

REDEFINING SUSTAINABILITY: POSSIBILITIES FOR ENGAGING THE SUBTLE EARTH IN
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

by

LINDSEY E MANN

(Under the Direction of Brian LaHaie)

ABSTRACT

Much of what is considered practice of Sustainability in Landscape Architecture is born from a worldview founded in reductionist Science. However, it is understood that such a worldview contributes to imbalance, preventing Sustainability on ecological, social and spiritual levels (Boff, 1995; Hartmann, 2004; Mies & Shiva, 1993). This thesis explores work from a variety of theorists and practitioners to redefine the practice of Sustainability, including: ecologists, theologians, anthropologists, psychologists, physicists, artists and spiritual leaders. Sustainability redefined considers indigenous livelihood which held the earth and its inhabitants as sacred, and insight into spiritual awakening, including the evolution of human consciousness. Practical applications of awakening consciousness to affecting land changes include the arts of Geomancy and Feng Shui, working with the Spirit of nature, and Biodynamic Farming. Case studies of these applications are discussed in relationship to Landscape Architects developing a more Sustainable existence on Earth.

INDEX WORDS: Sustainability, Consciousness, Spirit, Geomancy, Feng Shui, Landscape Architecture

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DEDICATION

This paper was compelled from intuitive recognition of critical global transformation as much as sound research. With heartfelt devotion, I celebrate those who guide humanity towards enlightenment, recognition of our cosmic unity and purpose, and peace. I dedicate this work, as all my work, to my beloved teachers for exceptional dignity, wisdom and inspiration:

Swamini Mayatitananda
Marko Pogacnik and Ana Pogacnik

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CHAPTER I

Statement of Intent

As planetary environmental concerns continue to gain public attention, Ecological Sustainability is an increasingly valuable ideal to Landscape Architects. However, Sustainability existing within a value system that views the Earth as a resource primarily, may not be the healthiest solution for the future of our planet (Boff, 1995; Hartmann, 2004; Muller, 2005). This thesis examines the contemporary paradigm of Ecological Sustainability, and questions how and if the practice of Landscape Architecture may approach Sustainability from outside limiting and destructive cultural beliefs.

Sustainability is redefined through gleaning insight from work of contemporary professionals and theorists, especially intersection between Ecology and Theology and from research into indigenous ways of life. Methodology employs extensive literature research and does not attempt to provide an in-depth exploration of any specific tradition or theory. Rather, ideas and practices from various schools and cultures are intermixed, providing possibilities for current times. Insight into the nature unsustainable livelihood is presented. As responsible citizens of Earth, and especially as creators of place, Landscape Architects may open to a more expansive source of inspiration, consciously advancing a gentler and more enlightened existence. Through review of relevant literature, it is concluded that *we serve as better designers and land-planners when we utilize a spiritual- ecological consciousness to encourage others, through experience of place, to let go of conditioning and access the ever-regenerating wellspring of consciousness.*

Introduction

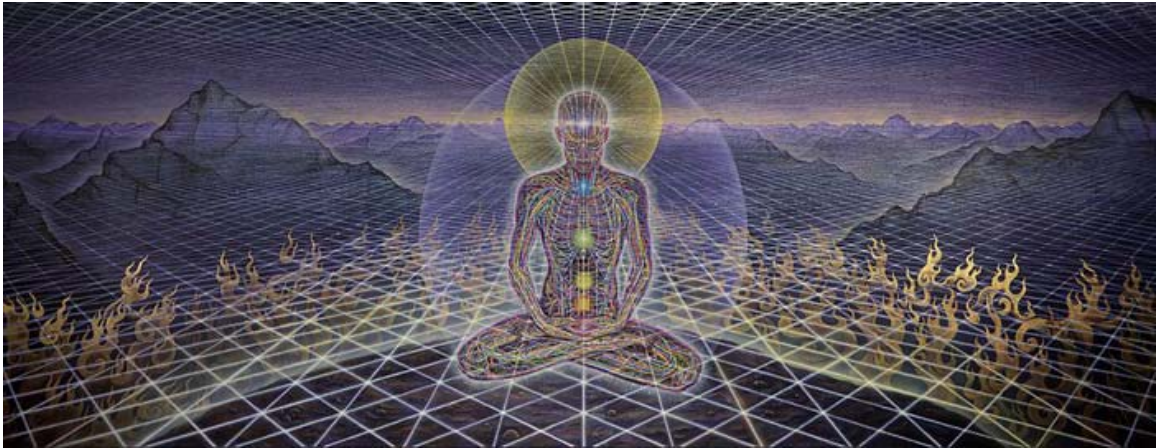
John Lovelock proposed the *Gaia Hypothesis* years ago indicating a cohesiveness and relationship between ecosystems of the Earth that translate to one whole, one dynamic mechanism. He later reflected in the foreword to Anne Primavesi's *Sacred Gaia* that in presenting the theory of Earth as a living organism, he had failed to see the overarching theological implications and that the "truths glimpsed in theology as well as the truths glimpsed in science are pertinent to all our lives and meant to be available to everyone" (Primavesi, 2000). Drawing from a variety of disciplines, especially theology, spiritual development is an underlying theme of this paper, with the platform of practicing Landscape Architecture as physical application. A multi-disciplinary approach allows a deeper understanding of the subject at hand, as Theologian Anne Primavesi advocates in *Sacred Gaia*, paraphrasing Levi-Strauss, "From many different versions, rendered simultaneously, there might flow a sense richer and more profound than each of the partial and distorted meanings that any single version, taken in isolation, might yield to us" (2000). The term "spirituality", sometimes vague or ambiguous, is defined as collective and personal growth, "seeking to apply natural, evolutionary, divine, universal, cosmic law" towards a greater reality (Muller, 2005). As the underlying, driving force of evolution, spirituality refers to the continued process of awakening of human consciousness. As Willis Harman contests, "The long path of evolutionary development is not so much pushed by random mutations and natural selection as it is pulled by a higher consciousness" towards which humans implicitly strive (1981). Each experience in our lives offers a valuable lesson, stored somewhere in our being and in the collective psyche or consciousness of humanity, as recorded by Psychologist Carl Jung (1949). Thus, collectively we arrive closer to truth.

Awakening consciousness is often seen as synonymous with spiritual growth, indicating perceptions of the interconnectedness of all life. Psychologist and Spiritualist Carl Jung in his classic *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (Jung et al., 1949) refers to a process of personal [spiritual] transformation “by which the ego communicates with the unconscious self or higher Self” and achieves access to the “collective and universal consciousness.” Similarly, in *Cosmic Consciousness*, Bucke discusses the furthest stages of evolution, when the “human soul will be revolutionized” as immersion into the whole “flux of cosmic consciousness” (Bucke & Acklom, 1923). This cosmic consciousness is a “higher form of consciousness than that possessed by the ordinary man,” and describes the substance which pervades all life and from which life sprung. Perceptions of cosmic consciousness are available as a person transcends his or her ordinary consciousness. Theologian Alan Watts relates the idea cosmic consciousness by describing existence of a pervasive, universal substance:

“Where do I begin and end in space? I have relations to the sun and air, which are just as vital parts of my existence as my heart. The movement in which I am a pattern or convolution began incalculable ages before the (conventionally isolated) event called birth and will continue long after the event called death. Only words and conventions can isolate us from the entirely indefinable something which is everything” (Watts, 1951).

Watts’ perceptions are supported by ancient systems of Eastern thought, such as Taoism and Buddhism (Cooper & Palmer, 1998), but also by findings of modern science. Contemporary quantum physics now recognizes that matter is actually frequencies of vibrational fields interacting with each other. That which we perceive to be solid simply vibrates at a low enough frequency to be recognized as such. If we saw energy and not matter, we would see more interconnection than separation, as described by Watts and in the popular movie, “What the Bleep do We Know?” (2004). Relating to Bucke’s or Jung’s notions of collective consciousness, we can recognize the interconnectedness as

a larger force beyond our own limited mental processes and fine-tune our abilities to access the larger force, or the “essence of Being. . . infinite Being in infinite manifestations,” as Schweitzer describes (1968). It seems more essential to our own livelihood, with a perspective of interconnectedness, that we respect those with which we coexist and literally are *part of*, as we respect ourselves. We realize, as Boff relates in *Ecology and Liberation*, the “sense of communion that all things possess” (1995).



“The Union of Human and Divine Consciousness Weaving the Fabric of Space and Time In Which the Self and Its Surroundings Are Embedded”(Grey, 2006). Artist Alex Grey demonstrates the interconnectedness between a man and his environment: *THEOLOGUE*

This communion that links us inspires a reverence for all of life when we become more identified with it. Schweitzer presents that “Reverence for life means to be in the grasp of the infinite, inexplicable, forward-urging Will in which all Being is grounded... Then only do we become profoundly qualified for life.”

The philosophy of honoring life as universal and ultimately interconnected is a stark contrast to the often senseless philosophy that creates our modern world, such as design driven purely by economic factors. In *Beyond the Post-modern Mind* Huston Smith comments on the intellectual climate of the day. Recognizing the current, “postmodern attitude tends toward the absurdity of existence, and toward confusion and denial of meaning,” he asks, “is it possible for humankind to live indefinitely with its world out of focus?” (Smith, 1989). Smith’s question seems to accurately claim the

non-committal and bewildering approach that much of the post-industrial world is founded upon. In contrast, including concepts and experiences of expanded consciousness opens new doors for landscape architects. Many contemporary teachers (Tolle, Teilhard de Chardin, Tiwari) discuss expanded consciousness leading to a more “enlightened” engagement with the planet, one in which human beings are at peace with each other and with the earth. These teachings assert that a harmonious planet must begin within each individual, first. Living in harmony with our fellows here, and with the Earth, is regarded as the single most precious action we may take serving our larger, overarching developmental process- this is consciously engaging in the evolution of awakening (Boff, 1995). In addition, a focus on attuning to the Earth’s health is highlighted, as a primary focus of Sustainability includes environmental concerns. Taking responsibility for our own inner peace and individual actions is taking responsibility directly for the health of the Earth. As contemporary theorist Leonardo Boff relates, “Just as there is an external ecology, so there is an internal ecology. The Universe not only exists outside us in its own autonomous state, but also within us.” He contends that the state of the world in all its turmoil and inspiration is merely a projection of what occurs from within each of us. We are the microcosm, which reflects the health of the macrocosm. Thus, by dedicating ourselves to practicing peace on the subtlest of levels, we, as designers of place, are able to engender peace and clarity through our designed spaces and, thus, to the psyches of those people who experience place.

Expanding from the notion that all matter is pure frequency raises the question of the frequencies that we cannot see. Research has been conducted into the spirit matter of the natural world (Pogacnik, 1995; Tompkins & Bird, 1989). As humans have mental, emotional and spiritual bodies housed in the physical, so it is suggested that there are

many layers of *etheric* bodies that comprise the Earth as an entity, and all her inhabitants to varying degrees, including plants and animals, even rocks (Steiner, 1924). *Etheric* is understood as an invisible, energetic, sometimes emotional presence that communicates the impulses of the soul to the physical body including the brain (Pogacnik, 1995). To compliment Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis, within the physical unity of the Earth's systems can also be acknowledged the etheric collaboration which works to bring physical life to this planet. Further, it has been shown that working directly with etheric layers of the planet is a more efficient, effective means at creating harmony on the planet, than from top-down gross-physical application (Ivy, 1999; Pogacnik, 1995).

In this paper, presented first is a critical look into current societal assumptions and conditioning that limits our great potential towards creating a healthier, more Sustainable existence. Presented next is a theoretical perspective of spiritual, mental, emotional and physical human relationship to Earth. This relationship to Earth is next demonstrated by studies of individuals and groups in their lives and work, earthwork, specifically. Following is discussion of ways in which such an approach to our natural and built environments can merge with the practice of contemporary Landscape Architecture. To continue to read, I do not ask the reader to agree with the existentialist theme of this paper. It assumes, though, motivation towards a more harmonious planet, employing the Earth-human relationship for primary investigation.

CHAPTER II: TOWARDS REBALANCING: CULTURAL ASSUMPTIONS ENDANGERED

In a comprehensive approach to understanding Sustainability, we can use the concept of yin-yang, relating the ultimate interplay of balance and polarity of the microcosm and macrocosm. In Chinese Taoist theory, everything is composed of the two opposing forces; they are thought to be “in constant struggle within everything.

When they reach balance, the energy of life is created. From this we can see how important harmony is to nature” (Cooper & Palmer, 1998). Yin aspects can be described as “receptive, inside, dark, space, feminine, passive, nurturing, *the earth itself*” (Pitchford, 2002). These qualities are not valued by modern, *western or northern* culture. On the



other hand, yang is described as “active, function, light, exterior, masculine, time,” all of which are highly esteemed or predominant in our culture. The consequence is the force of life that evolves organically, flourishes and supports when *allowed*, is suppressed and forced, usually resulting in subtle or palpable devastation, originating in the offset of balance. Physicist and world-renowned social theorist Vandana Shiva relates that the suppressed forces of feminine in our contemporary culture are responsible for the interwoven environmental and social devastation. In *Reductionism and Regeneration*, she considers third world feminist scholarship that critiques the dominant modern scientific world-view. The “Scientific Revolution... though legitimizing itself in terms of universal

benefit for all... is a Western, male-oriented and patriarchal projection which necessarily entails the subjugation of both nature and women" (Mies & Shiva, 1993). Our present world-view provides a "reductionist, mechanistic" model of life that "simultaneously creates the measure of value and the instruments for the annihilation of that which it considers non-value" (25). The "possibility of colonizing and controlling that which is free and self-generative" founds the basis for our all-powerful economic system and is supported by a western, scientific worldview. Of many global examples Shiva provides, one indicates the production of industrialized seed and fertilizers considered superior substitutes for nature's seeds and fertility; yet they rapidly transform soil and plant life into a non-renewable resource and create pollution. Nature is considered a genetic resource to be owned for corporate profit. Shiva paints a grim yet enlightening picture of how dominant patriarchal-based belief supports and is supported by modern science. This interrelationship can be described as excessive Yang and allows for the cyclic nature of subtle and overt violence that threads all areas of modern, "western" culture for sake of production.

The current cultural drive towards outward production denies one's own essential interpersonal relationship. Our culture finds itself "almost convinced that what is measurable is what is real, and that our most direct experience- that of conscious awareness- is somehow less real and less worthy... we find ourselves confused about eternal values and enduring goals" (Harman, 1981). In contemporary society, instead of learning tools to discover our vast nature and unique talents we are culturally programmed to respond appropriately, not authentically. It is little wonder that the modern human has lost touch with the inner voice. The voice has been hushed for conformity to societal standards, which discourages any type of true self-exploration, a

process Harman refers to as *cultural hypnotization*. As a result, many people are alienated from their deepest passion, their individual creative spark, and are unsatisfied in general life and work. Francis Tiso finds fault with the economic system. “We all have to earn a living, and that creates a single excuse for avoiding the tension between the drive to mature spiritually and the drive to succeed and win approval.” Our increasingly complicated technologic solutions, he says, “carry the seeds of their future irrelevancy. The solutions that will be lasting are much more modest, personal, small and tender” (1981). Tiso recognizes the aggressive dominant factors driving civilization have denied the polar Yin force of receptivity. If attuned inward, on a personal and tender level, we receive what arises with attention. What is created is a space for presence. “True growth does not come through experience nor action, but through the process of awareness,” (Tiwarī, 2000). When we remove ourselves from the unnatural whirlwind of production and thought, we are able to touch deep peace and simplicity at the core of our beings. The yin quality of quiet attention allows for true personal and collective growth.

Imbalance and Unsustainable Culture

We don't need to delve deeply into philosophies of balance to recognize that modern culture is unsustainable. Sustainability, defined as “meeting the needs of the present [human] generations without compromising the ability of future [human] generations to meet their needs” (WECD 1987 UN conference), has thus-far proved impossible in an industrial or post- industrial culture with current population densities (Hertsgaard, 1992). It is generally accepted by environmentalists as well as

anthropologists and theologians that humans and the planet are now at a time of crisis. The Forum on Religion and Ecology recently founded at Bucknell and Harvard Universities seeks to revise Earth-human relations for evidence that we are “loosing ground due to widespread global and ecological degradation.” Time is critical environmentally because the Earth is at or near carrying capacity, human population densities in relation to consumption of the Earth’s resources have reached maximum (Worldwatch 1996). It is clear that underlying assumptions and core cultural values are at least contributing to crisis. Wendell Berry proclaims, “The economy of money has infiltrated and subverted the economies of nature, energy and the human spirit... we are entrenched in a total usufruct system that has become exploitive. It is destroying what gave it life and what it depends on to live” (1977). When an anthropocentric concept of sustainability cannot be met, the culture is certainly not adequately considering other cohabitants of planet Earth, or the Earth herself. Likewise, a utilitarian and anthropocentric culture cannot engender a right practice of true Sustainability from within its own structure. In *Ecology and Liberation*, Leonardo Boff communicates as such, “The dominant ethics of present-day society is utilitarian and anthropocentric... Without a revolution of the mind, it will not be possible to bring about a revolution in relations between humankind and nature” (Boff, 1995). Sustainability necessitates a whole-organism approach, an understanding that the health of the whole is essential to the health of all of its parts; and the health of its parts are interdependent; Sustainability is possible when humans assume our “rightful place as a link in the vast communitarian chain of the cosmos”(36). Sustainability is multi-faceted concept: as economic as it is environmental, as personal as it is global. Thus we examine Sustainability from global, cultural and personal perspectives.

The contamination of our physical world has been revealed as a reflection of collective human condition, as oppressive societal conditions and individual mental patterns. As a mirror, the great chaos indicated by environmental devastation, reflects the mass pain and confusion of human emotional and mental states. J. Krishnamurti famously exclaimed, "War is the spectacular and bloody projection of our everyday life." The same can be said for the destruction of the Earth. Quite literally, "pollution" of the mind creates the pollution and devastation occurring outwardly, globally. "The ecological crisis reveals the crisis of profound meaning in our way and system of life, and in our model of society and development... The violence and aggression in the environment grow from roots deep down in the mental structures that have their genealogy and ancestry within us" (Boff, 1995). Internal pollution refers to harbored mental states of negativity, anger and even repression from which people approach the world with hostile attitudes and actions. Our multi-billion dollar entertainment industry, including television, alcohol, and sports is enough testament to our need for escape from our own turmoil. Likewise, pharmaceuticals have exploded. In *Let Them Eat Prozac*, Healy discusses an incidence of about one in eight people prescribed antidepressant medication in the United States (Healy, 2004). People do not avoid a contented reality. We have become so accustomed in our modern culture to the underlying tension and aggression that motivates our move towards progress, that the absence of peace is accepted as 'normal'. In recent years, stress became an identifiable byproduct of our busy lives. We recognize its overarching effect and presence, but as business in each moment occupies us, we fail to recognize the disharmony occurring anew. As Thom Hartman points out, "every empirical study of both historic and contemporary cultures finds that the more complex and hierarchical a culture is, the harder people must work and the more frantic

their lives are” (Hartmann, 2004). Assumptions that more, faster, efficient means of production will satisfy us, or is necessary of us, goes against our very grain and creates a lack of well-being, sometimes barely perceptible in the moment. The stress stems from assumptions of our culture that promote disheartening abuse of the Earth, our host, and the denial of natural ways of life. Spiritual Master Maya Tiwari communicates that we become isolated through disconnection with nature and loose sight of our purpose. Thus, Sustainability is a deep and complex issue, unsatisfying and destructive cultural assumptions seem to be the basis for the current spiritual and environmental crises.

Science as Complete Worldview Underestimates Complexity of Reality

“More and more people are rejecting the determinism of evolutionary biology and genetics espoused by mainstream science, abandoning the pessimistic existentialism of our immediate philosophic forbearers, and becoming increasingly disgusted with the environmentally destructive and soul-deadening effects of our consumer-driven materialism.” (Wilcox, 2003)

Life sciences describe living systems in terms of mechanic parts and their supporting functions. In a living thing, though, the mechanics do not effectively explain the larger, cohesive force of life, that of pervasive, dynamic *being-ness* that is the purpose of the operating parts. It can describe the parts to a machine, but nothing of the whole *being-ness* of the “machine” (Harman, 1981). In a human, for example, we understand how the digestive and nervous systems contribute to functioning whole, but the driving force of life that initiates the systems and keeps them running is less definable. That force of life originates and dynamically fluctuates beyond the cohesive function of assembled parts. “Dynamic” refers to the process of constant change, that

every living thing is “constantly dying and also regenerating” (Primavesi, 2000). The danger of viewing living systems through a mechanistic lens is exemplified by the techno-industrial destruction of life. Vandana Shiva claims that “reductionist science is at the root of the ecological crisis, because it entails a transformation of nature that destroys organic process and rhythms and regenerative capacities” (1993). Living things are reduced to component pieces that are extracted, “improved” and exploited to maximize profit. An obvious example is that of a complex forest ecosystem reduced to commercial wood then to cellulose fiber for paper. Forest, land, and genetic resources are manipulated to increase the production of pulp wood. It is evident that the process of “scientific” forestry and “development” are destroying organic processes and regenerative abilities.

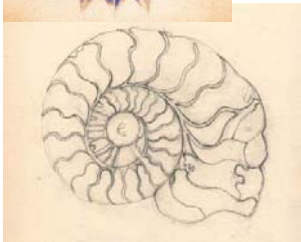
Science provides excellent insight into the mechanics of physical existence. It is too often regarded as the whole picture, though, instead of informing part of the picture. The tendency is to regard the scientific approach as a belief system, rather than a tool, a concept explained as *hubris*. The mentality that exudes, “If I cannot see it, or if science cannot explain it, it does not exist,” dramatically limits our understanding of life and access to superior solutions. Intuitive processes, wrongly seen as subjective, vague or unidentifiable are often rationalized out of consideration or declared as untrustworthy. Thomas Hartman observes the “popular impact of science [is] to cast doubt on the validity of creative insight and intuitive sense of what is right” (Harman, 1981). Ironically, it is scientific method that is attributed to being subjective. Willis Harman, Engineer and President of the Institute for Noetic Sciences, simply described as science of intuitive knowing, contends, “The motivation of science, in fact, is strongly rooted in an intuitive faith that the universe is ultimately understandable by methods of

systematic inquiry.” Harman demonstrates his point with the phenomena of psychosomatic illness and the placebo effect which demonstrate physical well-being as highly affected by attitude. British physicist Sir Arthur Eddington told of an ichthyologist who, after combing the sea with a net made of one-inch mesh, arrived at the “scientific” conclusion that there are no creatures in the sea with a diameter of less than one inch. The quantitative emphasis of science, that tends to equate what is physically measurable with what is ‘real’, is like the one-inch mesh net. “It captures some aspects of reality and misses others” (Harman).

Western scientific thought “rationalizes” to remain comfortable, so one can maintain a static perception of reality. However, moving beyond mind-dominated perception is often prerequisite to delving into the nature of reality. It is often asserted, especially from those of outstanding “genius” achievement, that in order to access a higher place of existence it is necessary to move beyond prescribed mental patterns. Rudolf Steiner is one such exceptional person who advocated intuitive versus so-called logical reasoning. Though he only lived 35 years, he lectured widely in the early 20th century and authored over 200 books that initiated worldwide movements in many fields such as Medicine (Anthroposophic), Agriculture (Biodynamics), Nutrition, Dance (Eurythmy) and Education (Waldorf). Each related to a spiritual science he named *Anthroposophy*, the essential basis for understanding the complex approach to interacting life-systems. In a 1909 lecture titled *Practical Training in Thought*, he argues that what is often considered “practical thinking [is] merely reasoning in traditional ruts of thought. Thoughts can only be drawn from a world in which they already exist,” thus touching yet undiscovered reality must occur outside of regular mental processes.

Further, he states, “it is the denial of the spiritual world that produces the worst kind of malpractice in thought” (1909).

Albert Einstein has been identified as one of spiritual greatness. His genius in Science is noted not to have come from a rational, studied approach, but arose in moments where he was able to move beyond his mental processes, touch inspirations, and later test the theories using scientific method. He said that he rarely thought things through with his intellect, but instead achieved his most important realizations in flashes of insight, moments of intuitive *knowing*. Thus, even great contributions to Science are not always, or perhaps rarely, product of the scientific method. Insight into allowing for intuitive approaches is provided by Julian Bernard, an internationally acclaimed teacher of earth-healing. “I have looked in detail at relationships between people and plants. Both share in the Kingdoms of Nature. Bach [of Bach Flower Remedies] spoke of some plants



Vivika Alexander: Mandala and Fossil

being ‘divinely enriched’, but it seems clear that all of life is divinely enriched could we but see it. That is the problem of the scientist: how to see the invisible. Perhaps we must begin to look with an open eye.” Looking with an “open eye” relates to expanding our consciousness or spiritual unfoldment. He thus recognizes the limitations posed by unwillingness to expand life-view and include the etheric, spiritual and invisible energetic layers of life’s web.

Scientific methods must serve us and adapt accordingly; we need not serve the method. We are thus restricted when we readily deny the existence of phenomena that cannot be explained by our categorical impulses derived from physical science.

Moving Beyond Mental Resistance

“Today it can be generally said that people are not prompted by reasons when making statements, but rather by the thinking habits behind these reasons. They have acquired habits of thought that influence all their feelings and sensations, and when reasons are put forth, they are simply the mask of the habitual thinking that screens these feelings and sensations. Not only is the wish the father of the thought, but all our feelings and mental habits are the parents of our thoughts. We all know how difficult it is to convince another person by means of logical reasoning. What really decides and convinces lies much deeper in the human soul” (Steiner, 1909).

Thinking is overrated. Indeed much current and ancient spiritual teaching addresses the problem of mental resistance to change (Steiner, 1909; Tolle, 1999). Eckhart Tolle discusses a common slavery to one’s mind. The mind erects all kinds of barriers to a soul in need of change. Change is often uncomfortable or frightening, so our minds “rationalize” us away from the newness to avoid fear. We remain subservient to mental chatter and conditioned beliefs, only somewhat conscious of the mental directives. On the other hand, thinking with awareness can be very useful. If we are conscious of our thought processes and use the brain to plan, for example, as a tool to be brought out and used very directly and put away. We run into trouble when the mind runs on at length and we then identify the random, transient thoughts as ourselves and act accordingly. Right thinking is a tool to be developed consciously, suggestions for which are provided in detail in Steiner’s aforementioned *Practical Training in Thought* (Steiner, 1909) or Tolle’s *The Power of Now* (1999).

Opening the heart to the present moment, attuning to the pulse of manifest consciousness is the aim of many spiritual practices (Hartmann, 2004; Satchidananda,

1990 translation). A great deal of awareness, focus and intention is needed. Learning to move beyond mental resistance is the largest obstacle. Actually insane and religiously applied, we filter experiential exploration with logical thought, as if our logical minds can comprehend the various layers of entire universe. Thus, we explain existence through limited, rational understanding, and arrive at a largely distorted view of reality. Our rationalization is frequently incorrect. We filter only part of the information available in a given situation through a lifetime's store of beliefs and selective memories, fit to perceived experiential comfort. Instead of straining to wrap our brains around something, or being lost in the confusing soup of mind-stuff, the objective is being attentive to the consciousness of life flowing around and through us always, and, as Steiner delivers, "ideas come at the right moments, and the right thoughts occur when needed." This radical shift at first takes a great deal of relinquishing control and perhaps faith. But with practice, living becomes far more effective, enjoyable and less stressful.

The entire extensive system of Yoga, traced to the earliest Vedas 45,000 years ago (Spalding, 1927), is aimed at Union of Mind, Body and Spirit with the highest goal of life achieved by learning to transcend the mind. The first sentence of the Sage Patanjali's ancient, revered *Yoga Sutras* reads, "*yogas chitta vritti nirodha*," translated, "yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind," or "restraint of the modifications of mindstuff is Yoga" (Satchidananda, 1990 translation). Yoga is defined here as Union of Mind, Body and Spirit. The Sutras teach the way to unification, oneness with all, is through disassociating oneself with mental chatter. Learning to move beyond our addictions to incessant mental chatter and maintaining full present awareness is paramount for awakening to expanded worldview. "To become awake in this very moment... seemingly very personal work, is actually among the most important works we

can do to save the world, because as we become grounded in the present, we gain the personal power to change it” (Hartmann, 2004). For most people, our brains dominate most of our attention at all times with preoccupation of past events or future perceived events. Eckhart Tolle has awakened to lasting joy, transcending mental habits, and warns us that no future experience is worth our time in thought, because it is hypothetical, imagined. We quite literally cannot deal with the future, because we do not know what it will bring. Similarly, the past is behind us and not to be relived. “Nothing ever happened in the past; it happened in the Now. Nothing will ever happen in the future; it will happen in the Now” (1999). Tolle encourages us not to mull over the ideas mentally, but allow the truth to resonate with our more powerful nature. Naturally, proper planning and preparation in life is beneficial, but in its rightful place should the mind be used. Once we can ignore mental obsessions and hypothetical delusions, we are available for the depth of the present, where, life actually exists. *Life is not thinking, but is awareness of the present moment.* Entering the fullness of the present, Tolle describes as true enjoyment, “In-joy-in yourself.” There is no more space for societal prerequisites, politically-correct behavior, or boring jobs. Our beings aren’t repressed, we have cleared the air of ego-centric drives, we are authentic, and our wants are for the good of all. Indeed, we are (debatably) fulfilling the purpose of human life and approaching the next phase of our evolution: higher consciousness.

CHAPTER III: THE QUESTION OF SUSTAINABILITY: CULTURAL PARADIGM OR IMPLICIT

LIVELIHOOD

"The problems humanity faces- war, overpopulation, exploitation, prejudice, oppression, greed, hate- are just the symptoms of a disease. We need to treat the symptoms, but to cure the disease; we need to eliminate its cause. The cause of the disease is ignorance of the truth that we are not merely unconnected, independent beings whose particular welfare can be achieved at the expense of the general good. The cure is the recognition that we are all one with each other and with all life in the universe."

- Theosophical Society

Questioning global Sustainability in a speech titled *Can the United Nations Become a Functional System of World Order*, Robert Muller declared that he had "come to believe firmly today that our future peace, justice, fulfillment, happiness and harmony on this planet will not depend on world government but on divine or cosmic government... Most of these laws can be found in great religions or prophecies, and they are being discovered slowly but surely in the world organizations." As former Director to the Secretary General's Office of the UN, Muller says he arrived at recognizing "spiritual transcendence as the next step in our evolution... through three decades of observation and endeavors in our planet's first universal organizations" (2005). *Spiritual transcendence*, as related by Muller, refers to the balanced process of *opening* and *being*, qualities of the feminine principle Yin. This chapter seeks a renewed concept of Sustainability as guided by Muller's projection of spiritual evolution that reestablishes the *yin* principles to allow balance. Contemporary anthropologists, theologians and spiritual teachers are sources of inspiration in the quest for real Sustainability.

Creating Inner Harmony promotes a Healthier Environment

“In quietude, we converse with something higher than ourselves and, in that conversation, discover the miracle of our shared humanity.”

- Norman L. Koonce, American Institute of Architects (former VP, CEO)

Theologian Anne Primavesi eloquently proclaims that “one bright particular star” emerges from the “fusion of coevolutionary and theological horizons... the hope that, as a species within diverse environments, we may evolve towards a consistently nonviolent way of life” (2000). Creating peace with the world at large is seen as a highest measure of true Sustainability. Internationally acclaimed Artist and Earth Healer Marko Pogacnik contends that “crisis we perceive around us is a reflection of a severe crisis on the evolutionary path of human beings. Solving aspects of that crisis within individuals reflects to the landscape as acts of ‘healing of the Earth.’ At the same time, of course, each of us becomes healthier and happier” (Pogacnik, 2004). The Earth heals as humans begin to resolve their own conflict. In a similar vein, Pope John Paul II, in a message titled *The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility*, proclaimed if “man is not at peace with God, then the Earth itself cannot be at peace.” He concedes that the “profound sense that the Earth is suffering is also shared by those who do not profess faith in God.” The Pope recognizes that the suffering Earth is a result of suffering man, due to his separation from God, and thus with all of life. Relationship with “God” is a mirror for our own interpersonal relationship. World spiritual leaders contest that the decision of each individual to create harmony in his or her own life is the most essential step to peace in the world at large, and thus a brighter environmental future. One option at this crucial time, as Tolle contends in *The Power of Now* (1999), is to evolve willfully and consciously into a state of greater consciousness or presence, that in turn serves to

actively maintain an inner environment of peace. Maya Tiwari is a preeminent world spiritual leader who, at the core of her teachings in various fields, transmits the message to “make a commitment to inner harmony” as pivotal in any true growth, personal and collective. Indeed, it is recognized as individual’s responsibility to the world to care for her or his own spiritual evolution. Theologian Francis Tiso contends that there is a “social dimension to the solitary leap into the mystical heart of reality... [that] the broad dissemination of knowledge, the nurturing of imagination, the cultivation of radical liberty is completed by nurturing of the inner person as receptacle for universal forces, as the locus wherein possibility can be embodied in life”. Tiso describes freedom found through awakened consciousness as *radical liberty*, indicating that nurturing inner harmony brings us to the source of infinite creativity, unlimited possibility. He suggests that social transformation, as environmental transformation, is implicit in opening to universal forces, expanding consciousness. For people cannot be so wholly transformed without resulting impacts to Earth and other people.

Transformation and access to higher levels of awareness such as indicated by Tiso seem to be crucial at this time. Harman contends that a prime task of adult life is to become dehypnotized from cultural programming: “As this dehypnotization occurs, it becomes apparent that there are potential levels of consciousness far beyond ordinary consciousness.” It is believed that humanity is undergoing crucial evolutionary shift in consciousness (Pogacnik, 2004; Tolle, 1999). Our *conscious evolution of consciousness* is positioned to balance the great chaos demonstrated by the state of our fragile ecosystems, including social and global economic structures. Many people are taking the steps of conscious evolution, which are analogous to saying: We are taking responsibility for ourselves. We take responsibility for our individual actions,

realizing the contribution to a larger whole. On a subtler, more essential level, we attend to our inner environment, and create one of harmony. Taking responsibility for our inner harmony precedes all else, because it sets the stage for how we approach and interact with the world. Each individual begins internally where the most radical change is poised to begin: in every thought, word and action.

Presenting personal and planetary harmony in relationship to Landscape

Architects relates to the task of creating healthier spaces, which thus feeds healthier and more enlightened minds. The built environment is “linked to the psyche and its need for spiritual orientation, wholeness and transcendence” (Barrie, 1996). Thomas Barrie in *Spiritual Path, Sacred Place* recognizes the great interconnection between space, mind and spirit, and also the potential of created space to transform consciousness.

Similarly, Robert Schuller writes in *Physical Environment Shapes our Transcendence* that “architecture does not simply provide an envelope in which the ineffable can be experienced, it participates in the experience by providing a portal that erases or at least makes more transparent the boundary between matter and mind, flesh and spirit” (2005). Stuart Brand points out that construction is the second largest industry in the world, next to agriculture (1995). Thus, the built environment, including urban, rural and suburban comprise the two greatest industries on earth. Our responsibility as designers of place calls for us to support conscious evolution. Ethical imperative calls us to resolve ourselves in every moment to inner harmony, to find that “sense of tranquility, which is a potent catalyst for human creativity.” For, “If we’re under tension and stress, we are distracted, and the creative subconscious suffers” (Schuller, 2005). We effectively create a mental space of calm sufficient to allow for transcendental inspiration in design.

Earth Consciousness

“At a time when that material solutions to ecological crises are not sufficient, perhaps the [spirit of nature] is offering us a real alternative on how to restore the upset balance of nature on our planet” (Findhorn Community, 1975).

To encompass greater receptivity for the multi-dimensional qualities of life, we might question primary assumptions regarding our relationship with Earth. As Landscape Architects, possibly an important step is understanding that the Earth as we know it is not just physical phenomenon, but an actual force of consciousness. In *Building the Earth*, the honored modern scientist and theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin speaks to human relationship with earth consciousness; “the only truly natural and real human unity is the Spirit of the Earth” (1973). Cohesive and dynamic, the life-force that is the Earth serves as our link to the vast indescribable origin of life. In *Gaia and God* Rosemary Ruether discusses “those qualities in ourselves that are rooted in and respond to the life Power from which the Universe arises”

(1992). This “cosmic life process” is universally embodied in Earth Consciousness. The term “Her” is often used to describe this consciousness, as it reflects aspects of the feminine yin principle of creating and nurturing, giving and sustaining life. She is our Mother. In



Cyhldeptis by Hrana Janto

a biological sense we are all physically made of earth-stuff, and in a (Teilhardian) theological sense, humans find our unity “our inseparable, loving connectedness with all of life” through connecting with the consciousness of the Earth. In *Wisdom of the*

Elders: Honoring Sacred Native Visions of Nature the authors remind us that “Not only the animals, but also the plants, the earth, and landforms, air, weather and sky are spiritually invested” (Suzuki, 1992). Much indigenous wisdom from around the globe is reflected in the ancient, sacred texts the Vedas. The Vedas, written by Brahmins (priests) over 5,000 years ago, provide the foundation for Hinduism today. *Deva Rina*, presented in the Vedas as the foremost sacred observance of *dharma*, path of truth, translates to mean, “Reverence to the Divine, reverence to Nature- to the earth, river, wind, fire, and space, to the animals, plants, and every blade of grass, every speck of dust” (Tiwari, 2000).

Indeed, sacred connection with our origins, expressed through communion with sacred Earth, may allow for sustainable livelihood. In perspective, Anthropologist Thom Hartman reports from extensive research “for the first 194,000 years of humanity’s roughly 200,000 year history, humans viewed the world and its living creatures as sacred, as having souls and spirits. A person who caused permanent harm to that world was considered as insane and banished from the tribe... It is probable that the ‘Older Cultures’ view of the world is actually more scientifically accurate than our [Younger Culture of 7,000 years].” Probable also is the Older Culture’s view allow for the possibility of Sustainability. The more removed we become from earth consciousness, the more lost and confused our collective human nature becomes, and the more dangerous humans become to themselves, each other and their host. The common idea of humans acting as parasites to the Earth describes only the last few thousand years with the rise of industrialization and the loss of connection with the natural world. In right connection, the rhythm of life beats continually from the core of Earth’s

consciousness, resonates with and triggers our own inner rhythm. Ancient cultures are testament to the inherent communion:

“Throughout their lives, they [Shoshone Indians] had to be aware of the spirits of nature and the worlds beyond nature which surrounded them, to monitor their interactions with others for appropriateness and propriety, keep a mental record of obligations and past interactions with family and other clans, and know where the sacred and profane places were so they could be visited or avoided” (Hartmann, 2004).

Similarly, it is known that Aboriginal Tribes in Australia, before white contact, had no concept of memory for themselves (Hartmann, 2004). The natural environment provided them with knowledge needed in the present moment. Earth guided each detail of their existence. From an indigenous perspective, our life purpose is written in the blueprint of the essential consciousness of nature. As we manifested from this consciousness, in it we also find direction in the everyday sense. If we attune our inner ears, like many indigenous people we learn to move with intuitive direction towards our joy, thus serving in harmony with life’s purpose. Says Gerald McMaster of his Native American culture “When we return to [our homeland], we rejoin our people- past and present- and the unseen forces that are part of our being... In a very real sense, the land is a source of healing for us” (Livingston, 2005). If we understand ourselves as spiritual beings and the earth as an overarching spiritual presence that guides us individually and collectively, we perform *that which is to be done* for the greater whole of life. Imagine relinquishing the fears and desires of our individual egos to serve the larger purpose from an inner knowing. Communion between our spirits and Spirit of life that speaks to us through various manifested aspects of nature allows this harmonious dance. Francis Tiso considers this: “Setting aside the residue of stale thought and manipulation liberates us for the task of engendering authentic love. It is difficult to imagine love

without this clarity, this distinctness arising from the lively expression of the inner self.

In a similar way, it is difficult to imagine a genuine ethics without liberation from the assumptions and habits of the 'superego.'" When acting from the ego, we are unclear of the direction of truly noble design. But when directed by Earth consciousness, our designed spaces "inspire the inhabitants to align themselves in a more beneficial and meaningful way with the natural forces, the natural rhythms of life" (Ivy, 1999). It is past time to redirect our awareness towards developing a deeper sensitivity for the consciousness of life. We must learn to move beyond our preferences, comfort and fears and sense what life is offering us. With enough attention and inner stillness, we can perceive, indeed, that the land offers much wisdom in regards to directions for future planning. As Marko Pogacnik intuitively, "Planet Earth is a living multidimensional being that has its own consciousness. This consciousness is aware of the environmental, ethical and emotional destruction that our civilization is inflicting upon the eco-sphere of the planet" (Pogacnik, 2004). Marko works, receptive to earth consciousness, to heal the crisis on the planet, with wisdom originating in earth consciousness. (More in Chapter IV regarding design based on connection with earth consciousness). When we are motivated from a place of intuitive knowing and commitment to serving the whole, we act in conjunction with the forces of nature to affect change. This is Sustainability: towards unhindered justice, conscious evolution.

Cosmic Memory: Ancestral and Indigenous Relationships with the Earth

“Cosmic memory, sometimes referred to as collective memory, is the complete recollection of the entire living universe from the beginning of time. Every atom and molecule of the cosmos, including the most minute cell and space within the human body, is infused with the cosmic memory of all time. The physical and emotional form and function of each species is due to this memory of the universe.” ((Tiwari, 1995, 2000).

Moving out of our individual shells and opening to a vast chain of interconnectedness is the task of human beings today in awakening consciousness. One of the most essential tools of effective connectedness has been actively erased from human modality, wisdom of the ancients. Cosmic memory, lessons like treasures held sacred in the collective mind of humanity and accessible through intuition and inner stillness, is often denied. Our birthright of accessing timeless passages, lessons built ‘stone by stone’ that provide each successional generation with clues to balance and betterment, is washing away with the tides of ignorance, sacrificed to material progress. Psychologist and Spiritualist Carl Jung refers to Cosmic Memory as the “Collective Unconscious,”



Alex Grey depicts collective/ cosmic memory: Nature of Mind

indicating a vast pool of experiential wisdom collected from the course of every human life since the beginning of time (Jung et al., 1949). This collected wisdom also contains essential knowledge of our origins beyond human species. As birthright, all humans have

access to this precious well, dug deep and filled over millennia by our ancestors. Human beings can honor the collective wisdom, by accessing it for use in serving the whole, and adding anew in the forging of higher consciousness. “At this pivotal time in human life, the most important understanding we can offer to our humanity is neither physical, emotional, nor financial; it is the practice of seva- spiritual service- that helps to restore ancestral memory so that we may heal the long-ignored rift with the spirit world” (Tiwari, 2000). Swamini Mayatitananda, authored as Maya Tiwari, understands the fruitful relationship to be had honoring the ancestors and, in turn, accessing ancestral memory.

As our ancestors provide a link with cosmic memory, our Ancestors are intimately linked with our own paths in life. As we have inherited their DNA and physical strengths and trials, we have inherited their emotional and spiritual patterns as well. As we grow, we move beyond limitations that we harbor due to our own past experience and that of our ancestors. Thus, our quest for personal freedom also serves them. As we break the cages of outmoded beliefs and actions, mental restrictions that do not serve us, we release ourselves and our ancestors to higher consciousness towards our divine nature. *Our ancestors* refer to the collective ancestral pool of all humanity and those specific to our blood-line. The latter are more immediate; they serve as the direct links for each individual in his or her present life to the greater ancestral lineage of humanity. Thus, we are able to connect with the force of the collective ancestral consciousness through intimate memories and associations with those of our blood line. Bñi Maya Tiwari teaches simple Vedic (sacred, Hindu) observances to reconnect with ancestral spirit in *Path of Practice* (2000).

Shamanic cultures and other tribal beliefs held ancestral memory as central to fulfilling their life purpose and informing their everyday. As previously discussed, to

Shoshone Indians, nature was their web, their network. They listened to the pulse of consciousness through an intimate relationship with Nature Spirits that guided their lives moment-to moment. "When a Shoshone looked out at the natural world, she saw a landscape rich with life, both visible and hidden. That life was known to her, called to her, spoke with her, and often guided her" (Hartmann, 2004).

Other Native American tribes also shared this gift. A Sioux proclaims, "We do not chart and measure the vast field of nature or express her wonders in the terms of science; on the contrary, we see miracles on every hand- the miracle of life in seed and egg, the miracle of death in a lightning flash and in the swelling deep!" (Eastman, 1993). Charles Alexander Eastman, or Ohiyesa, a Sioux of highest nobility raised in traditional ways eventually came to study in white schools, earning an MD and law degree. He committed his life to passionately translating the ways of his people into Euro-American culture. In his autobiography he speaks of the 'supernatural' powers many of the tribal members came by naturally, such as his grandmother's "knowing from a feeling in her breast" the ill or good fate of her sons in remarkable detail. "And I believe," he writes, "such nearness to nature as I have described keeps the spirit sensitive to impressions not commonly felt, and in touch with unseen powers." Nearness to nature was a spiritual existence imbedded in the Sioux's way of life that informed and defined all courses of life. "The Great Mystery that surrounds and embraces us is as simple as it is exalted. To us it is the supreme conception, bringing with it the fullest measure of joy and satisfaction possible in this life." A livelihood so permeated by spirit empowered the nation to thrive entirely upon moral character. Other "protection than the moral law there could not be in an Indian community." Committers of a crime were entrusted to publicly divulge their misconduct and punish themselves in solitude. Generosity indicated

positive social standing. As a result of self-imposed ethics, general peace and honor of natural order between all the Earth's species reigned. War was seen as a grave service to the tribe and death in battle unquestioned, under the direction of the Great Mystery (Eastman, 1993). The Shoshone Indians, however, according to Hartman's research, had maintained peace for over a thousand years, long enough for any word referring to "War" be exempt from their vocabulary.

The contrast of either Indian Nation to our comparatively gluttonous, violent culture is striking. From the sacred experienced in all facets of life to a world "where all living beings in the web of life have been turned into commodities," we have reached the point of a "critical breakdown of Sustainability" (Lee Hong, 2005). The loss of Spirit and implicit ethics in contemporary culture is largely due to the loss of ancestral memory. Our culture obsesses over youth, when the Native Americans traditionally reserved long winter evenings for their Elders repeating "time-hallowed tales with dignity and honor, so as to lead the child into the inheritance of the stored-up wisdom and experience of the race" (Eastman, 1993). Honoring the ancients is not only a rite of the past. Contemporary cultures that have remained true to the wisdom of their ancestors prove serviced by their ancestors immeasurably. *Sixty Minutes* reported in light of the Southeast Asian Tsunami of December 2004 that one indigenous civilization, though in the heart of where the Tsunami struck, remained untouched. Reports told of their respect for their ancestral ways of life. "We knew to follow dolphins out to sea, those who were in fishing boats. And those on land knew to run to high ground with the elephants. We knew it was coming because we listened." Indeed, our "civilized" complicated infrastructure may be more of a problem than comfort, luxury or progression. The point is not to return to the ways of the ancients entirely, by living in huts, or hunting

wild game with hand-made spears. They were in another era suited to their evolutionary stage, the Earth and patterns of Consciousness at that time. Their relationship with Creation can and should inform our own prescription for living: communication with the force of life manifested as Nature to be an everyday part of existence.

Reestablishing Yin: Innate Access to Earth Consciousness

“A mare belongs to the creatures of the earth; she roams the earth without bound. Yielding, devoted, furthering through perseverance: thus the superior man has a direction for his way of life.

“The good fortune of rest and perseverance depends on our being in accord with the boundless nature of the earth. “The earth is still. It does not act of itself but is constantly receptive to the influences of heaven. Thus its life becomes inexhaustible and eternal.

Man likewise attains eternity if he does not strive vaingloriously to achieve everything of his own strength, but quietly keeps himself receptive to the impulses flowing to him from the creative forces.”

-Hexagram of The Receptive, *I Ching*, (Wilhelm, 1961)

The ancient, holy, Chinese classic, *I Ching*, expresses with vast depth and eloquence the nature of Yin, the feminine principle. The previous sections discussed the necessity of conscious harmony and possibilities as viewing Earth as a sacred guide. If we are to adopt principles of harmony and connection with Earth, it may reflect what is conveyed in the above passage. According to the *I Ching*, in adopting the noted qualities of receptivity, implied humility and trust, qualities of Yin, then we are able to access the life force, Earth Consciousness, to achieve “inexhaustible and eternal” influences.

The Universe, as explained by the *I Ching*, is a balance of polarity Yin and Yang, interplay between the two dynamic forces. Architecture is seen as a popular and necessary forum for Yin-Yang interaction, allowing man to participate in wielding and utilizing the forces. The best results are achieved when a “man-made object enhances and supports the environment from which it in turn receives energy,” according to A.T. Mann. A person’s creative will informed by receptivity to nature blends in unique creativity that successfully serves the task at hand. “Everything in the world interacts energetically, and when sensitivity and knowledge are used together, the blend is universally harmonious and supportive” (Mann, 1993). Ancient and essential wisdom regarding the nature of life, such as provided by the *I Ching* may prove invaluable in redefining an era of awakening consciousness and true Sustainability. Before identifying a physical plan of action, it may serve us to define on a subtle energetic level that which we intend to create. The above passage relates to the intention and energy behind an endeavor, a way of being and approaching that allows for greater balance, that is Sustainability.

CHAPTER IV: CASE STUDIES: SUBTLE EARTH IN COMMUNICATION

A Conference in Berkshire, England titled *Soil and Soul, Is there a Link?* discussed the necessity to “engage in a perception of reality a contemplative and pragmatic viewpoint rather than exploitative” (Robinson, 2005). Recent theological debate was noted to have recognized the whole of creation as sacred an interconnected, “expressing the presence and wonder of God.” Reconnection between material and spiritual existence was explored, noting that our “sense of being is strengthened when we can be stilled and close to nature.” When we are well-connected to place, our sense of identity becomes more deeply rooted. It was also noted that new ways of relating and connecting to nature are needed, which “recognize responsibility and open to higher possibilities.” This Chapter presents methods in which maintain the links between the material and spiritual worlds and allow for a more encompassing perception of reality, as described above.

Genus Loci: Reviving communication with the forces of nature

“Consult the Genius of Place in All!” -Alexander Pope

A classic paradigm of modern Landscape Architecture, *genus loci* or “spirit of place” describes perceptions of the character of a place and the associated feelings. *Genus Loci* is a common reference, but not commonly explored beyond depictive adjectives. Delving deeper, one moves beyond the abstract into actual, etheric qualities

or being(s) of a place that can be defined for our purposes. Contemporary earth-workers have discovered components of the invisible realms of nature that are thought to comprise much of our perceived “sense” of a place, such as Marko Pogacnik and participants of the Findhorn Garden. Works by these highly sensitive and accomplished individuals are useful in assisting a newcomer’s submergence in the spirit of nature. Some have found *Genus loci* can actually be communicated with, especially for human interaction with nature in partnership.

The Findhorn Community in Scotland has reclaimed a working collaboration with the spirit of nature within their Garden. Pioneers in reclaiming the sacred relationship, Findhorn has discovered that nature “must be known from within as well as from without, that it grows spiritually as well as physically” (Findhorn Community, 1975). Highly aware individuals connected to Earth Consciousness founded Findhorn through direct, regular communication with various realms of *Genus Loci*. Trust in direction from nature produced the seeming miracle of a now internationally renowned garden that began as a sand and gravel pit in northern Scotland. Through inspiration gleaned in meditation, one man moved his five family members from managing a five-star hotel to living in a trailer off the coast of northern Scotland. His mission was to garden. With sensitivity and trust in the messages of nature, the garden grew at unprecedented rates. Neighbors could not fathom the progress and word spread across the country. Within a few years, Findhorn became a renowned garden and community unparalleled in thriving beauty and lightness, springing forth from the gravel and sandy shores. It is now a world center for education and workshops in various arts. “Living as this group is living, on the land, by the land and for the love of the land, is the practical supreme form of wisdom- and freedom.” That they are giving of themselves creatively and with full-attention and focus in action, in this

case to the Earth who generously provides for them, allows a channel of communion with the essence of life, where real joy is found. In reverence for each minute process of life, perceiving always with fresh eyes is the aim. The message of Findhorn is clear: beyond the crumbling physical skin of the earth, etheric planes of creative energy are available to us in collaboration. By refining our senses we can bypass the inefficient modality of modern science and glean insight and even direction from the consciousness of nature. Access to etheric levels of existence was an every day affair in Pre-Christian eras. Modern culture has lost the sensitivity to perceive on realms of the invisible. Recovery of the forgotten sectors of human awareness is possible, necessary and delicate; it will also serve our planning initiatives in a more full understanding of “sense of place”.

Marko Pogacnik, artist and earthworker, delves into the heart of Genus Loci, questioning the qualities of the forces and motivations behind the physical bodies of nature, such as plants. For example, science explains the motivation for life through evolution, in a broad overarching concept for innumerable, variable processes. Into the specifics of evolutionary motivation, what, in a plant for instance, provides its own impetus to grow? For our identification, *Nature Spirits and Elemental Beings* (Pogacnik, 1995) outlines his perceptions through years of inquiry into the invisible forces of nature. He perceives and communicates with, through his highly developed intuition, forces or spirits of earth, air, fire or water nature. Marko discusses the first known book on the subject by Paracelsus in 1598 titled *About Nymphs, Sylphs, Pygmies, Salamanders and Other Spirits*. Paracelsus was a scientist of his day, examining and classifying an accessible and relevant part of life, just as a botanist might study into physical species of plants. Nymphs describe powers of water, Sylphs powers of air, pygmies earth, and salamanders fire. It is very clear to Marko and his contemporaries that spirits of nature

are the forces behind the physical that promote their growth and change. These “beings” direct pure consciousness or energetic space into specific directions to manifest the energetic structures that produce the physical substances we see and touch. Detailed pictures and diagrams of investigative report convey hierarchies and qualities pertaining to the invisible nature of life. The table below represents the multi-dimensionality of various co-existing beings, including human, according to Marko:

| LEVELS: | Minerals | Plants | Animals | Elementals | Humans | Angels |
|-----------------|----------|--------|---------|------------|--------|--------|
| Spiritual | | | | | X | X |
| mental | | | | | X | |
| emotional | | | x | X | X | |
| Vital-energetic | | X | x | X | X | |
| material | X | X | x | | X | |

Table I

A chain of scientific experiments from the US and Europe to India at the turn of the 20th century revealed that plants, in fact, display emotional characteristics (Tompkins & Bird, 1989). The described responses in *The Secret Life of Plants* could be linked to Marko’s vital-energetic and not emotional level. Both, however, imply a sense of kinetic awareness of the plant. Spirit matter and energetic structures existing in the landscape are under-investigated at present, but seem extensive and worthy of investigation. (This is to be explored in Chapter IV). They likely contribute much value to the vague, under-examined notion of Genus Loci.

Geomancy: Reading Subtle Energetic Layers of the Landscape

Geomancy is the practice of “locating and using earth energies” (Mann, 1993). A useful metaphor for understanding geomancy is the human body, reflecting micro and macrocosm. Like our bodies, the earth is alive with energies which pulsate across its surface. Alfred Watkins, an inventor, photographer, and antiquarian who died in 1930, discovered that many holy places, wells, moats, burial sites and stone monuments in the English countryside were linked by a web of lines. He found that the place names along the lines corresponded to the quality and use of the lines (Mann, 1993). Pre-Christian Europe developed a technique to build according to earth energy grids, harmonizing with the energies of place by citing structures accordingly, and utilizing the differing available energies of each place. The grid-like formations first discovered in the British Isles and then across Europe are known as *ley lines*. The modern day *Geo Group*, concerned with geomancy mapping in Seattle, describes a network of energy lines crisscrossing the earth. “These ley lines originate at power centers. Ancient monuments such as pyramids, stone circles, medicine wheels, shrines, cathedrals and other sacred architectural structures traditionally have been located on power centers” (Pettis, 2000). Many of the megalithic monuments, such as Stonehenge, are thought to be interactive with each other and the earth as they punctuate specific crossings of ley lines and powerful energetic sites. Temples and holy sites were often founded appropriately upon “wells” of uprising holy energy. Ancient Rome, one of the last western civilizations to organize its architecture according to geomantic principles, built churches upon crossings of ley lines and other auspicious energetic spots. Often, they reconstructed upon demolished holy sites of Pre-Christian religions (Pogacnik, 1997). *Dowsers*, those

who read earth energy lines, from our modern culture verify and support the power and sophistication of the ancient landscape. It is also understood that ley lines and auspicious sites are often interrupted or suppressed due to the ignorance of modern development (Underwood, 1973).

Literature in English concerning contemporary geomancy is limited. The Hagia Chora School of Geomancy in Austria includes lecturers and literature from across the globe, but does not yet publish in English. The school is focused on restructuring the current practice and understanding of Geomancy. Most Geomantic knowledge predates the Christian inquisition, when the earth arts were condemned as acts of Satan.

Marko Pogacnik, lecturer at the Hagia Chora School, is one celebrated figure helping to revive Geomancy in response to global environmental crisis and neglect of human spiritual links to the natural world. Through sculpture and deep intuitive readings of the landscape, he returns harmony to a place, often by energetically “restructuring” it in accordance to its sacred purpose. Marko interprets Geomancy in a unique way, creating exquisite sculpture that speaks to Earth and people. His sculptures host *cosmograms*, beautifully designed archetypal images that carry the purpose and intention of realigning a place in accord with its original purpose, which best harmonizes with the energies of the place.



Marko Pogacnik:
Cosmogram sculpture

Marko also uses the rhythm of song and dance to draw a place back into accord. Marko teaches workshops worldwide, joining people in application of his earth healing techniques. Reports from workshop participants and residents of the places in question have overwhelmingly affirmed the work, so much that he is currently contracted by governments in Germany, Switzerland and Brazil to conduct his healing

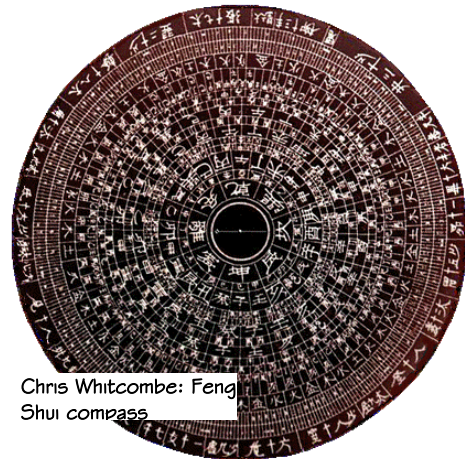
efforts with the land there. Further work in contemporary Geomancy in the United States is discussed in Chapter 5.

As testament to Marko, for the skeptics among us who need visible proof, science has demonstrated the ability of human thought and intention to transform physical molecular structure. Japanese scientist Masaru Emoto photographed microscope images of frozen water crystals and published the results in *Hidden Messages in Water* (2004). With different intentions projected at them, he discovered the drops of water physically and dramatically changed form. With positive thoughts, such as *love* or *thank you*, the drops of water showed beautiful formations like snowflakes with brilliant colors and complex patterns. However, the water with negative intentions, such as *hatred* or even those exposed to heavy metal music appeared dull, asymmetrical and less complex. From a geomantic perspective, it might be said that the energetic (vibrational) body of the water responded to the vibration of the projected intention, and thus manifested the change in the physical sphere, yet another related sequence of vibrations. Water is an extremely receptive and transformative phenomenon. It is traditionally used in religious ceremonies for its energetic cleansing properties. In Vedic traditions, it is said to carry large quantities of *prana*, or life energy, probably more true of mountain spring water than chemical-laden city water. Water, of course, accounts for 60-75% of an animal's body and is present to varying degrees in our air, soil and plant material. In its regenerative capacity, water can affect transformations of consciousness, such as energetic and physical cleansing, in a place, but it is also likely, as discussed in the above Biodynamic Farming section, that



other elements carry their own unique forms of consciousness that resonate (vibrate) at varying frequencies. The physical and energetic qualities of each element are very closely related. The earth for example is dense, heavy and slow, tends to hold on to projected energy for longer durations. The elements of earth, water, fire, air and space are described in the sister field of Geomancy, Feng shui, as “spiritual essences that carry characteristic energies and qualities...the principle agents through which the planet operates” (Mann, 1993).

Feng Shui is the Eastern form of Geomancy. Meaning literally “wind-water” it refers to the need to position any building, tomb or even one’s bed according to the prevailing natural forces in the area. “It is a way of building and relating to the landscape which sees the existing landscape as full of powers and forces, meaning and purpose long before humanity came to contribute” (Cooper & Palmer, 1998). Again, using the human body as metaphor, acupuncture meridians (energy channels) run through the body carrying vital energy to organs. While hundreds of acupuncture points lie along the meridians, providing means for external influence of the channels, so on the surface of the earth are there web-like channels of energy with punctuation points that disseminate energy and provide relationship between external and internal. Feng



Chris Whitcombe: Feng
Shui compass

shui contends that the “earth currents are the acupuncture meridians of the Great Mother” (Skinner, 1982). Feng Shui aims to analyze or sense these energies and determine appropriate methods and sites for buildings. “Buildings which utilize the natural elements of the land and tap into its energy are auspicious places to live, work or

bury the dead, while places that are antagonistic to these energies are inauspicious and will not bring good fortune.” As well, it is regarded as “everyone’s common heritage to respect and be sensitive to the earth energies within which they live” (Mann, 1993).

Feng Shui, like Geomancy, is the intricate art of sensing subtle, elemental vibrations and learning to work with the earth in accord, increasing planetary health.

Biodynamic Agriculture: Marriage of the Cosmic and Earthly Energy

In 1924 Rudolf Steiner responded to pleas of European farmers alarmed by declining quality of produce and familiar with his work in other areas to assist them with farming. A short series of lectures titled *Spiritual Foundations for the Renewal of Agriculture* served to establish a successful world-wide agriculture movement known as Biodynamic Farming. As a microcosm of the earth, the farm is considered a living organism. We know quite a bit about physical components from modern Agriculture, such as nutrients that enhance soil, and Biodynamics also addresses the “characteristic of life that can only be passed on by living beings” (Schilthuis, 1994). This characteristic of life is known as *etheric energy* or *life force*. The life passed from a parent to offspring, whether an animal or single-cell organism, can be understood as *etheric body* or *astral body*. The term *astral* indicates relationship of this field to the forces of stars and planets. Biodynamic Farmers work to “increase the cosmic formative forces that enhance plant and animal health and growth” (Proctor, 1997). Living organisms exist with the cooperation of four life forces: heat, light and air, liquids, and solid matter or minerals. Vitality, or life force, is seen as vital to plant (and human) health as are material substances. Without sufficient life force a plant does not build adequate resistance to

disease and are more susceptible to outside influences. Life force also functions to balance the physical properties of a plant. For example, stinging nettle, *Urtica dioica*, is thought to carry the forces of Mars that influence the composition of iron, magnesium and other minerals such as sulphur. In parts of the world where the Earth carries large amounts of iron, known as an iron pan, nettle functions to break up the soils, releasing the iron (Proctor, 1997).

Stressing that life can only be passed on by the living, aspects of the farm must be fed with living substances. Compost preparations, “nutrients created in a life process” are added to compost and sprayed over fields, serving to “support the effect of astral and life forces” (Schilthuis, 1994). Animal manure is an important part of the compost preparation process. Astral forces are contained in the manure, as it has been worked on by the astral body of the animal. Animals



Van James: Plant within the Elements

ensure of the self-contained cyclic nature of the farm. In a fully-functioning Biodynamic Farm, animals eat what was produced on the farm, digest the fodder and excrete what is to be composted and returned to the fields. The cycle of substances is permeated with life forces that give the farm its own individual quality. Because of the widespread depletion of modern soils due to development and industrial Agriculture (Berry, 1977), Biodynamic farms often use additional inputs for strengthening, such as herbal preparations of dandelion and yarrow and quartz crystal. Small amounts of the inputs function to improve compost and sprays for plants and soil.

Farmers, even without understanding the method or working on a fully developed Biodynamic Farm, remark that Biodynamic preparations make a remarkable difference in their compost (Koepf, 1993). Scientific Research, also, has indicated positive results for Biodynamic method compared to conventional farming. Herbert Koepf compiles “systematic research based on rigorous principles of scientific farm management and economics” in his guide to *Research in Biodynamic Agriculture: Methods and Results*. From meta-analysis, he discovers that the Biodynamic preparations contribute in significant differences in “ripening” of compost, such as temperature (relating to decomposition rate), nitrogen and ammonia levels, and other nutrient compositions. These differences improved the quality of the produce and soil, as measured by organic content, root development, microbial biomass and Carbon dioxide release. As well, Biodynamic preparations “enhanced” the quality of slurry or farm wastes. Studies on yields of Biodynamic farms in general show improved yields, but might be irrelevant since the aim of such a farm is the quality of production as much as quantity.

Quality of life, such as exemplified by a Biodynamic farm, is related to acknowledgement of life force and harmonizing of earthly and cosmic rhythms. “Rhythms are a means to becoming aware of how life is a process in time regulated in part by the earthly and cosmic environment” (Koepf, 1993). As landscape architects, we might seek to more deeply understand the natural rhythms of the planet to inform our premise for working with different elements in the landscape, such as plants or minerals. Rocks, for example, have a unique astral makeup which influences the surrounding environment. Plants are influenced by lunar rhythms. Biodynamic Planting and Growing Guides, available in many countries annually, are based on research by those such as Maria Thun, who tested traditional customs of farmers’ planting guided by lunar cycles (Schilthuis, 1994).

Her lengthy and repeated tests over 40 years indeed indicated plants (and animals) are influenced not only by the waxing and waning of the moon, but the movement of the moon through the twelve signs of the zodiac. Thun discovered that each of the twelve signs has a special relation with one of the life forces manifest in the four elements, and each element relates to development of the body of the plant. Earth element influences particularly root formation, while water influences leaves, the light/air element affects flowers, while the heat produces fruit and seed. Implications for Landscape Architects working with plants are fascinating. While we may be overwhelmed attempting to discern the specific, layered relationship of each element in the landscape, we might create healthier spaces by first considering the possibility of interaction between earthly and cosmic forces, and allowing our intuition to recognize appropriate application.

Biodynamics fosters a unique approach to working with the subtle Earth, which many serve to inform designers of place in a number of ways, as creativity and exploration allow.

CHAPTER V: *SUBTLE EARTH AS APPLIED TO THE PRACTICE OF LANDSCAPE*

ARCHITECTURE IN THE PRESENT DAY

An emerging shift in consciousness that requires our ability to move beyond conditioned mental patterns and honors a renewed connection with earth consciousness, as demonstrated by previous cultures and contemporary geomancers, is directly applicable to Landscape Architects. As we shape the built environment, we shape the future of the world. As Ed Mazria discussed recently in *Why Designers Hold the Key to the Global Thermostat*, the building sector, including the landscape and planning professions, are critically altering the planet by generating about half of all greenhouse-gas emissions annually (2006). If designers are the economic sector most responsible for climate changing activities, a major player in the ecological crisis, we must begin to change the core of the way we view and do business. Mazria offers strategies focused on the physical aspects of “green building,” though *spiritual awareness* is often recognized as a spoke on the wheel of Sustainability. Previous chapters explored how the spiritual aspect of Sustainability has functioned in realm of land arts; we might also serve the world by propelling ourselves forward, embodying means of expanded consciousness in all stages of the design and construction process. The results are places which are imbued with a renewed sense of respect for life, providing a platform from which others may experience degrees of their own awakening. As artist Alex Gray declares, “The purpose of a sacred space is to plant seeds of liberation in the mindstreams of people” (Gray, 2005). Gleaning from indigenous cultures, who boasted

effortless models of Sustainability, all places are held sacred. It is the problem of the designer how to communicate with the unique sacredness of each space.

In our work, first and foremost we might seek to explore the landscapes of the Earth with open awareness. Those who have mastered the art of communication with subtle realms of Earth in Geomancy and Feng Shui have laid groundwork for further explanation. They teach that when we learn to be still within ourselves, we are able to sense the etheric energy of a place, including manifested individualized aspects of creation and stored memory due to past use and intention. The aim, then, of experiencing these subtle earth energies is to “heal” the place, to facilitate resonance of a landscape’s healthiest potential functioning at that time. With this work, we also bridge the chasm between Earth and people and provide healthier lighter spaces for people.

Naturalists Employ Subtle Principles: Frank Lloyd Wright, Darrell Morrison

Though their work is not commonly recognized as sacred architecture or Geomancy, the work of some contemporary architects and landscape architects reflect the values of designing sensitively with nature. The art of Feng Shui is said to help buildings compliment the natural landscape, rather than attempt to overpower them; “where trees and bushes are planted to help buildings merge into the landscape; where natural materials predominate over humanly constructed materials; where height and breadth of buildings are strictly controlled by height and breadth of natural features around them” (Cooper & Palmer, 1998). The work of Frank Lloyd Wright is widely accepted as a naturalistic approach, in that it responds to and merges with the

surrounding environment, as described in the above passage regarding Feng Shui. The angles of Wright's desert home Taliesin West reflect the jagged peaks of distant rocks, while texture, color and the materials themselves originate from the surrounding landscape.

Emerging in Landscape Architecture are professionals who design with a holistic receptivity to place. Likened to "nature's process of having a seed or kernel or nucleus, and the letting that manifest itself as the design grows to where one feels it's an organic part of the whole," naturalistic design aims to embody, not dominate, a place (Ivy, 1999). Darrell Morrison, Landscape Architect, is one who practices in response to sense of place. He spends days at a time in solitude at a site before beginning design. The geometry and organic shapes his designs take often reveal studied intelligence of natural systems and usually respond to uniqueness of a place with local, indigenous material. The recent boom in therapeutic gardens for healthcare facilities recognizes the mental, emotional, and spiritual benefits of experiencing natural areas (Woods, 2002). Designers such as John Todd, creator of *Living Machines*, harness the power of ecosystem process for regeneration. As a Living Machine utilizes phytoremediation to clean waste water to standards that surpasses any modern treatment plant, nature's processes are respected as superior technology in their cleanliness and efficiency.

Sensitivity to place is multi-layered. Naturalistic designers begin with the art of observation and *listening* to the landscape. As related in the AIA Journal article *Physical Environment Shapes our Transcendence*, "listening is not a passive activity" (Schuller, 2005). Robert Schuller communicates that listening is actually co-creating, receiving and responding. Architect Walter Hood of Berkeley has delivered similar insight into design. In light of debates over rebuilding New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, he

declares, “It is time to listen to the land.” There is a larger purpose to be served, and we are served in discovering it. We are successful designers in that we listen and respond to the changing, inherent rhythm of a place. Landscape Architects, often with living medium, have optimum opportunities as designers to employ this more holistic approach.

Ecological Art as Conscious Raising Design

According to the Green Museum, Environmental art is art that helps “improve our relationship with the natural world.” Exciting possibilities for environmental art include that which relate to multi-layered existence of nature and provide opportunities for the betterment of human relationship with the Earth. Like Marko Pogacnik’s work with sculpture and Geomancy, exploration in the United States works to discover energetic levels of the landscape and reveal the discoveries to the public. The Geo Group was commissioned as environmental artists in 1988 to complete an energetic reading of the Seattle landscape. The project includes mapping the ley lines of the Seattle area, as well as design and construction of a series of environmental artworks that will be used to mark and enhance the ley-line energy. “These electromagnetic fields of energy emanating from the Earth have the capability to improve the well-being of people as well as the Earth as a whole. One of [their] goals is to



identify the presence of all kinds of Earth energies and work in harmony with the Earth Spirit to improve the flow of these energies” (Pettis, 2000). The potential of merging Geomantic work into Landscape Architecture is momentous. Drawing from Rudolf Steiner’s theory in Biodynamics, working with etheric realms is more efficient, as change can be effected faster and on larger scale than working with the denser, slower material of the physical planes. If Landscape Architects learn to harness energetic levels, through techniques employed in Biodynamic Farming or Geomancy, our work becomes larger in scope and more effective because we are harmonizing with a place, as opposed to fighting against it.

In the vein of ecological art in Landscape Architecture is the art of tending the land through the organic process of gardening. Many times cultivated land is regarded as inauthentic nature. Michael Pollan warns us against the absolutist tendency of the Wilderness Ethic. We so revere wilderness, now that humanity has learned to conquer it, and tend to deny anything besides untouched nature as intrinsically valuable. “As a result, Americans have done admirable job of drawing lines around certain sacred areas and a terrible job of managing the rest of our land. Once a landscape is no longer ‘virgin’ it is typically written off as irredeemable” (1991). Pollan is not arguing for less wilderness protection. Instead, though our cultivated landscapes might resemble more of a wilderness when informed by the Consciousness of Nature, wilderness in the sense of boundless and flourishing, as an experience provided by Biodynamic family farm, as opposed to an Industrial monoculture. The relevant distinction occurs between areas created with honest intention and effort in honoring the place, working in concert with the spirit of the place, versus imposing will of the mind’s conception, the more frequent application of place design.

The Individual's Unique Vision: There is No Formula

It is not my objective to formulate a program for the earth healer or Landscape Architect to connect with subtle layers of earth consciousness, only to deliver a taste of the explorations beyond traditional practice and to inspire one's own means for connection. It is a personal journey, as valid to our work in environmentalism or public service as on our individual paths of spiritual evolution. In reality, no program would be of service. Each of us would be taking directives from a program only partially true to us. Pogacnik teaches Geomancy workshops worldwide, facilitating individual exploration without confining an individual's experience or potential. A course description reads:

“Marko Pogacnik has, during the last 15 years, developed an original approach to geomancy, where working with vital forces, elemental beings, and centers of the landscape is linked to the awakening of the personal sensitivity and inner evolution of the participants. As a result, participants have the possibility to find their own way in perceiving and interpreting phenomena within and around them without being attached to a certain technique or belief system. The basis of the teaching is a holistic way of perception that includes body, mind and heart, coupled with the freedom of loving the Earth and Universe.”

The art of Geomancy teaches that when one is committed in sincere willingness to open to etheric realms, they are steadily, gently presented.

When truly present, it is said that every moment is entirely unique to itself and completely new, aside from mental processes (Tolle, 1999). Only our need to categorize impels us to make one situation look like another, denying essential details and new perspectives. The action of categorization seemingly makes it easier to “solve” puzzles, like programs for a landscape. It is too often believed that utilizing a previously devised solution is easier than having to consider the new parameters of

another project. Unwillingness to creatively employ a uniquely devised solution results. In turn, energy is used fixing the problems created by a pre-fabricated solution that didn't exactly fit. A common situation in today's rapid, thoughtless development also seems to surface in less-obvious ways. Landscape Architects and planners might employ the tools of the Geomancer or subtle Earth artist to devise solutions to unique problems. Once awareness is cultivated, the most important step is trusting that a genuine intention to collaborate for the good of all involved (harmony between humans and the ethereal realm) will likely result in a fruitful collaboration of all parties. However, one must be open to solutions that don't readily present themselves to the mind.

Institutions of Education: Contemporary Environments Foster Reductionism

That landscape architecture, with its breadth of exploration and deep roots reaching into the ever-changing physical body of the planet, is anchored in the tension of fluorescent lights and whitewashed edges, indicates a major compromise in our quality of relationship with deeper reality. We trade the opportunity for experiential, timeless understanding, for controlled and limiting thought-patterns. The study of a beauty so indefinable, boundless is trivialized in the one-dimensional plane of institutional settings.

In class, we are teaching people to think when we ought to teach non-thinking (Tolle, 1999). We are teaching organization, logic, formulas and critical programming. Critical thinking, though we are safe in constructed identities and think ourselves sophisticated for separatist, intellectual concepts, creates tragic fragmentation in our everyday realities. Critical analysis reinforces the myth of duality, when our goal of planetary harmony is reached through relating, not separating (Tiwari, 1995). Constantly

dividing, identifying, “that is not me” certainly creates no compassion for another or ourselves. Maya Tiwari teaches that compassion is grounds for forgiving, which inevitably precedes healing. The infinite possibilities within each of us become constrained as we critically fragment. We are denying and dividing parts of ourselves. When we have assumed confidence and connection with our true sense of self, she maintains, we have less need for rigid, external judgment. We trust within for ethical distinction, proven by the choices we make in thought and action in each moment. Observation of the non-categorical kind is needed. And when we put our minds aside, we will perceive and receive and know how to act in accordance with Greater intelligence.

Why not move into the outdoors more often as a class, and learn to relate to our Earth and see how her changing tides are reflected within. Then, students will entertain compassion, versus product as they “learn to see the whole, because they will discover that [our] community is a living system.” Life sciences and environmental planning programs “need to be learned by ponds, fields, rivers, valleys and hills, at the living interfaces between community and environment” to foster a greater sense of appreciation for and connection with life (Boulding, 1981). Joan Wilcox also eloquently relates the creative momentum moving through us as we remain connected, “Spiritual experience is best considered not as an effect but as a cause.” However beautiful, such experiences are not goals or destinations, but impetus to use the new insight for better work. As we are uniquely and deeply inspired, so we are able to facilitate and create healthier environments.

As previously discussed, harmony is upheld by a balance of the two yin and yang qualities. As designers, we are ethically imparted to help restore balance by creating space that offers perspective into basic assumptions made by contemporary culture and

shape interaction in less aggressive ways. To create these spaces, we must embody within ourselves, the qualities we would like to engender. An old adage notes, “darkness does not bring light to darkness.” If my objective as an urban planner is to encourage more balance in city plazas, encouraging reprieve or contemplation, I must be able to remove myself from a physical, mental and energetic space that hosts aggression. As designers, with the aim of creating a more balanced culture, it is imperative that we employ techniques of a more balanced kind. Frances Tiso compels us to design with balanced integrity: “The inner peace, of which so many have spoken, but so few know, arises from the conspiracy of love that animates the cell or sacred circle of persons devoted to personal integrity and global healing. This time,” he writes, “the Sages will be made from the very act of building the Earth.”

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