniqueness of this mentality as W.E.I.R.D. – Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic. Henrich is mostly celebratory of these values of independence and competitive individualism as directly responsible for the rational ordering of the present world economy,<sup>9</sup> although he concedes that more traditional extended kinship groups may, as they are assimilated into the new world order

face the loss of meaning they derive from being in a broad network of relational connections that stretch both back in time to their ancestors and ahead to their descendants. (Henrich, 2020, p. 486)

He fails to note, however, that the modern West had already done this to itself, while also gradually deleting the more abstract bond of collective congregational faith and communal associations that had largely replaced those extended familial bonds (Bellah et al., 1985).<sup>10</sup> The further question becomes whether the present world order can sustain the resulting planetary impact, and what would be the

conditions for a corrective numinous “break out” from this unprecedented “rationalization” of society and personhood?

### **A Western Spiritual Exceptionalism:**

#### **Personal Salvation, Self Realization, New Age**

What to make then of the division between the larger optimism of Toynbee, Sorokin, and Jung, and the pessimism of Weber’s super-rationalism and Heidegger’s universal commodification—such that “only a god can save us” (Heidegger, 1976, p. 57)—and which would make a Bourguignon effect permanent? Before exploring the possibility of a more revolutionary neo-shamanic renewal, it seems important to understand not the absence but rather an extreme narrowing of the Western numinous extending through pre and post Reformation Christianity into New Age self-realization—one mainly “adjustive” to a Western culture of exaggerated individualism increasingly opaque to collective responsibility.

#### **The Protestant Ethic of Vocation:**

##### **A Radical Narrowing of the Numinous**

In the face of Weber’s Protestant Ethic of Vocation, secularizing as modernity, it is easy to miss the numinosity, however narrowed, of the Calvinist *Tremendum*, further elaborated from Augustine (Troeltsch, 1931/1960), as the immediately felt power, majesty, and glory of an Omnipotent Deity, with an answering humility more related to subjugation than an earlier Christian Love and Forgiveness. Schematizing this overpowering aspect of the numinous: a wholly other God has predestined a small elect for salvation, and a majority for eternal damnation, with no humanly defined way of knowing who is who. Since the Will of God is “not to be measured by the standards of human reason or logic” (Troeltsch, 1931/1960, p. 585), only the fully Christian conduct of one’s earthly vocation can be a sufficient demonstration and test of one’s faith. Here the sense of paradox intrinsic to the unity of the numinous rests on this juxtaposition of a freedom of will and choice against the absolute determinism of Divine Will, resolvable only in a fully felt surrender to the possibility of Grace. With each of the faithful considered as a solitary, but worldly and now democratized monk, practicing within

daily life as “the tool of the divine Will” (Weber, 1922/1963, p. 114), it became inevitable to look past outward success and failure for whatever signs of “inner light” might exist—its own kind of inner-worldly mysticism. At some risk of potential heresy, for the Puritans of Massachusetts, surrounded by a verdant New World:

Dark warnings were detected in the whisper of the wind and the babbling of streams. Heavenly messages of high significance were thought to be written in clouds that scudded across the ever-changing New England sky. (Fischer, 1989, p. 126)

If even in the midst of their congregations these potential Elect “are and remain God’s invisible church” (Weber, 1904/1958, p. 110), the inevitable dilemma over time was becoming invisible to themselves as well—a narrowing of an already narrowed numinosity of power and will into “pure faith.” A major consequence for Weber of this juxtaposition of sanctified worldly vocation and unknowable salvation was a driven autonomy and

a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual...forced to follow his path alone to meet a destiny which had been decreed from eternity. (Weber, 1904/1958, p. 104)

Weber finds here the historical source of a finally secularized, and now globalized, unprecedented exaggeration of personal autonomy and separateness that came to define Western character. More psychologically understood this becomes the “schizoid position” that the psychoanalysts Fairbairn (1954) and Winnicott (1960) came to see, along with its compensatory narcissism (Kohut, 1984), as the underlying dilemma at the core of Western psychotherapy.

Another consequence of the Protestant Reformation for Weber was to at least partly replace an earlier communality and equality of suffering souls, with its warrant for Christian Love and Charity, with a new level of soul inequality—also soon to secularize. Love of neighbor was no longer primary, and economic poverty, actually intensified in the new industrial revolution, could be taken as its own portent of a Grace withdrawn—and so no longer warranting its traditional protection by the church.

In Weber’s rather brutal summary, in the Puritan Ethic

the duty to one’s neighbour is satisfied by fulfilling God’s commandments to increase His glory. The neighbour thereby receives all that is due him and anything further is God’s affair. Humanity in relation to one’s neighbour has, so to speak, died out. (Weber, 1904/1958, p. 226)

Although an equality of suffering, charity, and forgiveness continued in Catholic doctrine and the break-away Baptist sects (Troeltsch, 1931/1960), for Tawney (1926/1998) mainstream Christian society had begun its permanent separation of economic life from a spirituality considered as entirely a matter of one’s *personal* salvation. This development had already been well underway, not so much as a suppression of the numinous per se (Laughlin, 1992), but as the attenuation and narrowing of its more complete social communality, altruism, and humility.

### **Western Spiritualities of Power, Will, and Freedom: The Pseudo-morphic Christianities**

Oswald Spengler, whose *Decline of the West* (1922/2018) set out a framework for Sorokin’s and Toynbee’s more empirical efforts, offered his own version of Sorokin’s Idealist transformation of Medieval and Reformation Christianity. Struck by the metaphor of pseudo-morphism from mineralogy, where the inner structure of a crystal can be hidden within a different outer form, he suggested that beginning from approximately 1100 C.E. with heretical movements such as the Albigensians, Waldensians, and Brethren of the Free Spirit, there emerged a new pseudo-morphic Christianity. Its inner essence Spengler understands as Faustian—based on a spirituality of power, will, and freedom, and best symbolized by the soaring majesty of the new cathedrals. This becomes the latent beginning of a uniquely Western “religion of freedom” and Free Will,<sup>11</sup> with dissident individuals and small groups interpreting their ecstasies as the release of a Godhead within into a higher antinomian freedom and sacred empowerment. For Spengler it will be Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, as an ostensibly secular religion of “will to power” for

a futural Homo Deus overman—“beyond good and evil”—that finally unmask this Faustian/Promethean core. Nietzsche’s spirituality of a “life force,” while indeed “revolutionary” as an individual path toward “secular ecstasy,” is also primarily “adjustive” for both Spengler and the later Heidegger (1949/2012) to a techno-capitalist will to commodification of planet and humanity.

The initial formulation of this new spirituality can be traced to Joachim of Flore (1145–1202), who distinguished three spiritual eras of a thousand years—the *Old Testament* age of the Father, the *New Testament* age of salvation through the Son, and a final, pre-apocalyptic age of the Spirit beginning in 1000 C.E. Where the age of the Son was based on faith and communal love, the age of the Spirit would see the activation of an inner Divine Spark within each individual—manifesting as an ecstasy of joy and freedom in the incarnation of the God within. Perhaps the best examples of this new lineage were the loose groupings of the Brethren of the Free Spirit, who criss-crossed Europe between 1100 and 1400 in small communities of Holy Beggars—the Beghards and their female companions the Beguins (Cohn, 1961; Knox, 1950; Troeltsch, 1931/1960). They cultivated an “Adamic Ecstasy”—schematized as a return to Eden before the Fall—with an experience of joy and higher innocence which made sin impossible—since all forms of love had now been sanctioned and purified. Their successors in Cromwell’s revolutionary England, the Ranters, Levellers, and Seekers, felt that they had surpassed a theistic God in their unitive mystical states, and that if Christ had lived longer he would have attained to their level (Cohn, 1961).<sup>12</sup>

This line of self deification, also part of Jung’s early Red Book visions (Jung, 2009; Hunt, 2020), continued as an heretical but persistent background into the Reformation, soon to surface again as personal spirituality and an increasingly secular social order continued to separate. Its Quietist side, more explicitly mystical, began with the 16<sup>th</sup> century Sebastian Franck and carried forward into the similar “inner light” of the Anabaptists, Quakers, and German Pietists, for whom direct numinous experiences of light and joy became the direct signs of Grace and a freeing certainty in ones inner unity with God (Troeltsch, 1931/1960).

Meanwhile, a more prophetic line unfolded in the collective ecstasies of the revivalist camp meetings and Great Awakening of Edwards, Whitfield, and John Wesley. Here impassioned hell-fire sermons induced bodily death-rebirth “paroxysms,” surprisingly reminiscent of Grof’s (1980) “perinatal matrices” of high dosage psychedelics, and opening into a “born again” Salvation.

[They] cried out loud, with the utmost vehemence, even as in the agonies of death....accompanied with sharp bodily pain. These pangs of the new birth.... (Knox, 1950, pp. 520, 522)

These cataplectic states of being “slain in the spirit” could be followed by a unitive bliss understood as a final certainty of a salvation primarily centered on the self.

It should not be surprising then that Weber (1904/1958) traced a straight line of influence from these Protestant spiritualities through Emerson to William James, as also in their shared interest in the “new” mysticisms of the East, and James’ own concentration on religious experience as something primarily “individual”—a *personal* enlightenment to replace a *personal* salvation. James’ *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) and Bucke’s closely related *Cosmic Consciousness* (1901/1961) would anticipate a line of New Age and transpersonal thinking based on a psychologically understood natural capacity for a secular ecstasy/numinosity, largely stripped of its traditional metaphysical schematizations, but continuing/intensifying a spirituality of self realization and “higher states of consciousness.” This was further reflected in Jung’s higher Self and Maslow’s (1972) new version of an earlier Elect Brethren in his “higher specimens” of humanity open to peak experience and transpersonal realization—later still further developed in Almaas (1988) and Wilber (1995). Its capacity for response to collective crisis, and access to the breadth of an original shamanic template, has become less clear.

### **The This-Worldly Mysticisms of Self Realization: Adjustive Spiritualities of a Dominant Minority**

In social-historical terms, and at least in part, one can understand the self realization spiritualities of Jung, Maslow, Almaas, and much of transpersonal

psychology, as, in Toynbee's (1939, 1956) terms, an adjustive and re-balancing response of a dominant minority—Troeltsch's (1931/1960) "secret religion of the educated classes"—creating a certainly needed path of spiritual renewal for a radically secularized material society centered, to an historically unprecedented degree, on values of individuality and personal autonomy. With Weber, this has also become a society of unprecedented loneliness, and it is not surprising to find its compensatory psychotherapy centered on insecurities in self-esteem, fragility in sense of self, and defensive narcissism. Just as early capitalism needed a Weberian inner-worldly ascetic of sacralized vocation to find larger meaning for its individualized work ethic, so a still more desacralized contemporary society, with its hyper-individualism, social fragmentation, and decline in both congregational and secular community (Bellah et al., 1985), may not be fully liveable to those most sensitive to its stresses without these spiritualities of a heightened sense of Being, self realization, and embodied personal presence.

It is striking that Gurdjieff, whose Sufi based school was further developed in Almaas' integration of Eastern meditative practices, Reichian bio-energetics, and contemporary psychoanalysis, offers a portrayal of the Western spiritual seeker that anticipates by many decades the later mainstream psychotherapeutic observations of Fairbairn (1954), Guntrip (1968), and Winnicott (1960, 1971) on characteristic schizoid and narcissistic dilemmas in sense of self—portraying feelings of inner emptiness, lack of vital embodiment, and overall sense of unreality and futility (Gurdjieff, 1950; Ouspensky, 1949). Gurdjieff's answer to this latent vulnerability in sense of self was the be-here-now practice of "self-remembering," seeking to develop the essential strength and will of an alive ongoing experience of personal presence as necessary before any approach to the "objective consciousness" of the nondual spiritualities of the East. Almaas (1988, 1996) has similarly stressed that without initial practices to develop "personal essence" and "essential identity as Being," concepts close to Maslow's (1962) higher levels of self actualization, nondual experiences of an all-one can be destabilizing. Similarly there has been the puzzlement of Eastern meditation

teachers over their Western students' issues of self esteem that are unfamiliar to their more traditional societies, and resulting confusions of actual self-pathology with forms of enlightenment—deficient emptiness with the Buddhist no-self and narcissistic grandiosity with Atman (Engler, 1984). While Eastern practices originated within the traditionally more individualized elites of their feudal societies, and so appear to be ideally suited to *individual* Western spiritual seekers, it is easier to miss that their teachers generally grew up within extended kinship families and the "congregational" memberships that traditionally grounded the sense of self. Both of these are lost in a West of atomized nuclear families, with their narrowed and "hothouse" emotionalities, and early attachment issues fostered by a culturally mandated and too early "teaching" of autonomy and independence (Erikson, 1962; Junger, 2016).

In this regard Almaas' (2004) Ridhwan school of transpersonal development, the one with which the author has greatest familiarity (Hunt, 2003), is instructive both in its unique strengths and potential limitations—the latter pointing to this same cultural narrowness in New Age spiritualities of transpersonal self realization. First, Almaas (1986, 1988, 2004) has developed what is probably the most differentiated map of numinous dimensions and levels, and so in principle incorporating the full spectrum of what separately developed would be the mysticisms of knowledge, love, and power/will. In addition, Almaas (1988, 1996) has gone the furthest in developing, indeed out of necessity, Maslow's (1971) and Wilber's (1984) concepts of spiritual "metapathologies" (James' "theopathies"), as conflict patterns typical of neuroticism and psychoticism but in a context specific to spiritual development rather than traditional clinical diagnosis. Here Almaas makes detailed use of the contemporary psycho-analytic observations of Fairbairn, Guntrip, Winnicott, and Kohut to locate sources of blockage, distortion, and disruptive after-effects specific to each dimension and stage of essential or numinous experience.

This uniquely valuable empirical framework is separate from the aspect of a more cultural concern which Almaas terms the Logos of his system—what for Otto (1923/1958) would be its schematized metaphysic—and most developed

in Almaas' *Runaway Realization* (2014) and *The Alchemy of Freedom* (2017). While implicit in all essential states, much as also for love and wonder, freedom is here understood as the final fruition of an individual enlightenment or awakening into the nondual dimensions—a freedom understood as a joyful surrender into the energized aliveness of a continuous nondual unfoldment—of which admittedly few will be fully capable. This freedom is based on a primary “dynamism” and “energy” that releases an inner “red sulfur” empowering an “endless realization” (Almaas, 2017, pp. 54–55). Its outward expression will be the deep surrender of a “divine indifference,” “simplicity,” and “peace” (Almaas, 2017, pp. 70, 185).

This is primarily a language of the numinous narrowed to Otto's *Tremendum*—the paradoxical qualities of essential will as allowance/surrender and power as stillness/peace—via a quality primarily schematized as the “energy” of a spiritual absolute. While after much discipline and practice it would indeed release the individual from a very Western egoism and narcissism, its schematization as freedom very much remains within the Logos of that same Western culture—risking a sort of sociological metapathology of a “higher schizoid” that becomes primarily adjustive to the hyper-individualized cultural mentality that, on a now planetary level, got us here. It is a spirituality more adjustive to the dilemmas of the globalizing West, than the more revolutionary and collective re-sacralization now needed—a curative potential more in care, responsibility, and communality than “freedom.”<sup>13</sup>

One way of summarizing this larger dilemma is to say that Joachim of Flore's thousand year “Age of the Spirit”—with its mandate for realizing the godhead incarnate in each individual soul—would have been “up” in 2000 C.E. It might be said to have reached its most direct culmination in Wilber's (1995) fixed structure of a universal enlightenment—subtle, causal, nondual—and one only and rarely attained by the individual in deepest meditation. On the basis of these ages of Father, Son, and Spirit, also so fascinating to Jung (1977; Hunt, 2020), it would be time for a new understanding of human spirituality—whether that be termed a “participatory turn” with Ferrer (Ferrer, 2002; Hartelius & Ferrer,

2013) or the open numinosity of Heidegger's being-in-the-world (1935/2014; Hunt, 2019). Such a spirituality—existential, participatory, and indeed neo-shamanic—might seek its expression, in terms of historical precedent, in response to an historically unprecedented and global crisis in human purpose and planetary integrity.

So it seems especially striking that figures as diverse as Jung, Reich, Heidegger, and Toynbee foresaw this kind of neo-shamanic re-sacralizing of body, nature, and planet. What would be its collective source of energy and inspiration such that a neo-shamanic spirituality might re-organize a Faustian world-order?

### **Neo-Shamanism, Entheogens, and Globalization**

How might such a neo-shamanism look as the initial framework of a futural spiritual movement addressing a crisis of climate change and the runaway socio-economic structure both creating and accelerating it? Such a movement—with the full spectrum numinosity of its shamanic template—would have to replace a view of the material world as “fallen,” and so “commodified” in the axial and world religions, with its re-sacralization. Just as its original shamanic template was as yet undifferentiated between an inner-worldly mysticism and inner-worldly ethical prophecy, combining individual vision trance and social guidance, so a re-newed neo-shamanism would combine the experience of a numinously expressive nature with the values of an ecological and social activism. Weber (1918/1946, 1922/1963) had already stressed the fluid line between his two this-worldly types. Where the inner-worldly ascetic, whether Calvinist or Confucian, sought to be the “tool” or “instrument” of the sacred within daily social conduct, the contemplative mystic longed to be its “vessel,” attuned to its ever unfolding signs of grace. The neo-shamanism of our seminal figures had aspects of both this “participatory” societal engagement and a felt numinous connectedness with nature and planet.

#### **The Role of Entheogens**

Why would such a movement be, and even have to be, empowered by psychedelics—and

re-directed as its entheogenesis? Where else would come the numinous intensity required?

- 1) The widespread “populist” use of psychedelics, combined with their increasing legitimization as medicalized psychotherapy (Pollan, 2018), means that a larger array of people will have been exposed to a full spectrum of high intensity numinous states than was possible in both traditional religions and individualized New Age spiritualities. This at least partly obviates a now maximally intensified Bourguignon Effect, since recent decades will have begun a more gradual version of Timothy Leary’s (1968) fantasy of putting LSD in the water supply of all the major cities of the world. Is there then a tipping point, a point of societal ignition?
- 2) As cited above, multiple research studies of psychedelics have found an enhanced sensitivity to both physical and animate nature, and increases in environmental and ecological values. This effect is also intrinsic to the healing and integrating effects of all numinous experience as invoking the quasi-physical metaphors of traditional *lataif*/chakra patterns most immediately available through the physiognomically mirroring patterns of the natural order. Tacit in much spiritual experience, this is especially amplified in higher dosage psychedelics—rendering nature and planet holy.
- 3) Psychedelic experiences have long been shown to be guided by a set and setting that is both individual and cultural (Pollan, 2018; Winkelman, 2021). The larger set and setting of modernity includes an increasing awareness of climate crisis, growing social inequity, and their techno-capitalist intertwining. The radical openings of psychedelic experience will increasingly have no choice but to be shaped by this emerging planetary dilemma.
- 4) In terms more independent of set and setting, high dosage psychedelics also act as a kind of truth serum—reflecting the intrinsic revelatory, integrating, and healing function of the numinous. The *truth* is that there is indeed this human caused climate crisis and resultant habitat

destruction, and that humanity both shares an organismic continuity with all other species, and possesses a unique capacity for self knowledge that confers, in addition to our relative autonomy and freedom, the responsibility for a larger care and shepherding for what we also depend upon.

- 5) Finally, there is already precedent, and to some degree a guiding template, for this re-newed neo-shamanism in the North and South American, both indigenous and Westernized, sacred plant religions—along with their creative syncretisms with Christianity. A globalized version of these entheogen neo-shamanisms—including their future interactions with the “congregational” world religions—whether possible, inevitable, or neither—becomes entirely conceivable.

#### **Nativist Neo-Shamanisms: Precursors and Precedent**

Toynbee (1939, 1956), already anticipating a revolutionary spirituality to compensate Western materialism, searched in vain for a creative “internal proletariat” that could play a role analogous the transformation of Rome by early Christianity, and asked:

How is this apparent spiritual barrenness of our Western internal proletariat to be interpreted? (Toynbee, 1939, p. 188)

On the other hand, Toynbee was also aware of a smaller external proletariat, not yet internal but perhaps in hindsight with some of the stealth of an early Christianity, namely the indigenous neo-shamanisms of the Peyote religion, Ghost Dance, and one can now add the more recent South American Ayahuasca churches. He was especially struck by the syncretic fusion of these movements with a Christian universalism of love and reconciliation, while also in their pan-tribalism meeting considerable hostility from more traditional shamans. In contrast to earlier Indian prophetic movements which were understandably inspired by more apocalyptic visions of White destruction, Toynbee found in these movements

the distinctive characteristics of the “higher religions” that have been discovered by

those prophets...who have taken the path of gentleness. (Toynbee, 1939, p. 329)

The Peyote movement, fully emerging by the 1880s, began when Northern peoples such as the Kiowa, Comanche, and Delaware adopted aspects of an original Northern Mexico Peyote shamanism of the Huichol and Raramura, and still later with its then Christianized elements culminating in more contemporary legalized versions of the Native American Church (La Barre, 1969). Meanwhile, the Ghost Dance, largely developed by the son of a traditional shaman named Wovoka (Jim Wilson), was a syncretic integration of the traditional trance-inducing Sun Dance and Wesley style revivalism, culminating in group shared visions of heavenly after-life encounters with deceased relatives and the disappeared animals. Although the version spread to the Lakotas became part of the horrific Wounded Knee massacre of 1890, Wovoka's actual teaching promoted a peaceful reconciliation with White society (Warren, 2017). Later, and well into the 1900s, Ghost Dance remnants were integrated into the Peyote movement (La Barre, 1969). Most recently, the South American urban based Ayahuasca churches, Santo Daime, Uniao do Vegetal, and others, use an Ayahuasca tea in a mix of neo-shamanic music and ritual within a ceremonial Christianity, and unlike the Peyote movement are open to the non-indigenous, with centers expanding into Europe and North America (McKenna, 2004).

It becomes clear that not only can collective spiritual movements be organized around entheogens, but they can be syncretically linked with the world religions—leaving the link to climate crisis as the coming emergent. Meanwhile, that these movements were already *neo-shamanic*—that is, post tribal—takes at least some of the sting out of the also legitimate concerns with “cultural appropriation,” as in an “Ayahuasca tourism” where Westerners seeking a narrower self-realization do co-opt a traditional village shamanism (Fotiou, 2016; Winkelman, 2005). A more general syncretism is, however, intrinsic to the history of world religion (Toynbee, 1956, 1957), and could be defined as a *mutual* appropriation between two traditions—each modifying the other in an emergent creativity that enables a wider and

more powerful social diffusion. Examples would be the fusion of Mahayana Buddhism and the Bon shamanism of Tibet, producing Vajrayana Tantrism (Guenther, 1976), and early gospel Christianity crossing with Stoicism and Neo-Platonism in the Natural Law and Trinitarian doctrines of the Roman Church (Troeltsch, 1931/1960).

As above, while Christian love and forgiveness transformed Roman values of authoritarian individualism, a counter-movement of Romanization—of such righteous distress to Simone Weil (1949/2002)—entailed the Church acceptance of Roman class structure and slavery. One could speculate that in a futural entheogen infused neo-shamanism, the mediating role of Stoicism, especially, would be played by the Western psychotherapeutic tradition itself, along with the naturalizing influence of the emerging neuroscience of psychedelic and meditative states (Barrett & Griffiths, 2017), along with understandings of the numinous as a natural spiritual intelligence (Dale, 2011; Hunt, 1995b, 2016). The main equivalent of Weil on a destructive Romanization would then be a neuro-reductionism of the numinous in terms exclusively of a brain chemistry to be harnessed with new technologies of manipulation and commodification (Harari, 2015), rather than following the primacy of its phenomenology of an intrinsic openness, communality, and humility that would far better deconstruct the materialist values threatening from the other direction.

Since any such entheogen based spiritual movement, while intrinsically re-sacralizing the natural world, would also lack the specificity of organization for the physiognomies of nature offered in the detailed mythological grids of indigenous peoples (Levi-Strauss, 1966), the syncretic integration with traditional congregational religions would become all the more important. Here, to the precedent of the Peyote and Ghost Dance movements, should be added the unfulfilled promise of the Leary inspired Good Friday experiment, where seminary students given psilocybin underwent ecstatic Communion experiences (Pahnke & Richards, 1966; Doblin, 1991). More indirectly, but implicative of this same potential bridge, the recent Encyclical of Pope Francis, *On Care for*

*Our Common Good* (2015), endorses indigenous valuing of nature over a Christian heritage as “her lord and master” (p. 3). Rejecting its culmination in a Western utilitarian and planetary commodification, a more authentic Christianity “inspires us to love and accept the wind, the sun, and the clouds” as a “universal fraternity” (p. 148). The experience of awe in nature, for Francis, shows *both* “God in all things” and “all things are God” (p. 151).

### **Entheogens, Directionality, and the Nondual**

There have been two paradigms for psychedelic research. The first and most developed is entirely within a Western tradition of self-realization and individual healing. Much of its early development is owed to the work of Stanislav Grof (1980) on LSD, based on individual sessions, with guide/therapist, eye shades, and classical music through earphones—all to access a maximum “inner depth.” Grof distinguished initial stages centered around Freudian psychodynamics and then Jungian archetypes of an expanded sense of Self, further passing into his “perinatal” stages of death-rebirth crisis, where a surrender and dissolution of ego/body-image boundaries could open into the nondual dimensions of an all-one, as also described by mystical and meditative traditions.

The second paradigm, neo-shamanic and modeled more on encompassing surround than individual depth, and most visible in contemporary Ayahuasca research (Bresnick & Levin, 2006; Shanon, 2002), is based on a group administration, echoing sweatlodge and Peyote communality, and so integrating individual experience and group sharing. Used in outdoor settings it has the potential to further intensify the intrinsic attunement of these substances to nature and environmental values. It had its modern origins in the explicitly neo-shamanic group sessions of Salvador Roquet (Yenson, 1988), as initially influenced by the Mazatec shaman Maria Sabina (Krippner, 2017). He used circles of from ten to twenty participants, deliberately varying membership in terms of gender, age, and social class origins. The positive self-organizing effects of such group administration had already been foreshadowed in an early experimental study comparing single and group LSD sessions by the sociologist Philip Slater, with Morimoto and

Hyde (1957). They found an equivalent intensity between the two conditions, but with significantly less anxiety, confusion, and disorganizing body-image symptoms in the group setting, along with greater positive affect. Pollan (2021) has recently described similar differences between the more individual, medicalized, psychedelic research and group sessions with mescaline that increase an immediate connectedness with others and the natural surround.<sup>14</sup>

Both in terms of these differing traditions of entheogen research, and in the larger contrast between individual meditative traditions and the multiple neo-shamanisms, there emerge two understandings of a nondual consciousness. In the Eastern Vedanta and Buddhist meditative practices, and the Rishwan school of Almaas, the nondual all-one is conceived as an abstract, ultimate, and rarely fully realized goal. As above, its difficulty for hyper-individualized Western students, augmented by widespread trauma in early childhood relatedness, can render a nondual realization conceived as an ultimate freedom, and indeed in contrast to its theoretical understanding as the primordial condition of consciousness itself (Hunt, 2019), a strangely distant and easily fetishized goal.

By contrast, the shamanic traditions might be considered as starting from a more idiographic and multiple version of the nondual. Hallowell (1960) and Bird-David (1999) describe how in the languages of indigenous peoples major features of nature—mountains, trees, rivers, sky—commonly share the same grammatical forms as persons—making them “nonhuman persons” of spirit—and distinct from the different endings for physical things of a more utilitarian use. Their children thus grow up into an already established communal, extended kinship dialogue with nature that can then be specified experientially in shamanic training, dreams, and vision quest, and formalized in the Indian Medicine Wheel, Levi-Strauss’ (1966) myth based nature grids, and their carry-forward in systems like the Chinese I-Ching (see Hunt, 2011, 2020). It is the roots of this capacity, rediscovered by Westerners such as Thoreau (1854/1982), that are amplified in entheogen based experiences in nature, whose physiognomically expressive and externalized lataif/chakra patterns

are synesthetically embodied as the primary quasi-physical metaphoric vehicles of the numinous.

Loy (2019) distinguishes between a nondual approached from a language of the “within,” as in the Eastern meditative traditions that seek an ultimate dissolution of self into an Emptiness/Absolute, and a nondual manifesting initially from “without,” as in theistic revelation, and one could include in the present context the multiply expressive nature embodiments of a neo-shamanism. This distinction is necessarily relative (Loy, 2019). The realization of “suchness” in Soto Zen, in the immediate becoming one with the “pure sensation” of “temple bell ringing”—as a unique particularity in and of all time and being—can be seen as a more abstract version of the more specified “animistic moments” of vision quest, but without its mythically anchored associations or the fixed physiognomies of *I-Ching* trigrams (Hunt, 2020). The similarity to Heidegger (1950/1971), on the immediate beingness/presence of each “thing” as assembling the world around it, shows not only this influence of Chinese Taoism and Zen Buddhism on his thought (May, 1996), but his own version of an expressive neo-shamanism of land, path, and river (Hunt, 2019). Here the implicit inner “ladder” of Wilber and much Eastern meditation is replaced by a vital and multiply expressive “surround” that awakens from “without.”<sup>15</sup>

### **Some Societal Implications**

How might such an entheogen inspired neo-shamanic and ecological movement, so variously anticipated in Jung, Toynbee, Reich, the later Heidegger, and indeed Albert Hofmann, actually begin as such? Both Leary and Grof had envisioned psychedelic centers spreading to cities around the world, not in itself so unreasonable given the similar rapid growth of spirit mediumship in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century (Hunt, 2003). Clients were to gather in small groups on Friday evening for preparation and safety evaluations, receive the substance in guided sessions all day Saturday, and share and begin to integrate their experiences on Sunday. Something like this appears very close to realization as medicalized research on psychedelics moves toward a wider legalization (Pollan, 2018). Already more informal small group Ayahuasca tea circles have spread through North America and Europe using this same format.

The difference for a futural entheogen based Church of Gaia would be in this very collective set and setting, so that such centers/circles would also be positioned on the peripheries of urban centers so as to enable group exposure to parks, trails, hills, and rivers. On the model of Roquet, one might imagine small groups of twelve or more, deliberately mixed in terms of gender, age, and social origin, meeting perhaps over a year and taking sacred substances twice in that time—in order to allow time for individual and shared integration (Bieberman, 1968)—while maintaining and enhancing contact in the interim through group dream sharing methods developed on the model of traditional hunter-gatherer practices (Long & Manley, 2019). Then perhaps at the end of that year the original groups would dissolve, with one or two members becoming the nucleus for the next groups of twelve, and so on. These proliferating circles would be very much on the model of Hutterite sects (McKenna, 2004) and Wesley prayer groups after his large scale revivals (Knox, 1950). Here also would be the immense value of Almaas’ (1988, 1996) precise mappings of the metapathologies of blocking and distortion stirred up by these intense numinous experiences, to help with guidance and stabilization within the groups.

These Gaia “Save the Planet” congregations, in broader contacts with each other, would develop their own communalities, rituals, and specific nature symbolisms, along with regional syncretisms with similarly responding aspects of the world religions—as already seen in Peyote, Ghost Dance, and Ayahuasca church movements, as well as forecast in the neo-shamanic versions of Jesus in Nietzsche (1888/1954) and Reich (1953). The result would be a fluid interchange between the inner-worldly mystical – as a re-sacralized animate nature—and a this-worldly prophetic ecological activism—as a globalizing mass movement intent on putting full stop to the techno-economic decimation of planet. Thus inspired and embodied, these groups would organize and come together in forms of mass civil disobediences, yet avoiding the physical violence negated by the communality and sacred humility of the full spectrum of the numinous. This would be a non-rational sacred energization of an utterly

rational and deeply ethical ecological movement, to finally compensate for a highly rationalized economic and political system, itself driven by a non-rational greed and envy.<sup>16</sup>

What might prevent the Romanization and co-option of such a movement? And why would it not undergo its own secularization back into that same pervasive culture of materialism and personal gain? Here it would be the very intensity of entheogen experience, along with its democratization and repeatability, that would re-create some of the supportive social setting found among shamanic peoples. Yaden et al (2017), in comparing external judge ratings of samples of spontaneous mystical/ecstatic states with accounts from psychedelic experiences, found the latter to be higher in intensity, reduction of death anxiety, spiritual meaning, and resulting sense of moral purpose. It would be this combination of directly felt and renewable numinous impact, its truth-serum quality, and the very set and setting of climate crisis that might shield an entheogen Gaia Religion from its modern Romanization. Indeed one of the strengths of shamanic vision trance, further aided by an oral culture without any fixed written dogma, was that shamans could return to their original “dream times” of creation and re-envision changes in its schematizing mythologies to better reflect and symbolically address current social conflicts (Guss, 1980). It is as if a later Old Testament prophet might re-dream a new version of Eden, Fall, or Flood, one with new insights more authentically resonant with his/her times. Entheogen sustained Churches of Gaia would have some of this same capacity for continuous creative renewal—inherent in the very nature and function of widely shared and renewable numinous experience.

### Conclusions

It may be of help in following this admittedly highly speculative analysis to clarify the series of premises on which it rests.

- 1) There is an intrinsic and universal human capacity for numinous experience, with its core in the phenomenology of awe, and its function of an encompassing sense of meaning which balances, heals, and integrates.
- 2) This capacity—as both individual and collective—necessarily interacts with the socio-economic structure of human societies as its most abstract set and setting—and this in some mixture of mirroring that structure (Durkheim) and in its charismatically driven social change (Weber).
- 3) The full spectrum of this capacity for the numinous—with its personal spiritual transformation, communality, altruism, humility, and its primary metaphoricity in the dynamic forms of nature—has been most fully reflected in the wide participation “vision trance” within shamanic tradition societies, and this phenomenology is most fully reflected in their egalitarian and reciprocity based social structure.
- 4) There is strong evidence (Bourguignon, 1973; Winkelmann, 2010) that as the complexity of social organization increases across societies, this universal participation in trance declines, and the full spectrum of the numinous narrows in response to social pressures aggravated by these widening class differences and a resultant non-reciprocal competition and envy (Hunt, 2020).
- 5) In more complex historical civilizations, increasing social pressures can accumulate to precipitate initially small group “radical salvation movements”—Weber’s mysticisms and propheticisms—which have also had the potential to develop into the axial and world religions. There follow contrastive periods of secularization and renewal, as sacred/Ideational eras (Sorokin) struggle against the secular and Sensate bases of complex socio-economic orders.
- 6) The question then arises whether the present world order, unprecedented in its secular hyper-individualism, materialist values, and a finally endangering commodification of climate, nature, and society, would (Jung, Toynbee, Sorokin) or would not (Bourguignon, Weber, Heidegger) be open to its own collective spiritual renewal. And would any such emergent spirituality remain primarily “adjustive”—as with Stoicism for Rome and much of New Age spirituality today—or instead mediate the “revolutionary” social change needed.

- 7) Beginning from the crisis years before and after World War II, figures as diverse as Jung, Reich, Heidegger, and Toynbee saw the potentiality for a kind of neo-shamanism offering just such a re-sacralization of personhood, society, and natural world in the face of this now globalized “universal state” based on an unending techno-economic commodification. More recently, these intuitions have been reinforced by widespread awareness of a human caused climate crisis threatening planet and civilization, with an accompanying ecological consciousness and political activism. More or less simultaneously there has developed the growing acceptance and legitimacy of both the therapeutic and spiritual value of psychedelics/entheogens, with their intrinsic links to a sacralization of nature and enhanced environmental values.
- 8) Together these movements form a valuative background entirely congruent with the more abstract neo-shamanic spiritualities of our key seminal figures. With these converging tendrils already present, it becomes at least conceivable that an entheogen inspired, collective neo-shamanism might re-sacralize planet and nature sufficiently to allow the re-newed Ideational era needed for humanity to better understand its new and rather unprepared Anthropocene—less in terms of the Individualism, Rights, and Freedom that got us here than the Responsibility, Humility, and Care now required. The question remains whether any such movement would be in time to ameliorate a coming climate crisis and its grim consequences for society and nature.

Returning to Simone Weil (1947/2002) and her view of “affliction” as, along with nature itself, the major spontaneous setting that calls forth the numinous, the alternative would be that these same accruing social forces end instead as the sadly “adjustive” spiritual consolation left “post Flood” to a shattered humanity after a fully completed climate disaster—sacralizing whatever is left. One must hope for better than that.

## Notes

1. Taylor’s *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future* (2010) makes clear that most environmentalists and ecological activists, from Naess, Lovelock, and Macey, have shared what he terms a “Gaian religion” of nature as intrinsically sacred (p. 38), primarily in the sense of an inspired “civic religion” (p. 196) or deeply felt “philosophy” (p. 221) implicit now in much popular awareness and explicit in these small dedicated groups. By contrast the focus herein is on the potentiality for a collective or mass movement, numinously energized, in the sense of early Christianity, or more recently the nativist Ghost Dance, as understood in terms of the sociology and history of “radical salvation movements” and their charismatic potential for rapid societal transformation.
2. Much controversy has been occasioned by this view of a cross cultural shamanic template as the originary matrix for human spirituality, as an ancestry inferable from the study of present day hunter-gatherer traditions (Boekhaven, 2011; Znamenski, 2007). Certainly the early generalizations of Eliade (1964), Jung (1977), and the Jung influenced scholars of comparative religion drawn to Eranos (Hakl, 2013), soon collided with a cultural anthropology intent on the final uniqueness of each culture. Yet as further developed (Bourguignon, 1973; Furst, 1974; Winkelmann, 2010), there seems no denying a world-wide pattern of participatory vision trance, dream and nature centered, and with characteristic healing practices, among hunter-gatherers and inferable from paleolithic burials—a complex then variously manifested and differentiated in more complex social structures.
3. The archeologist Bruce Trigger (2003), in his comparative analysis of early civilization kingdoms (Egypt, Mesopotamia, China, India, Mexico) was so struck by the extreme disparity between elite and commoner in their separate living conditions and grave artifacts, in these first rigidly class stratified societies, that he suggested that such an exaggerated class

separation reflected a shift from an earlier communality to a more primate-like pattern of behavior—“a biologically based tendency toward individual competitiveness, the overt expression of which had been held in check... among hunter-gatherers” (Trigger, 2003, p. 678). One could add, however, that this would be less a phylogenetic regression than a kind of cultural displacement, since it is also a shift away from the species defining structure of language itself, with its intrinsic syntactic role reversibilities and decenterings (Hunt, 2016). If the all-one connectedness of the numinous is pre-figured in language itself, it seems clear that the institutionalized reciprocities of hunter-gatherer social structure would be its most direct collective translation. If strongly class based societies reflect a displacement of a core human communality and incipient equalization into a more primate-like pattern of intensified dominance-submission hierarchies, that would be consistent with a psychological basis for the Bourguignon Effect—in terms of the destructive effects of intensified envy in inhibiting the openness, communality, and genuine humility (rather than humiliation) which are already intrinsic to the inner form of the full numinous (see also Hunt, 2020 for extended discussion).

4. Toynbee, Sorokin, and Weber can be seen as doing an earlier kind of “gestalt” or “holistic” macro-sociology, akin to the gestalt-organismic tradition in psychology, and so uniquely attuned to the concern here with the relations of society and spirituality in terms of larger patterns of secularization and renewal.
5. Weber (1922/1963), with even less detailed knowledge than Toynbee of the shamanic traditions now so well researched, similarly sees the fully experienced “charisma” organizing his radical salvation movements in complex societies as the spontaneous coming forward under situations of social crisis of a “magical” element that he locates in tribal practices. Weber’s “charismatic impact” can be considered the social face of Otto’s numinous.
6. Thus, although mirroring the individuality of ordinary Roman society, Plotinus (third century

C.E.) stressed that only a few times over his lifetime did his contemplative practice attain the all-one nonduality of his Absolute, and the Stoic Epictetus (first century C.E.) reiterated how far he himself fell short of Socrates and Diogenes. A similar point will emerge with New Age spiritualities of transpersonal self-realization.

7. It was this justification of the virtue of a permanent suffering in Pauline Christianity, on the basis of a life-denying original sin, that so outraged Nietzsche (1887/1954) and led to his condemnation of a communal “slave morality.” This was in contrast to his later version of the “glad tidings” of a Dionysian Jesus (Nietzsche, 1888/1960), his own neo-shamanic re-envisioning also shared with Wilhelm Reich (1953).
8. Sorokin understands Ideational and Sensate eras as reflecting an alteration between two sides of human intelligence—Sapiens or meaning/understanding and Faber or tool-causation. This would fit with the view that while the latter, along with economic complexity, would develop in a more linear way across civilizations and eras in the manner of Gebser (1985), it is the former that would best show Sorokin’s cyclicity. Like Sorokin, Toynbee (1954) finds a deep antithesis between the two intelligences:

The circumstances favorable to spiritual and to secular progress are not only different but are antithetical....Spiritual and secular ideals are at variance; they are perpetually striving with one another for mastery over human souls. (Toynbee, 1954, p. 425)

While Sorokin (1937) ostensibly values both eras equally, his own distaste for the extreme Sensates of Rome and Western modernity matches Toynbee (1954), who saw his universal states as “regressions.”

9. Of course this church based narrowing of family kinship was mostly concentrated in the new entrepreneurial middle classes—never fully enforceable in the lowest peasant classes and often with official dispensations for the aristocracy. Relaxed considerably in modernity,

once the economically mobile nuclear family was well in place in the globalizing West, one could say that its virtue (Henrich) and/or damage (Zimmerman) was already well established. One can also note, however, that the W.E.I.R.D. mentality necessary for the creation of a global capitalism may not be as necessary for either its further administration or alternative re-shaping—as variously illustrated by China, India, or Denmark.

10. Indeed, contemporary Jungians Hillman and Shamdasani (2013) suggest that part of the personal appeal for Jung himself of his “collective unconscious” was its inclusion of all of the past human dead and future unborn in a single abstract sociality, and in this “realizing that one is part of something” (p. 164), compensating for his otherwise more narrowly Western concept of “individuation” as a “realization of the Self.”
11. Supporting Spengler on a uniquely Western preoccupation with the concept of free will, and its relation to a supposedly autonomous individuality, a recent study by Berniunas et al. (2021) found that while typical Western (W.E.I.R.D.) subjects endorsed synonyms for “free will” centered around “decision” and “choice,” subjects from non-Western countries understood it in terms of “desires” and “wishes,” ostensibly in the sense of being free to wish, but not to choose.
12. While Free Brethren, Ranters, and Seekers—as precursors of New Age spiritual movements—fit primarily with Weber’s category of inner-worldly mysticism, there was also an important prophetic, even social revolutionary, side to these heresies. Proclaiming social egalitarian concepts similar to the Free Brethren, several utopian millennial sects, sometimes advocating a pre-Fall sharing of property and spouses, briefly seized control of towns or districts in middle Europe, notoriously ending in catastrophic social abuse and finally in the state interventions of the mid 1500s in Mühlhausen and Münster (Cohn, 1961).
13. At one point in response to a student question, Almaas says:

I don’t usually think in terms of hope for the world or not....I am quite content if I see a few people getting helped. The whole world is not my job. It is too big for me even to think about. I am definitely not the Messiah. (Almaas, 2020, pp. 132–133)

This is perfectly reflective of Hameed Ali’s (Almaas being his pen name) personal honesty and humility. It also reflects Weber on the social context of this-worldly contemplative movements, where

the usual result is the acceptance of the secular social structure which happens to be at hand, an acceptance that is relatively indifferent to the world but at least humble toward it. (Weber, 1922/1963, pp. 175–176)

Yet in retrospect the occasional messiah-like grandiosities of Simone Weil, Wilhelm Reich, Martin Heidegger, Carl Jung, and Arnold Toynbee, while surely that, also seem more realistic, prescient, and warranted in the face of a planetary crisis, now fully arrived, and one that they variously intuited. Their explicit forays into “saving the world” can indeed read as extreme, but it seems increasingly clear that someone needs to.

14. It is important to note that the current development of psychedelic psychotherapy, facing its issues of pending legalization, has developed its own implicitly defensive “set and setting” of a medicalized/individual therapeutic “containment” (Noorani, 2021), certainly understandable in institutional terms, of the broader connectedness to nature, society, and spirituality intrinsic to entheogens generally, and the neo-shamanic tradition specifically. Both enterprises, while perhaps in temporary collision, would seem to have their own longer term inevitabilities and potential synchrony—since this felt connectedness is already part of those university based research findings (Barrett & Griffiths, 2017).
15. A perhaps related oneness, specific to a Western neurophenomenology, is reflected

in the way many researchers on the neural correlates of mystical states in psychedelics (Barrett & Griffiths, 2017), meditation (Dietrich & Al-Shawaf, 2018; Ataria et al 2015), and awe in nature (Van Elk et al., 2019) center their findings mainly in terms of a lower activation in the forebrain and parietal areas of self and self boundaries (the medial default network), such that their phenomenology is then entirely explained by an “ego dissolution,” with a resultant cortical reorganization from the “disinhibition” of more primitive brain systems. Thus Carhart-Harris and Friston (2019) posit the “free energies” of a less hierarchical “entropic/anarchic” neural patterning as more receptive to “bottom up information” from the “intrinsic sources” of the primitive limbic or reticular-thalamic systems (Solms & Friston, 2018).

What these actually very traditional “positive regression” models miss is the actual phenomenology of the numinous, in terms especially of its synesthetically embodied felt meanings, their role in cultural creativity, and the highly abstract nature of numinous awe itself (Hunt, 2019). These synesthetic processes have been localized in the posterior neo-cortical parietal regions that the neurologist Norman Geschwind (1965) made central to the cross-modal integrations underlying all human semantic meaning—both representational and presentational in Langer’s (1972) terms—and which Hunt (1985, 1995a, 2003, 2011) and Ramachandran and Hubbard (2001) have seen as most immediately expressed in synesthesias and synesthetic metaphor. The partial deactivation of parietal body boundaries will thus *also* allow into awareness these more microgenetically preliminary patterns of felt meaning—as with Laski’s (1961) quasi-physical metaphors—which are normally masked by the task orientations of forebrain predominance, and so can come forward as the all-encompassing felt meanings of a metaphorically symbolized numinous awe (Hunt, 1984, 1985, 1995a, 2019, 2020).

Including this fuller positive phenomenology (and its neo-cortical localization), while

acknowledging the levels of whole-brain energization often involved, avoids the danger of 1) invoking Maclean’s (1990) anachronistic notion of a functionally segmentalized primitive limbic/thalamic brain, rather than the now more accepted notion of the human nervous system as one integrated structure (Cesario et al., 2020), 2) missing the synesthetic and symbolic patternings of mystical states that themselves amplify the deep structures of a specifically human symbolic creativity. It is worth recalling that *our* thalamic/limbic system—no “crocodile within” (Cesario et al., 2020)—also responds with much “free energy” to the Brandenburg Concertos.

16. In a previous book, *Lives in Spirit* (2003), this author had ended with the view that a modern inner-worldly mysticism, with the transpersonal system of Almaas as its cutting edge, while increasing an attunement to nature and environment, should be kept separate from the more activist political side of an ecological movement—based on Weber’s (1918/1946) well known concern that the very different intelligence of spirituality, with its inherent felt sense of a moral absolute, should be kept separate from a political intelligence of competition, compromise, and its necessary relativity of means and ends. This is Weber’s version of a hallowed, if often ignored, separation of Church and State. In 2003 I had assumed that an aggressive response to climate crisis and its deadlines was already underway, but the present wider failure of even close to a sufficient response has convinced me that whatever the risks and excesses of a politicized eco-activism and resultant civil disobedience, inspired and energized by the re-sacralizing collective neo-shamanism pictured here, such a conjoined movement would not only follow theoretically from a social science perspective, but becomes a moral and spiritual necessity. The larger context of history may show that the separation of the spiritual and political decreed by Weber (and Jefferson) has only held at the admittedly safer margins and never at the living core. Even Jeffersonian democracy had its

origins in the earlier self governing Anabaptist sects (Troeltsch, 1931/1960).

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