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# Consciousness and Society: Societal Aspects and Implications of Transpersonal Psychology

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Although transpersonal psychologies of self realization emphasize individual development, earlier shamanic traditions also showed a central societal aspect and group based consciousness. Indeed, many have understood the transpersonal movement as developing towards an abstract globalized neo-shamanism. That altered states of consciousness, whether as integrative realizations of the numinous or as dissociative "hypnoid" states, could be felt and shared collectively was a familiar concept to the first generation of sociologists, who saw all consciousness as social and dialogic in form. Durkheim, in particular, foresaw a globalized spirituality of the future, his "cult of man," in which modern individuation would progress to the point where all we would have in common for the collective representations of spiritual awareness would be our shared sense of human beingness. This view foreshadowed De Chardin, and is presented explicitly or implicitly in Jung, Gurdjieff, Heidegger, Maslow, and Almaas. The implications of a societal, collective face of transpersonalism for a future planetary spirituality are pursued in terms of both a global ecological consciousness and the potential transpersonal significance of SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence).

**Keywords:** ***collective consciousness, Durkheim's "cult of man," essential identity (Almaas), experience of Being, Jung's Red Book, SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestial Intelligence)***

Transpersonal psychology has concentrated on the inner development of the individual, as evidenced by its focus on meditation, spiritual aspects of psychosis, the phenomenology of higher states of consciousness, and the conjoining of these states with new paradigms in physics. Yet, for earlier generations of sociologists and anthropologists these same higher states were also understood as social and broadly shareable in a group context. Their inherent social function was seen as central to group cohesion and collective identity. The felt qualities of numinous experience—in both their integrative and distorted forms—were held to be the virtues and values of a generalized humanity, and thus applicable as much to groups as to individuals. We may tend to miss this societal element in investigations of individually-oriented transpersonal topics such as the solitary vision quest of hunter-gatherer shamanism, forms of Eastern meditation, or the individual impact of archetypal dreams and research on their cognitive mediation (Hunt, 1995), but for early sociologists of religion such as Emile Durkheim (1912/1995), these phenomena involve the encounter with *collective representations* that, once communicated, become central to group identity.[1]

Since many understand the contemporary transpersonal movement as moving toward a globalized, abstract neo-shamanism it may be important to look at these societal and cultural implications.

## Transpersonalism as a Spiritual Movement: Weber and Troeltsch on This-Worldly Mysticism

Transpersonalism, especially in its advocacy of self realization and focus on the numinous felt core of all religions (Smith, 1975; Otto, 1958), has some of the elements of a contemporary spiritual movement. This socio-cultural aspect of transpersonalism corresponds to one of the German sociologist Max Weber's (1922/1963) four types of charismatic radical salvation movements, which emerged in the major world civilizations in eras of relative secularization and loss of collective meaning, and with the potential to develop into established religions. Weber distinguished between the outwardly individualistic mysticisms, with their initial appeal to the more educated and artistic classes, and the more overtly communal propheticisms, emerging first in the lower middle classes in response to social not individual frustration. The latter have more immediate potential

for mediating rapid social-economic change, as in early Christianity, Islam, and the Protestant Reformation.

Weber (1922/1963) further divides the individual and collective types into, on the one hand, other-worldly forms, where mystics and prophets leave mainstream society alone or in small communities, and on the other hand, this-worldly forms, where renewed access to the numinous is pursued within a larger everyday society. Ernst Troeltsch (1931/1992) predicted that the 20th century would see the advent of inner-worldly mysticisms as the compensatory response of the educated, steadily expanding middle classes to the secularization of the more prophetical Judeo-Christian tradition within a predominantly materialistic this-worldly culture. Troeltsch referred to this movement as "the secret religion of the educated classes," which corresponds to more recent terminologies of *New Age* or *spirituality* vs. traditional religion. One could say, along the lines of Weber (1905/1958), that just as the development of 17th and 18th century capitalism needed the support of a Protestant ethic of worldly vocation, so in the 20th and 21st centuries our resulting culture of hyper-individualism, which values autonomy to the point of increasing isolation and alienation, may not be fully liveable without the cultivation of direct experiences of felt Being—at the core of the numinous—for a movement incorporating Gurdjieff's view of self remembering, Heidegger's authenticity of Dasein, Jung's Self, and Maslow and Almaas on the transpersonal self realization of Being as higher sense of identity (Hunt, 1995, 2003).

To the extent that economic globalization entails the expansion of the educated middle classes, one could predict a continuing development of such New Age or transpersonal spiritualities, which are also the closest of Weber's (1922/1963) types to an originary shamanism directly integrated into the social fabric of everyday life (Hunt, 2003). Whereas De Chardin (1959) and some modern transpersonalists foresee a this-worldly spirituality of the future as a quasi-biological or evolutionary development of a planetary consciousness, for Weber (1922/1963) and Troeltsch (1931/1992), transpersonalism would be both the traditional form of human spirituality favored by current social conditions, and a historically unique movement rendered by an unprecedented economic and cultural globalization (Hunt, 2003). Accordingly we can ask what what might be its future social and collective implications.

## Collective Consciousness and its Transpersonal and Dissociative Transformations

We are a symbolic species and it would seem to follow that all human consciousness is social and dialogical in form (Hunt, 1995; Whitehead, 2008). It is probably not accidental that the primary metaphors for groups in Canetti's (1966) Crowds and Power are the same as for individual consciousness: streams, waves, and ocean currents, fire, rain, forests and vegetative growth, wind and storms. While higher states of consciousness may be most easily researched in individual contexts, these states are already social in their inner structure, as in the classical dialogue of soul and God, Atman and Brahman, and nondual merging. This makes these higher states of consciousness intrinsically shareable, with potential empowerment and charismatic effects for the entire group. For early sociologists, what is now called *altered states of consciousness*—whether as integrative numinous experiences or as dissociative hypnoid states—could be felt collectively. For Durkheim (1912/1995), religion itself is based on an "effervescence" or exaltation which can be experienced collectively when the intensity of group life reaches a certain threshold (pp. 218-220). Le Bon (1895/1969) and Tarde (in Shamdasani, 2003) understood that crowds could induce collective hypnoid states, and used the new psychology of the unconscious to label social imitation itself as "somnambulistic."[2] More recently, both Charles Tart (1986) and Guy Swanson (1978) speak literally of a "collective hypnosis of everyday life," or a shared "hypnotic trance" that forms the experience of being a part of a social group. In contrast to behavioral explanations of hypnosis, this phenomenological approach locates a descriptive trance or dissociative component in all intensely held social roles. We say, speaking loosely, that Hitler "hypnotized" the German people, but what if he really did? Certainly films of the Nurembourg Rallies show both a secularized ecstatic religiosity and a kind of group entrancement.

Durkheim's concept of *collective consciousness* means that there are society wide "states" and that these are inducible. In effect, the more deeply we go down and in to states of individual imaginative absorption, the more we simultaneously go out and into implicitly shared metaphors of the social field, or what Jung (1959/1969) described as deeply shared archetypes. Thus, there exists the potential for rapid societal impact by creative visionaries who Jung (1963) credited with making

"conscious just those images...which compensate for the general psychic distress" (p. 550). For both Jung and Weber (1922/1963), when shared access to higher states of consciousness declines in secularized eras, people feel less connected to each other on a deep level. But this level of commonality remains latent, as demonstrated in the periodic resurgence of radical salvation movements. For Durkheim, the fullest access to collective consciousness comes through those states of consciousness now regarded as subjective and private, but are actually based on an attunement to what Durkheim (1912/1995) called collective representations and which Jung saw as synonymous with his archetypes.[3]

A reason the social side of consciousness tends to be missed, aside from the extreme Western valuation of individualism and autonomy, is the very negative face of group states of consciousness that appears in mobs and destructive crowds. Le Bon's (1985/1969) early classic, The Crowd, described the shared states of exaltation in politically violent and/or lynch mobs, in which the most disturbed individual members galvanize group suggestibility. In the contemporary language of Almaas (2004), these states of group hypnosis create experiences of false essence—pathologically distorted and monolithic forms of essential strength, will, and devotion lacking the paradox of genuine numinous experience.

However, examples of group states of authentic numinosity also exist. In the context of New Age spirituality, there are the widely observed enhanced effects of meditation in groups. Additionally, there are reports of communal experiences during Grateful Dead concerts from the mid-1960s through the mid-1990s that describe a shared, distinctly identifiable sense of surrender, peace, and brilliant clarity mediated by the hynotic effects of Garcia's guitar (Pearson, 1987). More recently, descriptions of neo-shamanic raves, the Burning Man festival, and rainbow gatherings point to similar numinous experiences, including shared states of MMDA-aided communalism, euphoria, love, and a temporary sense of an idealized planetary-wide utopia (Hutson, 2000).

Most striking are the studies of shared numinous states in small and large groups emerging in the immediate aftermath of social disasters such as the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 and Hurricane Katrina (Solnit, 2009; Fritz, 1961). Horrific situations of mass destruction and crisis can result in the spontaneous emergence of temporary egalitarian communities based on shared numinous states that have the ineffable and paradoxical features of classical individual mysticism. Horrific situations of mass destruction and crisis can actually result in the spontaneous emergence of temporary intensely egalitarian communities based on shared numinous states that have the ineffable and paradoxical features of classical individual mysticism. Solnit's recent *A Paradise Built in Hell* (2009) includes people's descriptions of a "magical reality" of "paradoxical freedom," "joy in sorrow," and "euphoria infused with grief" that mediates the heroic levels of mutual assistance required. In hindsight, survivors describe the communalism of these periods as utopian. Much as with Almaas (2004) and Laski (1961) on individual ecstatic states, entire groups seem to enter the hole of catastrophe and, where it is inescapable and fully felt, to emerge in shared essential states of strength, will, and compassion. Again, we may wish to know less of these states since they can imply that we are only at our collective best in the face of disaster, as also in the literally sacred bond of strength, love, and compassion shared between soldiers in the most horrific conditions of battle. On reflection, one wonders if the group setting may not even be primary over the individual one for the actual frequency, at least on their access levels, of numinous states.

At the same time, it is important to avoid a reduction of transpersonal experience to a sociologism that would simply match psychoanalytic reductions to infancy. For Durkheim (1912/1995), the shared effervescence of communal ecstatic states was explained as an attunement to the social bond itself. While religious symbolism often contains projections of the economic conditions of society (Weber, 1922/1963), Durkheim's reductionism would be a bit like the leaves on a tree interpreting their shared movement in the breeze as produced by their own simultaneity. Similarly recent research from the perspective of attachment theory correlating sudden conversion experiences (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990) and states of experiencing the physical environment as humanly alive (Epley et al., 2007) with variations in mother-infant attachment patterns, seem less an explanation than part of a demonstration that all symbolic experience, and not just higher states of consciousness, begins developmentally with the early mirroring bond. Its gradual internalization renders all human consciousness in the form of an inner dialogue, whether verbal or non verbal, with the latter including the synesthetic embodiment of forms of nature—light,

darkness, heights and depths, flow—that mediate adult mystical experience (Hunt, 1995). Higher states of consciousness are neither perceptions of society nor reversions to infancy but later developmental recognitions of the existential reality of both individual and collective being. This constitutes more than a psycho-social "process," since our existence, and the experience of it, may have the objective structure of a gift and a mystery in which we all share, whether explicitly or not (Hunt, 2006).

## Durkheim and Jung on a Spirituality of the Future

If spirituality is as social as it is individual, the question arises, perhaps especially in a predominantly secular era, of how this human potential for a directly-felt numinosity could or would re-emerge as the potential inner face of an outwardly globalizing world order. Durkheim himself, in an important 1898 essay "Individualism and the Intellectuals," foresaw a spirituality of a future humanity where modern individualism would progress to the point where it is all we would have left in common for the "collective representations" necessary for spiritual awareness – in short as our sheer beingness as humans. Durkheim called this a "cult of man," very much anticipating New Age spiritualities (Westley, 1978), and DeChardin's (1959) unitary "omega point" of a future planetary consciousness, although for Durkheim, these future states would be based on sociohistorical, as opposed to evolutionary or biological, grounds. The maximum realization of individuality, with its modern values of justice, respect, and charity, would become the basis for the renewed religious collectivity that holds society together at its deepest levels. Durkheim (1912/1995) said:

> There remains nothing men love and honor apart from man himself. This is why man has become a god for man, and why he can no longer turn to other gods without being untrue to himself. And just as each of us embodies something of humanity, so each individual mind has within it something of the divine, and thereby finds itself . . . sacred and inviolable to others. (p. 26)

At times Durkheim's language is strikingly resonant with both earlier Gnostic concepts of the Anthropos, or Higher Adam, and Nietzsche's "overman" as a higher essence of humanity, both elevating the human as the ultimate source of the sacred (Hunt, 2003).

Durkheim himself did not develop this understanding of individual being as a maximally abstract collectivity of the sacred, as the 20th century gave rise to Heidegger's *Dasein*, in which authentic identity is based on a directly felt sense of Being, a transpersonal psychology of self realization extending from Gurdjieff's self-remembering, Jung's Self, and Maslow's identity of Being in peak experiences (Tiryakian, 1962). Most recently, Almaas (2004) has distinguished between two phases of the experience of individual identity as presence or Being. First there is "personal essence" or the "pearl," which is the development of a personal sense of beingness based on a spontaneous synthesis of one's capacities for autonomy and intimate contact, independent of ordinary self image. Almaas' discussion of this point is reminiscent of Maslow's (1971) being-values in the process of self-actualization. Second, there is the realization of "essential identity" or the "point." In this case, the sense of one's true self, as the "point of existence," is sensed as Being itself, as a unique singularity expressing the Being of all that is, and often mediated by the image or metaphor of a "brilliant star."[4] Essential identity can also be understood as a further development of Maslow's (1962) sense of identity in peak or numinous experience as pure presence. The question becomes then, in the spirit of Durkheim, to what extent are these realizations of individual transpersonal development also possible as shared states of consciousness on a collective, even planetary, level?

The early Jung clearly thought so. His recently published *Red Book* (2009), the personal record between 1913 and 1917 of his visionary crisis period after his separation from Freud, contains material strikingly reminiscent of Durkheim's 1898 essay and directly anticipating both Heidegger on *Dasein* and Almaas on essential identity. Like Durkheim, Jung laid out a post-Nietzschean spirituality for a future globalized humanity, in which only an individual path of "absolute singleness" can lead to a new "mutual love in community," a new closeness "as never before" (pp. 231, 245). In a more formal paper from 1916 he similarly states, "The more individuality is accentuated, the more it develops qualities fundamental to the collective notion of humanity" (p. 285). Meanwhile, in the *Red Book*, like both Heidegger and Almaas, the unifying quality of human beings becomes the experience of Being as such. Individuation means the "star god in you is gaining in power . . . the star-like nature of the true self that simply

and singly is . . . thereby making Being eternal in each moment." Whoever sees this "becomes someone who is" and this "stellar path will be one and the same for all people" (pp. 349, 354- 356). One's felt identity as Being becomes both the self realization of the individual and the basis of community for a future collective humanity. Jung later sought to capture this inclusiveness with his biological concept of a collective unconscious, but his more personal and impressionistic *Red Book* seems more consistent with Durkheim's sociohistorical collective consciousness.

Although Heidegger's Dasein was so clearly anticipated by the early Jung, with the authenticity of an individual attunement to felt presence or Being, Heidegger's (1994) understanding of Being, as the core of the numinous, is as social and collective as it is a matter of individual experience. In his lectures of 1934, while sadly still under the spell of National Socialism, Heidegger (2009) understood this collectivity in terms of the world historical potential of the German Volk, as expressed in the ideal of the Aryan "superman." In Almaas' (2004) terms, this would be a manifestation of a "false pearl," a regionalized and parochial version of personal essence, all too narrowly fusing individual autonomy and duty to the state.[5] The later Heidegger (1977) more clearly understood that a globalizing technology and the progressive and inevitable loss of regional ethnic traditions had thrown all of humanity together on a planetary and collective level. Already in 1934, however, Heidegger (2009) said, much as one finds in Jung (1959), that the extremes of modern individualism were pushing us together in a new stance, in terms of the planet itself, and forcing us to ask, "Who are we in ourselves as the center of an actual and possible humanity?" (Heidegger, 2009, pp. 41-42). Heidegger stated that our beingness is felt equally from the stance of "I," "you and I," and the "collective we." Our mode of being-in-the world, collectively as well as individually, can be directly sensed in terms of qualities of felt meaning, such as expansion, flow, and clarity, or contraction, drift, and decay (Heidegger, 1995; Smith, 1986). Thus, to what extent is it plausible to conceive of something like Heidegger's Dasein, Jung's Self, and Almaas' pearl and point as the future basis of a collective planetary spirituality—as Durkheim's cult of man?[6]

## Globalization, Science, and a Planetary Spirituality of the Future

Certainly some such development of a new spiritually mediated sense of collectivity may be needed for humanity to meet the coming global crises of climate change, and desertification, nuclear proliferation, over population, and their attendant threats of mass starvations and migrations. Recent research in social psychology (Wohl & Branscombe, 2005), shows that suggesting an identity with all of humanity to experimental participants leads to higher levels of forgiveness for other groups who have historically persecuted one's own group. Yet, to have the force of Durkheim's (1912/1995) collective spirituality, such an identity must be more than an idea or sentiment, but also a directly felt, self-validating numinous/charismatic state of consciousness.

Pragmatically speaking, there seem to be several barriers to such a collective, planet-wide realization of Durkheim's cult of man. First, there is the seeming necessity for any group identity to be defined against contrasting outgroups in order to demark its own boundaries and define its inner nature (Hornsey, 2008). What would be the outgroup to demark a planetary humanity? Even in the above study by Wohl and Branscombe (2005), the suggested identity with humanity was juxtaposed against more traditional outgroups. Historically, the false pearl identities of Aryan superman and proletarian worker were always pitted against demonized opposition groups. A second potential barrier emerges from the apparent necessity of transpersonal states of self realization to be mediated by abstract physical metaphors and images of light, spaciousness, darkness, radiance, depth, and/or flow (Hunt, 1995). These spontaneously carry accompanying transformations of individual identity past humanity itself and into an anthropomorphized nature (shamanism) or larger panpsychist universe (transpersonal parallels with modern physics)—in other words into expanded states of "cosmic consciousness" (Hunt, 2003; Friedman, 1988). Such states bypass the more intermediate level of Durkheim's cult of man, and any collective version of Jung's Self and Almaas' (2004) pearl or point, which would then need its own specific imagery in order to be directly embodied and synesthetically animated as its own numinous state and expanded sense of identity.

However, given that the societal face of the transpersonal movement corresponds to Weber's (1922/1963) inner-worldly mysticism and that this form of New Age spirituality has always been defined by a syncretism with the science of its day (Campbell, 1978; Hanagraaff, 1998), it seems relevant that certain

developments in contemporary science may have the potential to challenge both of these barriers to a planetary spirituality of a common humanity. There may be ways that scientific developments exteriorize and support what would otherwise remain interior transpersonal states.

First, what of the possibilities for a collective version of what Almaas (2004) has called personal essence? We have already seen that this state of personal beingness, based on a spontaneous synthesis of autonomy and empathic contactfulness, embodies something of the more or less cross cultural ideals of Maslow's being-values, and that a group realization of this state can appear in the wake of major environmental catastrophies (Solnit, 2009). Meanwhile, in the 1950s both DeChardin (1959) and Jung (1959) anticipated a future planetary emergence of an expanded sense of identity. While Jung wrote, "Our world has shrunk, and it is dawning on us that humanity is one, with one psyche" (p. 410), De Chardin, perhaps with more realism, saw such a spiritual planetization as gradual, with an initial increase in regional, ethnic, and traditional religious tensions, as is currently seen. Even the growing planet-wide ecological crisis, which has the ultimate potential to unify humanity in the face of a common threat, is slow moving and initially regional in its impact.

Almaas (2004), however, has suggested that a globalizing environmental awareness has the potential to integrate humanity and planet "as one unified pearl" (p. 473).[7] Until recently there has been no unifying imagery to support this collective sense as a specific shareable state of consciousness, although Almaas points out that spontaneous images of the Earth can mediate individual realizations of personal essence. Such collective imagery does emerge, however, from the experiences and photography of astronauts and high-flying test pilots. They see the actual curvature of the Earth and experience this as simultaneously vastly beautiful yet delicate, and utterly contrastive with the sociopolitical realities on the planet below. The sheer facticity of the widely shared photographs of Earth from space, now hanging on walls everywhere, helps to make tangible this sense of humanity and planet as one felt being. These photographs may help to mediate a specific felt sense of a collective pearl, with its contrastive boundary being our separation from the surrounding coldness of outer space, and with our sensed unity with the Earth eliciting intimate compassion and concern for all who reside on the planet. More than just an intellectual awareness, these photographic images convey a felt immediacy and objectivity of beingness, or "that's us." A generation or two growing up with these mediating images may help to compensate for the regional tensions stirred up by our progressive globalization, allowing more and more of us the felt state of "citizens of the planet."[8]

What then of the deeper level of self realization that Almaas terms the point, or essential identity as Being? Is a collective version of this state even conceivable as a future planetary spirituality – especially given the ostensible lack of mediating imagery and contrastive outgroup? For Almaas, individual realization of identity as Being is experienced as a unitary sense of one's true self as presence, and this as both the essence of humanity and of the universe itself. There is a felt "unique singularity," intimately precious, ultimately free, and located in the immediate experience of "I am." It is commonly mediated by metaphors of a "radiant point of light" or "the image of a brilliant star" (Almaas, 1996). A potential collectivity of this state, consistent with Durkheim (1912/1995) and Weber (1922/1963) on the implicit sociology in all forms of spirituality, is at least implied in the Indian Atman and the Gnostic and Neo-Platonic Anthropos, historically understood as both essence of humanity and the most immediate mirror and expression of the Absolute. In the modern era, however, the origins of cosmology and the evolution of life are no longer mediated by metaphors of a radiant emanation from a spiritual absolute, but are instead understood as only gradually emergent from primitive and elemental roots. Lacking this supporting imagery of Creation from a higher source, we find ourselves alone in an ostensibly alien universe, no longer of unique and singular significance as the mirror image of God.

Here again contemporary science, as the partial creator of this materialist world view, may offer an opening to a renewed collective identity as a specifically human sense of Being. If and when human society receives a sign or message from an extraterrestrial civilization through the radio-telescope listening posts of SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence), operative now for several decades, I would suggest that essentially overnight we could become aware of our collectively shared and unitary beingness with a sharp objectivity. Then, we would all have no choice but to experience all human beings as one shared being, now finally defined against an actually existing contrastive outgroup. The morning

following such an announcement we would all begin to look at each other differently, with exactly this sense of a collective singularity, definiteness, preciousness, and unity that defines individual self realization. Indeed, in his later writings, Jung (1959, 1975) suggested that only such an encounter would allow us to see ourselves objectively. Correspondingly it would be no accident that Gurdjieff (1950) places the dialogues between Beelzebub and his grandson, on the way to earth for a last try at our collective spiritual awakening, on his imaginary spaceship "Karnack."

Given the vast distances involved, and the immense time span required for any attempted reply to such a signal, and even the possibility that this signal would only be received by us after the demise of such a civilization, its primary impact would rest, potentially forever, on the sheer fact of its occurrence. It would be the empirical knowledge of the existence of such an extra-terrestrial civilization, quite possibly uncontaminated with any detailed understanding of their similarities and differences, that would mediate this transformed experience of ourselves as one being. Considering Almaas' (1996) metaphor of a star-like point of light mediating the individual experience of essential identity, it seems significant that at the vast distances involved, our primary experience of such beings would be as from star to star. They would see us, if aware of us at all, as our sun, and we would see them as their star. This could afford a precise, collective image to match that of individual self realization.[9]

Yet, it is also true, for Almaas (1996) and other transpersonalists (Hunt, 2003; Hunt, Dougan, Grant, & House, 2002), that every plausible higher state of consciousness has its specific disintegrative, potentially psychopathological, analogue or inversion. For Almaas what inverts, blocks, and/or can be stirred up by the development of the "point" is narcissism, with its compensatory grandiosity, hypersensitivity to intrusion, and vulnerability to shame and rage. On a corresponding societal level, De Zavala, Cichocka, and Eidelson (2009) located a collective narcissism of irrationally-inflated views of one's own group, with suspicion and dismissal of other groups as ultimately threatening, all hiding an implied sense of group insecurity and inadequacy.

One can see the narcissistic inversion of the positive social potential of a SETI reception in contemporary flying saucer cults, which for Jung (1959) reflected a collective compensation for anxiety concerning a shrinking planet. We see a reactive paranoia, implying a defensive human unity, in Wilheim Reich's (1957) later belief that his cloudbuster was repelling flying saucers, and in John Lilly's (1978) frantic ketamine-driven calls to the White House warning of extraterrestrial invasion. More recent developments of flying saucer scenarios as documented by Mack (1994) move beyond sightings to more threatening recalled experiences of abduction, invasive sexuality, and bizarre cross-breeding. These seem like projections of our worst fears about our own nature. Jung's view that the fascination with flying saucers represented the beginning of a new spiritual movement is confirmed by the more recent neoshamanic additions of out of body experiences, archetypal dreams, and healing abilities and spiritual teachings in many reported abduction accounts (Ring, 1989). Here, for small groups of believers, humanity is implicitly unified, but in the form of a collective paranoia, full of victimization and shame. Contemporary flying saucer movements are the extreme narcissistic inversion of Durkheim's cult of man, and Jung's (2009) collective "stellar identity." Their collective spiritual and transpersonal potential seems minimal. This is very much in contrast to the conjoined mirroring potential of SETI, offering the hope of a mutual and collective sense of becoming real and existentially present, as a planetary version of Winnicott's (1971) concept of shared mirroring between mother and child, which allows the latter to become self consciously present to itself, and is later internalized as the inner dialogic structure of all human consciousness.[10]

## Conclusion

There is a final potential barrier to these conditional social scientific predictions of a planetary spirituality of the future modeled on transpersonal realization, Weber's this-worldly mysticism, and Durkheim's cult of man. Just as on the individual level it seems necessary to fully accept actual feelings of deficiency and suffering for the spontaneous emergence of transformative states (Laski, 1962), and just as Solnit (2009) documents the emergence of temporary utopian communities only in the wake of unavoidable collective disasters, so any future planetary spirituality, potentially in response to an unambiguous SETI communication, would also necessitate our fully feeling our collective and objective shame over our continuing destruction of our planet and exploitation of fellow humanity. That *will* be the face we present, and so become more fully aware of in ourselves, in event of a SETI communication. Only the genuine acceptance of that shame could allow this undistorted

emergence of the collective consciousness of our identity as Being as envisioned by Durkheim, Heidegger, and Jung. This collective unity could then become its own secular and scientific form of a traditional religious notion of original sin and the subsequent fall from grace. It is the undeniability of history as our outward collective face. Gurdjieff (1950) called this "objective conscience," and as in all consciousness, it can be individual or collective. We have been inquiring here into its future planetary potential.

Put most simply, a SETI "answer" will create a newly specific and collective questioning about "us" in our being and beingness, in our own unique singularity as mirrored in "theirs". And *that* will have spiritual or transpersonal consequences related to Almaas on the "point" and Jung on the Self—here as a collective seed for a new planetary wide form of spirituality.

**Notes**

1. This paper was presented at a Plenary Session at the 17th International Transpersonal Association Conference in Moscow, Russia, on June 25, 2010. The author thanks Linda Pidduck for editorial assistance.
1. A recent example is Jonathan Lear's (2006) account in Radical Hope of the young Crow Plenty Coup's vision quest dream of a chickadee, mythologically significant for tribal elders in such a way as to lead the hitherto warlike Crow to a policy of accommodation to the U.S. cavalry that preserved their traditional way of life to a degree lost by the other native tribes of the region.
2. Part of the usefulness of these earlier generations of sociologists and anthropologists comes from their primary valuation of phenomenological description, an approach that fits best with the qualitative methodologies of contemporary transpersonal studies.
3. In shamanistic societies, where higher states of consciousness are encouraged and socially important, parapsychological experiences are more accepted and seem more frequent (Walsh, 2007; Hunt, 2010); this is based, I would suggest, on the shared archetypal imagery that is prominent in, these states (Hunt, 1995). No one is surprised when tulips appear in my yard on the same morning they do across town. On a similar sociological basis (as opposed to a psychological or botanical one), there might not be surprise at many instances of spontaneous telepathy, including Ganzfeld research where hit rates of imagery between senders and receivers can exceed mathematical chance. Westerlund, Parker, Dakvist, & Hodlaczky (2007) found higher qualitative matches between receiver imagery and the art prints not sent than even in those randomly selected for sending, suggesting that especially on these archetypal levels of imagination human individuals are already far more joined than is commonly realized—joined not in terms of some special individual psychology of extra-sensory perception, but in terms of a more general sociology of consciousness as collective.
4. For Almaas (1996), realization of the point is also the beginning of openness to nondual, nonconceptual transpersonal states.
5. Other examples of 20th century false pearls include "the proletarian worker" as the ideal of self-actualization in the Soviet tradition and "American Civil Religion" (Bellah, Madsen, Sulivan, Swindler, & Tipton, 1985), with its personal ideals based on figures such as Lincoln and Jefferson, also somewhat romanticized by Maslow (1971). These collective versions of personal essence constitute circumscribed societal paraphrases of Maslow's self-actualization, but all sharing a common narrowness through integrating personal autonomy and social responsibility by means of essentially regional values falsely held to be ideals for all of humanity. Purporting to define the ethics of a new humanity, the Fascist superman, Marxist worker, and American civic individual were secularized religious forms of a this-worldly, broadly Judeo-Christian propheticism, with ever-present temptations of a narrow fundamentalism. They are ostensibly secular but actually utopian forms of what Weber (1922/1963) termed "ethical prophecy," with its charismatically sanctioned "salvation" through social action. Troeltsch, Durkheim, Jung, and contemporary transpersonalism exemplify the opposite tendency toward a this-worldly, often secular, and more directly experiential mysticism.
6. It has come to my attention that this combination of Durkheim, De Chardin, Heidegger, Jung, and transpersonal psychology with a spirituality of globalization bears a similarity to Leonardo Boff's "trans-cultural phenomenology" (Dawson, 2004).
7. From the perspective of "deep ecology" (Fox, 1995),

such a development would remain "anthropocentric," but it is difficult to see how human beings could ever unite to stop environmental degradation on a planet-wide basis from anything other than a raised and expanded human identity, in which, with Heidegger, our beingness "shepherds" the multiple dimensions of natural being we impact. It is on this basis that Zimmerman (1994) sees the later Heidegger as offering the most fundamental philosophical voice that might come to underlie the ecological movement.

8. This would be an objective extension of American "civic religion" (Bellah, Madsen, Sulivan, Swindler, & Tipton, 1985), but with a planetary breadth of the conjoined ethic of autonomy and responsibility that would transcend its present "chosen people" narcissism.
9. Note that, consistent with the core facticity of modern science, none of this analysis works as an experiential thought experiment beyond its plausibility as a social scientific hypothesis. It would have to be empirically real to have this impact and to potentially unify us as a single humanity, transcending all political, economic, ethnic, and religious differences.
10. None of these predictions, combining Durkheim, Weber, De Chardin, Heidegger, Jung, and Almaas require what I would myself regard as some fantasy of human perfectability. I have developed elsewhere (Hunt, 2009) a cognitive-developmental theory of an inherent and inevitable unbalance in human nature based on the cross integrations between the ultimately incommensurable domains of person knowing and thing/tool intelligence. These domains, derived from a reinterpretation of Kant on the sublime, and similar to the approach of Mithen (1998) to human evolution, can neither be fully and permanently synthesized, nor fully separated, and so produce a permanent unbalance of partial and ultimately unstable amalgams. These also create our perpetual sense of novelty and sense of the numinous, which is also the source of human freedom and choice. On this model each culture and civilization is a relatively long-term integration, but never a final synthesis, of these logically separate domains, with Weber's periodic eras of secularization as their re-separation and more overt collision. Accordingly, the present extrapolations of a planetary spirituality of the future are describing a potential cultural integration of the spiritual and material that might, with some luck, replace our secularized era, one in which the tensions underlying all human culture stand out more vividly than in the eras of relative and longer term integration. Durkheim's cult of man would foresee such an emergent integrative culture in the context of present globalization.

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