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**Empathy and Anastomosis: Transcending Ideology**

**Part I: Empathy, and the triad of ideology:**

Empathy empowers human beings in ways that ideological absolutes which polarize the notions of good and evil cannot mirror. In order to contextualize the phenomena of empathy, it is essential to first clarify certain aspects of emotional interaction incorporated in social practice. There are three central manifestations of emotional communication which circumvent rational exchange and are thus prelingual in their context, they are emotional contagion, empathy, and sympathy. Emotional contagion is when the emotion of another causes a response in oneself in a subconscious undifferentiated manner. Thus, when one believes the reflected emotional state to be their own. Empathy is when despite knowing the external origin of the emotion one is reciprocating, it is reciprocated in an undifferentiated fashion such that one truly identifies with the state of being and not with the person who is experiencing the state of being. Finally, sympathy is where the individual who is being observed experiencing an emotion is witnessed and approximated as merely that, without the further identification with the emotionality they display. Hence, our emotional interactions reflect a myriad of ideological dispositions depending upon their magnitude relative to one’s mechanism of identification. That is to say, human nature can be approximated as an emergent ontology which derives itself from the coalescence of increasingly generalized social customs as they are addressed interpersonally among individuals. Beginning with the idea of a “self”, which implies the existence of an identity that extends our conditional awareness beyond the boundaries of pure determinism. Continuing with the notion of a “tribe” which describes an elevated application of the human tendency to form an identity as it is generalized such that it aligns with the same general approximation of a group of self-identified beings. Furthering still into the concept of a “nation” which in essence is the process of codification of that initial self/tribe mentality which then projects its basic components unto the greater masses via the mechanism of law or enforced customs. In addition to these subjectively generated mechanisms, there are also relatively objective forces extant in our shared environment which play a role in shaping our collective ideologies. For instance, an individual who is raised within the boundaries of a lush rainforest, and whose tribal society participates with the natural forces in that environment in order to sustain themselves may approximate the natural world as being one that is giving and nurturing. Whereas an individual who is raised in the bustling cosmopolis of a modern world city like New York or Singapore, where sustenance is derived from the acquisition of hyper processed material goods exchanged for symbolic currency which is given in exchange for labor, may consider nature to be an idealized or antiquated appeal to primality which possesses no intrinsic will. Both individuals would be correct in their approximations, however only to the degree that they describe what it is that their environments represent to them personally on account of their experience. Objectively thinking, their experience means little to nothing in regard to what is actually at work in the greater shared environment. The complex ecosystem and chemical and biological processes which comprise the natural environment of the lush forest are not discernable via participation in their processes. Neither are the complex supply chains and global production networks made visible via merely participating in a consumerist lifestyle. However the sustainability of both of these networks of sustenance are intrinsically linked, and if unbalanced, mutually assure each other’s destruction. Neither individual in this given context can thus take responsibility for the role they play in their environment, as it relates to morality or ethics. Neither presumably “chose” to come into being wherever it is that they happened to be born merely on account of the level of virtue associated with that particular place. Nor does either of the entities possess a degree of agency which enables them to alter or otherwise divert the practice of their respective ideological customs in order to achieve such balance merely on account of their rational understanding that interdependence does actually exist. Although people can learn to rationally understand that their subjective experience is not indicative of global reality, this learning does not necessarily empower them to act on this knowledge. In order to do this, they would need to already be completely in control of their every thought and action. Human beings, however, do not function in this way. Our design is to delegate the responsibility for our behaviors via habit.

We formulate habitual responses based on how they are reinforced by the experiences they illicit from whichever locality we occupy with most of our time. This process is not the rational component, it is the subconscious, or the compartmentalized decision-making processes which allow us to employ our conscious awareness in order to form non-reactive or metaphysical impressions of our environment and experiences. When an individual does this is it called their “personality” or “identity”. When a tribe does this it is called their “culture” or “ritual”. When a nation does this it is called their “ideology” or “politics”. The problem with the individual subconscious, is that it is slow to acclimate or adapt to changes in the environment. This lethargy results in the experience of change as though it were suffering. The problem with the tribal culture, is that it is suited to a particular lifestyle which may or may not remain viable or feasible relative to changing local trends, or may be based on archaic beliefs derived from misinformed logic. The problem with nationalistic politics is that they create a substantial dived between the worlds peoples and thus drive a system replete with redundancies that exponentially increase the endogenic and exogenic costs associated with global progress. These three systems are also, unfortunately, self-reinforcing. Because the first disposition reflects the second which is reflected in the third, the notion that each is somehow innately valid arises from the unconscious recognition of symmetry throughout the three.

The subsequent role played by these socially reinforced, reactionary ideologies is that they are thus self-perpetuated at the cost of those they are meant to empower. In his treatise on the “Power of the Powerless”, Vaclav Havel identifies such a trend when he likens the autocratic and socialist states responsible for hypocritically oppressing the workforce to being slaves to their own ideology. 1 This reduction of ideological tyranny applies to the core principles shared throughout all of human existence. As mentioned above, the trinity of reflexive behavior, reflexive culture and reflexive ideology work in synchrony to ensure the arbitrary enslavement of the present to the antiquated practices of the past despite the progress and change which has emerged as the future. It is this triadic societal entity that our minds cannot yet seem to understand. Thus, in an effort to reassure ourselves of the validity of our collective logic, we as beings are prone to mindlessly espousing rhetoric which edifies the superior or clandestine value of our local ideology. The romantic term for such espousing is sophistry, whereas the secular terminology identifies this trend as nationalism. However, when the notion of radical freedom is breached in any of a plethora of dissertations ranging from mysticism to philosophical treatise, the freedom that is described has to do with a transcendence of the influence each of the three unconscious mechanisms described have upon the life one lives. Christ for instance, is said to have preached merely fellowship and a sense of collective responsibility for each other regardless of any materialistically divisive components. Or simply, unconditional love. Buddha taught these things as well, asserting the importance of an eightfold path which sought to make the unconscious conscious, thus changing the triadic system of ideology from the bottom up.2 That is to say, both teachings essentially identify a way to make each action taken willful and arranged according to a logic defined by the greater good rather than the local custom. Socrates taught a very similar dialectic, which urged each individual to question all things, whether those things originated from themselves, the gods or the culture.3 Ergo, the noble path as defined by any of the massively applicable religious ideologies, including those espoused as secular rhetoric, essentially define a process of freeing oneself from the ignorance entrenched within the blind ideological behemoth comprised in sociopolitical or national identities. In a sense, this logically implies that the ultimate goal of any of these belief systems is globalization. The issues which have plagued the global community for the last millennia can all be boiled down to a failure of each of these belief systems as it relates to their methodology for spreading their influence. Rather than uniting via their similarities, they perpetuated conflict and attempted to dominate one another according to their differences. However, these differences derived from the unique identity, cultural custom, and ideology which the belief systems inherited via the mechanisms they were intended to disempower. This is an important distinction, because it is what lead to the eventual treaty in Westphalia responsible for creating the modern notion of what comprises the nation state.4 As well as the nation state itself is essentially the entrenching of a dichotomy which restricts the various mechanisms of ideology from realizing their ultimate aim, basically repressing them. This repression results in the accumulation of tensions between global agencies which is expressed and released through warfare or otherwise mitigated via neoliberal practices aimed at ensuring a greater proportion of economic interdependence, than cultural difference. The issues are obvious, but the fact that this economic interdependence can change drastically at any given time results in the likelihood that any stabilization of the global atmosphere brought about by this system is fated to be short-lived and unpredictable.

**Part II: Suffering and the Knowledge of death:**

It is said that to live, is to suffer, and that sacrifice and the willful engagement in suffering for the sake of lessening the potential suffering of another is what it means to “love” or show compassion. Wisdom, in part, is strongly associated with a willingness to confront the mortal condition, namely how all that is living will inevitably come to perish. 5 What’s more, the manner in which this “perishing” takes place, is simultaneously deterministic and radically freeing. As an archetype, death can embody both determinism alongside the ultimate freedom of will from its compulsive conventions. To do this, what is determined by convention or pattern is the physical, biological, and chemical processes of being. The body ages, sickness exists and so on and so forth. While the probable causes of death in any given scenario cannot be narrowed down necessarily in terms of predictability, they can be reasonably hypothesized. However, when it comes to the reaction of the will to the phenomena of death, there is no possible way to make any predictions. This is because the psychological reaction to something universally relevant like death, is bound to be unique to each unique individual. While ritualized, or cultural practices might diffuse themselves throughout their relevant localities when it comes to the nature and interaction with death, the individual and their understanding of their role relative to the culture and so on elicits a singularity within consciousness, where one is simultaneously made aware of both the separateness and the connectedness of humanity. In this way, from the seat of the collective unconscious, familiarity with and acceptance of the eventuality of death is directly proportional to the appraised value of life one is living.6 This is because to come to life, is also to come to death, two circumstances of which neither presents a state that is consciously chosen. Through love and the pursuit of universal fellowship we meet death according to terms that deplete its impact. If one comes to associate themselves with the wellbeing of others and invests their efforts in the practice and proliferation of empathy driven identity, the thought of losing the individual form in this lifetime is less and less unpleasant. There are a few reasons for this that will be touched on in later sections, but for now I will explain what I mean with a brief example.

When it comes to consciousness, there is really no consensus on what it is as a construct. Neither are its origins, process of development, or potential higher states of relevance known. However, we do know that neurons function by using electrical signals and these signals can be stored and accessed due to the alterations of the plasticity of a cluster of cells which react predictably to electrical impulses.7 That said, this only describes the process by which your senses lead you through existence. That is, according to the infrastructure mentioned above, one ought to be feral, content to spend almost all their time either pursuing survival or avoiding danger. However, it is the position of this essay, that consciousness is comprised of a subtle or exceedingly non-dense self-sensing component which is also capable of sensing other consciousness beyond itself according to the same mechanisms. An identity is an entrenched familiarity with a pattern of strongly reinforced expectations, conscious interactions, and behaviors relative to one’s locality in space. Along with this localization of sensory awareness comes an extremely personal attachment to the manner of reception one’s identity is met with. This creates a circumstance wherein the individual is at once driven to please and relate to others via politeness or small talk or otherwise brief and impersonal interactions, while on the other hand the reluctance toward being controlled by external factors is incredibly difficult to reconcile in an era where submission to social class systems are imperative to one’s participation and success in the shared postmodern environment. Those who ultimately fail to reconcile this cognitive dissonance tend to project its implications either deeper inward or more aggressively outward, and of course a third method which does neither and merely grows according to its own unique nature and is not projected at all. Those guilty of the first two reactive archetypes relative to most nations and cultural practices, tend to fixate upon nationalism or some other socially relevant separatist mechanism within the collective unconscious. Whereas the third state of being describes something akin to severe social impairment.

I have concluded, after some mulling, that death is really a very beautiful thing. Of course, it can be scary, and depressing. But then again, life can be scary and depressing too, so I don't think that is what gives death its power over us. And death is an unknowable thing, it extends beyond the reach of our awareness, because it is (by definition) the absence of awareness. So, these two characteristics of death create a sort of logical limbo for our rational minds. We are reflective beings, we take cues from our environment, and respond to those cues in order to participate in a game, called survival. Everything living plays this game. But the game has one rule. (well, thermodynamics does really), and that rule is, that nothing is perfect. Perfection does not exist, because if it did, the game would be unfair, and diversity would eventually be eliminated. This would be bad, because a universe filled with one thing is basically the same as a universe filled with nothing. However, this one rule, eventually causes all living things to die. But death begs the question, if nothing can be perfect, how can death perfectly happen? How can it completely erase something? Wouldn't that be against the rule? Questions like these lead to answers like nothing is ever really gone, or death is an illusion, or life is an illusion. But they are just an accident, the questions, that is. Because they are invalid queries. As we already know the answer is that death exists. Tangibly. We know this because we haven't met anyone who has been alive forever, and we have not been alive forever. Because of this, we know that we will not be alive forever. Because of science we know that the rule of death extends to the very nature of reality itself. Even stars die, the earth itself will die eventually, the entire universe will die eventually. The question of how death is imperfect is answered much more simply than questioning the nature of reality, however. Death is imperfect because it does not account for reproduction. It does not account for timelessness. It does not account for consciousness being able to share itself even after the death of its being. So that makes it imperfect. It does not kill all of us, our memory survives, and is carried in the memories of others, and passed down from their memories to the future endlessly. The marks you left upon the surface of existence continue to shape the entire universe endlessly like ripples in the waters of time, recycling our energy infinitely until the cosmos itself burns out and reignites. And there again will we be. Because the game mentioned in the beginning isn't played by life. Life is like the pieces on the board. Reality is like the board, consciousness is the player.

When a chess game is over, the players don't cease to exist, they simply cease to participate in specific games. Because of free will, as soon as they are not playing a game, they will possess the potential to play any other game. And when they choose to play, inevitably, they will call the game they're playing "new". They will in doing so thrust the previous game into a state of invisible certainty called the "past" and utilize their knowledge of past experience in order to inform the game they are playing currently. Which takes their imagination of themselves to the future, from which perspective they can watch their actions. Eventually the game is ended, and their manifested past present and future will fade into some hobbled down version of themselves back in the subconscious of the players. Perhaps then the same players go to different boards, however they forgot their prior experience. the question is, would the game the played then mirror exactly the game they were made to forget. Or would they simply follow their intuition, trusting their feelings to guide them. Perhaps then the players begin new games, participating according to the same rules. But with different opponents. There will be certainties, the games will begin, and they will end. But for the duration of their existence, each game creates a different portrayal of play. Different players, having experienced different games compile their experiences and use the knowledge they attain to inform their play in future games. This makes the future games impossible to determine, because the players are constantly changing the way they play. So in that way, each game is momentary and fleeting, but because of the nature of the players and the way experiences are integrated and utilized to shape future experiences, they always exist, so long as players exist. So the universe is playing a game called consciousness. consciousness is playing a game called life, and life is playing a game called survival. But we are humans, we aren't just life. We are a combination of the matter of the universe, the awareness of consciousness, and the experience of life. And we are playing a game called society. But we are experiencing something unprecedented in the universe prior to our existence. Because we are remembering that we are consciousness, and we have become lost in our own game. And we have begun to think we are the pieces we have made for ourselves. And that has made us fearful of death. But death is just a rule, in a game, that recycles its pieces, and its board, but leaves its players untouched. We have become lost in our game of desire, and it is time to let that game end, we have become ruled by our game of scarcity and we must allow that game to end, we have become enraptured in the experience of apathy and we must allow that game to end. We must strive for more than comfort, and allow humanity to begin a new game, with the same rules, but with players that have experienced the results of evil and of greed and of separateness. And who know the benefit of kindness, and sharing, and unity. Compassion for others is what allows for society to grow unfettered by selfish desires, empathy is historically proven to thrust empires into golden ages. We cannot continue as a race either claiming to be a disease and thus undeserving of salvation or superior beings convinced of our own personal god hood. We are human beings, all of us, some more kind than clever, some more clever than kind, some quick to rage, and some self-deprecatingly reserved. But regardless of our demeanor, or our mannerisms, or the subjects of our conversations, or the drugs we do or don't do, or the tv we watch or we don't watch, or the kids we have or choose not to have, or the genders we copulate with or we do not copulate with, or the Gods we worship or we do not worship, we are still just humans. Made beautiful because we reach for perfection and perceived as cursed because we cannot grasp it. But we are in a way divine, because perfection is an invention of our minds, a tool with which to study and understand all things. Because no matter how long the search, or how honest the individual, perfection will never be found, and that makes it infinite, comprised of multitudes upon multitudes of shared experiences. But it is also a poison that darkens the light of our lives, casting its shadow over all that we touch, rendering it transient, imagining a better version of everything. This poison devours gratitude and shapes it into ambition, this poison devours compassion and shapes it into caution, this poison preys on empathy and shapes it into violence.

It is time to end violence, to do this we must end oppression, to do this we must act on the behalf of compassion, and not ask that we get to keep our possessions and self-devouring routines, but demand that we will not rest until those comforts exist for others. We can refuse to be oppressed by greed, merely by ceasing to participate in it. You see humanity is an amazing miracle, each human is essentially pure potential, and the amazing thing about pure potential, is it can become anything it desires to become. But humans have long since been distracted by the ego, spitting its poisons into their. Emptiness, calling it loneliness. The ego keeps the mind trapped, either in the future with anxiety, or in the past with guilt. This renders individual’s incapable of living in their present moment. However, this moment can be reached when it is understood that each player is exactly equal in every way, only their bodies differ. And only very slightly. But on their inside, when regarding who they really are, they are so amazingly different it is as though they were each a universe entirely in it of themselves. Wake up from the game of selfishness and begin to play selflessness. Really honestly investigate and ask yourself, "who am I?" Then prove it.

**Part III: Sympathy and the Nationalistic Identity**

Nationalism, or the inherent recognition of a preeminent separateness inherited via the locality of one’s birth is essentially a misbegotten and socially reinforced fixation of the identity which derives its meaning from the relationship between the individual and the roles prescribed by the society they are born into. This state of sympathetically driven fixation generally begets a subsequent association with a demonstrably nationalistic or ethnocentric approximation of value as it exists in accordance with the proportionate alienation of definable “outliers” by the self-proclaimed national or ethnic superiors. This limits the relevance of nations or cultures as they compare with a potentially globalized society, because it forces various sovereign nations to interact through the personified lens of cumulative ego driven motivations and separationist ideals. Thus, postmodern society requires, in order to transcend the adversarial and conflict ridden norms of the past, the establishment or development of a complex and interdependent system of social hierarchy which categorizes these differences in an empathetic and ultimately equanimous way, that is a system which prioritizes at its foundation the relationship between the individual and humanity such that the notion of global divisiveness can be abandoned. Otherwise, in the absence of this establishment or development, oppressive mechanisms are bound to arise from the inherent archetypal divisiveness indicative of such polarities. Some societies, such as India, have prepared for this eventuality by prescribing a perpetual mechanism which determines social roles within the community, as well as defining ritual duties and obligations and associating them with the roles they are meant to serve.8  Citizens thus supposedly benefit from being alleviated of the need to define their roles for themselves. However, the unpredictable nature of human development, as it relates to the intrinsic uniqueness of individuals, may cause this imposed system of social value to be confining and tyrannical to their ability to live in their truth. 9 For instance, although caste defines many roles and accounts for various societal mechanisms, it doesn’t speak to the empowerment of what an individual identifies as in and of themselves. Additionally, the greater societal fluctuations inherent to progress may render many practices undertaken by these types of cultural or religious enterprises anachronistic and/or reactionary. Thus such sentiments which resist progress due to the primacy of ritualized social practices inherited from antiquity must be capable of allowing themselves to incorporate change more fluidly, and without inciting widespread disruption of the societal homeostasis.

This brings us back to the seemingly abstract idea of “Unconditional Love” or less romantically “universal fellowship”, and the question of whether it is capable of being embodied on a global scale. To answer this question, we need to transcend the perpetual practices and social constructs which subsist upon the furtherment of divergence or otherwise rely upon inequality in order to persist. It is the position of this essay that if understood archetypally as well as analytically and socially, Universal fellowship is revelatory of profound wisdom and is therefore immensely empowering to the point of being able to radically free societies worldwide from the entrenched ideological practices which currently enslave them. That said, when discussing “Love” and Universal fellowship interchangeably, it is important to refrain from reflexively interpreting it as being indicative of the shallow or immature interpersonal affections which love is often taken to represent. Love as it is described in concert with empathy and compassion, is greater than the sporadic moments of spiritually motivated romanticism which often accompany its mention. The term meant to embody these notions is ‘limerence” and it has no place in this discussion. In our hearts, as human beings, humanity has known itself forever, and we have known each other forever, living each life wading through the waters of the universe searching for each other. Or less poetically, one could argue that this metaphor represents the same archetype which determines what secular science translates through the process of genetic evolution according to the more grounded Darwinian logic. 10

Human beings are not inherently or intuitively multicentric in their awareness, or multipolar in their consciousness. Nor do they happen to exist within a utopia, thus in this life human beings are collectively tormented and oftentimes controlled through fear. There are so many who fear vulnerability so much, that they project accountability for their emotional state unto externalities in their environments, or relationships. It is because of the principle of Love as defined in this essay as being the conscious recognition of oneself in another, and of the other in oneself, that one might transcend the illusory separateness which plagues our limited sensory awareness. The knowledge that there exists no hierarchy by which to prescribe human beings with differential value is empowering in that it renders each individual both essential and equanimous. Human worth is immeasurable, so no one can speak to a human’s value, as for beauty, that is something else, it is what experiences are to experiencers, beautiful. It is due to the archetypal conceptualization of the notion of Love that we can recollect ourselves in conjunction with other beings. “Who I am, what I am, why I am.” These questions rest in the cavernous abyss of the shared Human experience and they can be leveraged to manipulate the masses just as easily as they are able to bring forth salient concepts of interdependence. I aim to elucidate the secrets of existence as such secrets are revealed to me by through the gnosis that accompanies the embodiment of the triumvirate conditions of Love, Empathy and Compassion respectively. As such I am driven to awake gnosis in others, in such a way leads them to their own individual truth and thereby begins to heal and reconstruct society in the image of peace. One individual at a time, and in faith that this healing is contagious as in it is transmittable via the phenomena of emotional contagion. With this gnosis comes the understanding that we are wholly inseparable from each other, having evolved an interdependence which shifted our reliance on favorable environmental conditions to a reliance on societal structure and social cohesion.

**Part IV: Self and Society, the rejection of indoctrination**

Human beings exist beyond the limits inherent to the sensory scope of what we can immediately comprehend. This has always been so. The human capacity for awareness stretches vastly beyond what relates solely to the subjectively experiential. The key to this awareness that we possess, is that in order to access it, one must stretch their conception of “Self” beyond the limits of the isolated human container. This is done by associating and metaphorically relating to archetypal forms in such a way that the Identity develops as its own conditional archetype and can thus intuitively relate to and interpret the larger realities which arise from nature. But before I can explain the nature of that path, I must first tell you of the nature my path Not in its entirety of course, but merely in regard to the aspects of my experience which serve as evidence that the process described is capable of extracting wisdom from the collusion of emotional and observational stimulus. Thus, it is not out of arrogance, or self-importance, but because of the interpersonal nature through which the empathetic activation of archetypal awareness derives its wisdom. Wisdom which emerges from the dichotomy of archetypal truth and subjective experience. To reconcile these two polarities, one must address them simultaneously, thus forming a non-dual object of consciousness by which they can be held uniquely relative to each other and therefore distinguished in an a-causal fashion without being susceptible to false correlations. 11This description alludes to the functional mechanism of consciousness which derives itself as empathy. My path is a confusing, and chaotic path relative to those who did not live it, a statement that would be true regardless of who’s lips it fell from. So, I will ask that as readers you try to remain fair. The idea in simple terminology is very straightforward, by presenting an individual component every step of the way in conjunction with an archetypal component, an empathetic disposition is intuitively, and perpetually active. This reinforces the practice of empathy as both a social mechanism and as a cognitive learning tool, while it also establishes a framework from which to develop the archetypal component in a way which immediately applies it to the conceptualized self and thus fosters the preconditions necessary to manifest multicentric being and intuit fluctuations in non-local consciousness.

Thus, I will ask you to understand that it is not narcissism, but necessity that drives the somewhat autobiographical nature of this message. I do not know the ways of those who are not myself. My message is that the universe speaks a language we are each capable of learning and participating with, thus we can each develop a personal relationship with the collective unconscious that permeates all of humanity. I aim to show that by fostering this relationship each day, we become capable of realizing previously unknown levels of potential. So, I will share with you my experience with the universe. In doing this, my hope is not to cause others to emulate my lifestyle or adore my words or my person. Nor is it to elevate my social status as though it exists beyond human limits, as in much the same way as I perceive this universal relationship, so to can any human being and to the same or even greater degree. My aim is not to gain recognition or infer specialty. I do not intend to paint myself as a deity or insist that my relationship with the archetypal forms is mine alone. My passion is not an ambitious one, but a loving one. I want the people of the world, who are my family, and who I love, and rely on and seek to learn about, to find within themselves the key to self-acceptance and the courage to be loving, and to employ empathetic consciousness. I want to live in a world where compassion is of greater worth than greed, so I am writing and learning as much as I can about how to dissolve greed via the inception of empathy and compassion. I am not claiming that these things are discoveries, especially I do not claim that they are exclusively my discoveries or that they necessarily all directly relate to all human beings. Nor am I attempting to present myself as enlightened beyond reproach. I am simply grateful for the way in which the seemingly chaotic stanzas of mental and environmental anguish that have peppered my experience, have come to find synchronistic harmony at the close of each measure, during the music that has been my life. And it is this music that I wish to show others to hear. Because this abundant symphony is made up of billions of unique instruments all playing their individual roles unaware of the importance, they possess to both each other and to the symphony itself, it is likely that most of those who comprise the harmony do not perceive their immeasurable value. This subsequently causes them to devalue all things.

        To clarify the metaphor of the symphony that has been established, and the music, it is perhaps redundant to say, that the music is love, and the symphony is human kind. As I have explained, I am only sharing my personal journey, because it is the only journey, I possess actual knowledge of, and thus serves as enough foundation by which to associate all relative truth. Also, because I have come to understand that the unique qualities which have defined who we have been, and who we ought to become in terms of humanity as a whole have to deal with the notions of power and politics just as much as more emotional archetypes, I have categorized them as such, first there is the need for individuals to learn to approach the attempt to control their environment with a humble reluctance to control experience coupled with a thirst to participate efficiently within the environment. Which is to say, it has never really mattered what happens around us or to us for that matter. It is the role of the empathetic to always be far more concerned with what was happening within themselves as well as what was happening within those around them and what could be done to address their needs. It is the first concern, that of what occurs within, which serves as the initial launching point for empathetic consciousness. So, begins the message of compassion that I am to apply to the political and the global reality we all share. I will ask you to read it to completion, no matter how confusing or vague it may initially seem.

     I do not remember my life eidetically. I don’t know why, but I don’t seem to be able to call forth perfect memories at will or remember the details of most experiences. But I do seem to have a good memory. I mean, I remember the things I do, with emotional clarity. And the things I have experienced that have had meaning to me have always been experienced within me. There are whole parts of my life where I remember only dreams, and for the most part I remember feelings only. And then I use my imagination to paint those feelings with the contexts in my experience that coincided with the feelings I remember. I feel these in my heart. Like a warmth spreading out through my body, having its locus deep within my chest. So, for me at least, my thoughts begin in my heart, and they are sent to my brain to be interpreted by my mind, so that I can understand my experience. It is important to clarify, that I do not speak of sensations. I am not talking about the limbic cocktail that evokes our nerves to tingle with alert purpose. I am talking about the peace behind that cocktail and of the profound awareness which informs it. This is an important distinction, because sensations can be deceitful, the sensation of joy that is felt in the body of a healer is no different from the joy in a killer. What differs between these two archetypes is their relationship with the sensation. And most times the nature of this joyous sensation is determined by the contextual nature of life experience. For me I have always felt joy after bringing peace to an environment. From acts as small as smiling at someone lovingly or embracing a stranger as though they were an old friend. I feel joy when I calm an angry peer, or I elucidate a personal truth to some random individual in hope that doing so will allow them to feel seen, and heard, and valued.  It has been my experience that most other individuals are well intentioned. But I have also learned that intentions do not make people trust worthy. I say this, because I have learned through pain, that humans become something else when they are afraid. They change under the influence of fear, they become sad, or angry, or despondent. They abandon their faith while in fear’s presence, and they forget who they are to escape themselves, to escape their bodies, to escape their fate. And in our time, fear has ruled for so long that it’s influence rules all aspects of our society. It has become so powerful, that we have begun to fear being fearful. What was once beauty being fueled by love, has become fear of not being beautiful. What was once passion, fueled by hope, has become fear of not being successful. What was once honor, fueled by empathy, has become defensiveness for fear of defeat. In these vague terms, it seems an obvious problem, with obvious global manifestations.  Things like war, and the sexualization of culture, the consumerist mentality of overly consumptive societies, the presence of terrorism all over the globe. But I cannot speak wisely of these things, as I have not thoroughly studied them.

This reality was initially hard for me to accept. The reality that I have no knack for scientific understanding or mathematical precision. But eventually I realized I had a knack of my own. I could see larger things with quite a lot of inexplicable and shockingly insightful clarity. Things like relationships, personalities, transformative patterns of change, emotional states and their causes, and the prediction of potential atmospheric shifts in most environments. I realized that really, society doesn’t exist the way we are taught that it does. It doesn’t have a mind or an intention. I realized that the personal aspects of our individual lives, are what determine the nature of our societies. This became vastly apparent once I began to interact with other individuals. In the realm of psychology, it is generally understood that most everyone alive is lead throughout their experience by their emotions. These emotions that are reacted to however, evolve from within the contexts of the respective societies occupied by the individuals experiencing them. Simultaneously, the social implications of the way emotional reactions are employed is largely determined by the cultural or political customs of the society itself. This means that a great deal of potential power and influence are available to any entity capable of prescribing these social mechanics. This means, as anyone with a history book would notice, that historically speaking, every attempt to utilize fear as a method of ruling groups of individuals has had the same pattern. It works marvelously in the short term. It isn’t a pleasant thing to admit, but it is the truth. Consider someone like Hitler. He was able to awake anger in others, preying on their fears of inadequacy, and insecurity.12 I had always had problems with my teachers growing up, not outwardly of course. I dislike conflict very much, and so I tend to process things internally as I have previously explained. My problem was that each of my teachers, it seemed, would have our whole class read a book about the holocaust. And for this it should be known I am grateful. And to the authors I am thankful for their wise tomes. However, they fail to communicate the actionable information we need to access in order to identify and address the conditions which made such a state of events possible. They communicate instead the plight of the subaltern and give a sense of the potential consequences which follow hateful autocrats being let to come to power. In the postmodern world, we need a system which defines the individual as a microcosm in and of itself, which is reflective of the amalgamation of various layers of social consciousness. This would then allow for the simulation or investigation of the social constructs which are put forth and perpetuated by various seemingly innocuous social mechanism and emotional practices. In my thought the solution to the formation of such a conception is empathetic interpretation. That is, the identification with the emotional states which appear to be reinforced by social customs and projections, and the correlation of these emotional states with the individual and the pressures and forces capable of capitalizing on this bridging of the gestalt and individual. However, instead of this approach, the classical attempt to rationalize the holocaust and basically all forms of collective human evil seem to be more concerned with making us understand how evil and awful that thing Hitler did had been. Of course, I agreed with them, Hitler was deranged and clearly had evil intentions as well as practiced evil actions. I always thought it to be rather obvious that it was an evil thing that happened. But why did no one seem concerned with why or how it happened in the first place. I knew, as any feeling human being knew, that genocide was intrinsically immoral, and that the Jewish people certainly should not have had to suffer.  Although it seemed to me that using the record of their suffering to demonize Hitler, was distracting from the larger point. That being the millions of followers he amassed, and how quickly he amassed them, and how he turned mothers and employees and doctors and all manner of men and woman into murderers, and racists, and homophobes, and vile creatures that seemed to suddenly lose themselves to their passion for greatness, how he controlled them with their thirst for validation.13 The culprits of the holocaust were not limited to generals and political leaders. The culprits were the citizens who could exist so long as they didn’t do anything to interfere with the eradication of the citizens deemed unfit for existence. The participation of the citizens who had been arbitrarily deemed superior in the torture and extermination of those that had arbitrarily been deemed vile. The mechanism that prescribes these roles isn’t always limited to regimes it can be religious cultures (for instance in regard to homosexuals) or corporate entities in regard to corrupt economic policies. However, in the case of Germany, in context of the first world war in which Germany had been made a crucible and left to implode while other nations blamed them for the war, and refused to acknowledge their suffering effectively cutting them out from being afforded economic aid. The German people came to be shaped in such a way that their national identity was suddenly exaggerated in its separateness, this hyper nationalism lead to a dissemination of individual ideology which saw the self as it related strictly to the state. And so, in this microcosm sat the image of the macrocosm, and in the hearts of the German people there grew a thirst to be ruled rather than a desire for the individual power to rule. It was a short amount of time before this lead to the elevation of Adolph Hitler from a relatively menial position to Furor, as he climbed to the top of government by exerting his influence in such a way that catered to certain social roles and emotional stances which had been previously taboo and thus personally repressed.14 That is to say, his hyper nationalistic, divisive ideology appealed specifically to the radically disenfranchised and victimized, as well as it aimed these emotionality’s in a way that collectively projected them unto a group of individuals who presented the hyper national Germans with a equal and opposite people (the Jews) who were themselves defined by their tendency to maintain a separate nationalistic identity despite their absent homeland. Thus, the Germans who identified with their nation were aimed at the Jews who were unique in their custom to refrain from identifying with the nations they occupied. It is due to the nature of this relationship between a sudden nationalistic uprising and its sudden development of some arbitrary group of individuals into an anti-national crucible which defines the issues carried out even now by the Jewish people themselves as they continue to marginalize and disenfranchise the Palestinian people according to the same logic.15 This emotional echo of the German dilemma is repeating itself in Israel as we speak. It isn’t singular to Israel and Germany either. The role of genocide is almost central to the role of the nation state, as each time a nation is formed, it appears to cost the lives of countless minorities or socially oppressed groups within the formulated nation who fail to reflect whatever the boundaries happen to define as the majority. This practice traces back to antiquity and can be seen in every shift, local or global as it relates to the fluctuating dominance of world ideologies. 16

 By the time I was in high school I had been through a lot which had been both painful as well as alienating regarding my peers. But it had given me the opportunity to meet others like myself, and unlike myself, who had been made to feel all those things. I personally was removed from the care of my biological parents due to their inability to provide a safe environment. Rendering me an orphan. And what’s more, is that in the time we currently live, orphans are flocked together and distributed through the social welfare system via foster homes and group homes, and other similar facilities. This meant I was an orphan among orphans. And as it was my custom to romanticize my experience to boost my emotional memory, I had always felt like I belonged to this invisible culture, an unspoken brotherhood of the fatherless, and the motherless. I felt as though I was among my people, wandering with them through the emotional desert of the foster system. Certainly, some of the homes were kind, and many of them tried to understand what I was going through. But in the end, they simply saw me as a wounded abnormality, they treated me as though what I was, was something entirely different than what they were. They rarely trusted me, forcing me to admit to slights I hadn’t committed to be granted any privileges. They rarely listened to me or asked me about my past. Because they had read about it, and they were afraid of it. They were afraid of me. What’s worse, is that my nature was one that accepted my pain and sought to learn from it. I adored my difference, but more than that I adored my ability to relate, and my ability to see the world through my own eyes. Never accepting what I was told, always trusting my intuition. But because of my ability to properly process my emotional strife I was accused of feigning solidarity, of pretending to be happy. I was accused of denial and treated like a liar. It became their custom to treat me with contempt, and to punish me excessively to attempt to get a rise out of me. But I didn’t want to lose control, I didn’t want to be angry or sad. I simply wished to be allowed to heal in a way that was natural to me. And I felt sorry for them, because I knew that their inability to trust my peace, was borne from the absence of their peace.

     And so, getting back to the point. While I learned about the holocaust and the Cold War. I felt as though I profoundly understood these characters in my history books. I could understand the disenfranchised, as I had myself been made to feel insignificant and without worth. But for me it was not my suffering that went unacknowledged, it was my healing which went unnoticed. So, I did not learn to show others what it was to suffer, but I began to learn how to show others what it was to refuse to suffer. I could understand the Jewish people. After all I knew what it felt like to live my life feeling unwelcome and without a home. For the same reasons I understood the Palestinian people, who found themselves now suffering at the hands of Israel and being left without the aid of an international power to protect them.17 I knew what it was like to wander hopelessly among countless people finding comfort in those few who understood the nature of a life such as mine. I even knew what it was like to be taken from my home suddenly and separated from my family, and permanently marked as unworthy in the eyes of my society. Because I could emotionally understand these things, it seemed obvious to me what happened each time war broke out among diverse peoples. The disenfranchised among them having been made to feel the way they did, adopted the role of victim, simultaneously as they projected the role of tyrant unto any group which profited from the same circumstances. Essentially it was the bitterness of schadenfreude that lead to most conflicts.18 In a moment or perhaps many moments, of supreme dysfunction, those among the disenfranchised who had come to harbor hatred because of it, would strike out against their either purposeful or circumstantial tyrants. Peace would thus become dissolved completely into the abysmal portent of rage that swirled quietly just beneath the surface of a profoundly sick society. 19 The terrors which arise from these situations are always horrific, genocide, worldwide warfare, ethnic cleansing, the enslavement of countless peoples, the entrenching of social inequality for the pursuit of fiscal gain, these are all violations of the sanctity of humanity. 20 However although dark and difficult to digest, much can be learned from this. Not in the emulation of this disorder, but in the knowledge that it offers which gives hope of eventually avoiding the repetition of such evils. I learned not to force my suffering upon others, because I had been moved deeply by the plight of the subaltern, and It became clear to me that small decisions could have potentially dire consequences. I learned that vengeance made future aggressors out of present victims thus creating more victims subject to the transformative power of vengeance, and so on and so forth, perpetuating a cycle of endless conflict. As is the case currently in Palestine. I began to understand it: vengeance, fury, the act of seeking retribution for suffering, to appraise via cost benefit analysis, an event which is of no benefit in addition to extorting an immeasurable cost. In the heart of an individual, this spite distorts one’s own recognition of their intrinsic faults. Causing individuals to perceive those faults mistakenly as having their origin in another. And I began to understand humanity and nationalism. I knew what it was like to want a place to belong, and how it felt to be invisible, and unfairly loathed. However, I also knew what it was like to find fellowship in the unity afforded by transcending such arbitrary boundaries and instead identifying with humanity as a whole.

School kept teaching, and I learned of the Russian revolution. Of how Tolstoy had such profound naïveté regarding the hearts of humans. Of how the USSR abused its people, exhorting them and mistreating them. Pushing their working class to exhaustion to socialize their economy. Disregarding their people to “fend for themselves” as the government became obsessed with fashioning itself. I saw the evil of Lenin, and the corruption of greed that transformed a would-be communist state into a haphazard aristocracy. But I saw something else too, I saw their fear, at knowing how easily the world could come to war. And I saw the same fear in the pages that described America at that time. I saw the passive aggressive wake of Nazism spreading itself over the globe, as though the Nazi’s actions having become a memory had further become a virus that spread throughout human consciousness, a global cognitive dissonance that made nations fear a lack of order, simultaneously as it made the people fear an overabundance of it. The world became frozen in a state between action and inaction akin to distraction, and the process which arose from this state of being was the mindless pursuance of consumption for the sake of comfort. The Cold War is a perfect example, Russia and the United States had come to fear open conflict, knowing what it would bring, and so they participated in a passive aggressive conflict that used what they believed to be lesser nations as pawns in their abhorrent squabbling. Today it is clear what came of these squabbles. In Laos there are thousands upon thousands of unexploded ordinances still claiming the lives of innocent peoples, in Cambodia this lead to the genocide of millions of people, in Myanmar and Darfur and Tibet such genocides took place as well.21 All for nothing, there was no gain in all of this. That is perhaps the worst truth of all, the fact that all of this apprehension and bloodshed took place for nothing other than the posturing of intrinsically unsustainable nationalistic hegemonies for the sake of fleeting economic dominance. Today the consequences can be felt worldwide as massive over consumption, exctractivist culture, and the undercutting of global trade agreements by compromising the environment has come the threaten the whole of life on earth. 22 Hence, climate change is the fault of all humanity, and therefore the responsibility of all humans to correct. Those who shoulder the majority of the blame, happen to currently shoulder the majority of the power in regard to being able to promote change. However, they simply choose not to for no reason other than an adolescent pride derived from an entrenched sense of economic entitlement. It is really very sinister, the way in which these global superpowers claim to have earned the right not to act on account of their being responsible for the fact that action is now necessary.

I understood this profoundly too. I had lived through my parents’ divorce in my youth. And I had seen firsthand the archetypal form of the passive aggression that those countries had participated in. I understood in my own small way how the smaller countries must have felt knowing that their lives were being torn apart by a conflict that barely involved them. And I felt empathy for them all. And I was sad at their lack of understanding. I learned from those people, in those books, that another human behavior had ascended the individual and taken root in the national. Just as a crumbling family cannot stop its grief from forcing its suffering onto its members, so did our nations dispense their grief onto their global family members. A example of this cultural impact can be read about in diatribes of the conformist culture that pervaded the fifties. As well as a millennia long history of endless conflict for arbitrary reasons taught of the cost of the obsession with similarity. How it had happened that a desire to assimilate the global community under a single culture that had repeatedly threatened the entire world. Thus it was with the modernist era, while it appeared on the surface that humankind flourished within the borders of a few fortunate nations, it only did so at the existential cost of entire societies elsewhere. But I could not accept this. Because I recognized this archetype as well. I had spent varied years, in various environments which attempted such assimilation. I had lived in a residential treatment center, because of my guardian’s denial of my inner progress. I knew what it was like to feel trapped in a culture that over emphasized the dangers of difference. I knew what happened when an isolated group of traumatized individuals who had been told to repress their emotions, were scrutinized and forced to behave as though their pain had no meaning. And I saw that this had happened to our country, and that our nation had become so obsessed with distancing themselves from their humanity, that they renounced their rights and their privacy in favor of protection from their many fears. I thought this to be a grand manifestation of the human survival urge. It looked to me as though the whole of the world was suffering from some profound form of post-traumatic stress disorder.23 Causing humanity to become infinitely weaker to the power of fear. And I saw how the various countries who possessed the capability, began to use this fear to control their people. And I must admit, I still don’t know of the intentions that drove this. Perhaps it had begun as a noble cause. But looking into my history books and then out at my world, I began to see that this cause, however it had begun, had changed overtime. As the people became resilient to the fear, and the populace became more and more intelligent, the leaders who had learned to operate a fear-based system had to find new ways to keep the people afraid. And so once again the world began to crumble. I saw that this desensitization to human conscience was misnamed progress, as the effects of its sociopathic urges imploded within the shores of America. Although the sixties brought on a backlash of sorts, a sort of short-lived cultural revolution that sought to push back at the familial driven emotional repression of the fifties.24 A strange obsession with disorder was born, and our government, albeit unknowingly, had appeared to have pushed its people too far. Suddenly all over the Globe the population began to speak out against the fear. Speakers like Martin Luther King came to devote their lives to reawakening our humanity. But I also saw torment, a torment I understood profoundly, as I had understood the lessons my life taught to me prior. Because I had been born into a home built upon domestic abuse, that worshipped violence and drug use.  I recognized my father in the hearts of the drug users of the sixties and seventies, trying to escape their existence without ending it. I recognized my mother in the helpless souls that were tormented by memories of violence and hatred. And I felt sorry for them both. These people I would never meet, and the individuals that begat me. It occurred to me that our global community had returned to its adolescence, to escape its destructive nature. But as this occurred, I saw the people embrace ignorance, and ignore knowledge, perhaps being afraid of what further knowledge would bring.25 After all it had very recently wiped two cities from the earth.26 I saw this as a new form of emotional repression that had made its way into the global consciousness. And I learned of how the mania that came with denial could lead to an obsession with superficiality. And I saw the fear empowered rulers once again take advantage of their people, this time preying upon their superficiality. They replaced the fear of destruction with the fear of economic destitution and promoted an agenda that favored superficial progress at all costs. I read, and listened to myriad teachers, and it became more and more apparent to me that our governments had failed us profoundly, just as the past monarchies and dictatorships had been corrupted, so had our current global community fallen to the machine of greed. They who were meant to serve the public became bitter and superior and began to serve trans national corporations instead. They once again revived the Machiavellian notion that the people exist to serve the state. While the individuals of our population became distrustful of all exterior authorities and became obsessed with serving themselves, even at the cost of others.

**Part V: Truth, the reality of the Human Spirit:**

      And it was then, that I found my gem. The one truth which had been lost for so long that it was difficult for me to understand initially. It became apparent to me, that any system or social invention which was left to its own devices, would eventually come to put itself before those it was intended to serve. I saw that although peace could be seen to exist occasionally within our world, whatever notion that delivered that peace, could also come to oppose it, should the notion become obsolete as change did its work to transform our consciousness. I saw that any who blindly adhered to ritualistic values, could come to defend those values irrationally for fear of being shamed. For fear of being ignorant. This I understood profoundly as well. Because in my experience I had come across such a system of social intervention, and for me it was the social welfare system. For as I had been taken from the violent environment provided by my biological parents, I realized that environment was simply replaced with one wrought with emotional suffering. My father’s ignorance simply replaced by the ignorance of many other fathers whose idiocy was only exacerbated by the arrogant bitterness of how they hated not seeing themselves in me. I thought back to the residential treatment center, and how I didn’t seem to belong even there. This place that was supposedly created with the sole purpose of helping me fit in, could only remind me that I did not belong. It sought to teach me normality, by emphasizing the dangers of abnormality. And they told me I was abnormal, and that I was wounded, and that I needed their help. But they sought to help, by imprisoning me with the most violent of my people. Forcing me to participate in a structure that focused on analyzing behavior and controlling emotional urges. The thing was, I already analyzed behavior, I already controlled my urges. But still I am grateful, because they unknowingly made me aware of how to analyze and calculate efficiently the behavior of others. They indoctrinated me with psychological concepts that kept my thoughts centered on the behavior of the irrational, and the feelings of those around me. They gave words to the processes I had formerly only know via feelings and intuition. As time progressed, and my behavior remained calm, the various staff came to respect me. They saw I had no outbursts, no violent behaviors. And although the various therapists that tried to pry into my personal feelings often punished me for being sarcastic, or determined that I was in denial, even they had to admit that I was different than my peers. In a residential treatment facility, one is issued a critical incident report each time they misbehave in an excessive manner. Things such as screaming and breaking things, refusing medication, refusing therapy, or obviously violence, or running away. And in all the four years I had spent at this facility, I had never received a single critical incident report. I was so far the only individual to do such a thing. But still I was not believed, still they treated me like a sociopath, demanding that I admit my wrong doings, and confess to sins I had not committed. Thus, I deeply understood my culture, because I had experienced its archetypal form, I had fallen prey to the many shortcomings of a society uninterested in creativity, or new ways of thinking, intent upon finding the worst in everyone, and doubting the best in everyone. I learned while in the center, that it used to be an orphanage for German war orphans. And while I was there I became interested in the meaning of things, like my name, and my lineage. Soon I found that my last name meant Orphan, as Childers was the name given to orphans from Childer-haus shortly after the crusades in 1066 AD, and I found that my first name meant God’s Peace. And this coincidence intrigued me. Here I was, an orphan, in what was formerly a German orphanage. Here I was known for being peaceful, unbelievably so. And all at once I felt as though I belonged, and like I was exactly where I was supposed to be. And I began to Wonder about God.

       I suddenly remembered a time when I was very young, the first night I was taken to my first foster home. And I had wondered what my life would become, and I had begun to feel frightened that nothing would be okay. I remembered laying there in my bed as a child of five, trying to organize my short existence, only to find it had already far surpassed the degree of exposure to trauma of any of the adults I had come to meet. So, the next day, I found a bible, and I asked my foster mother about Christianity. It would be an extraordinary understatement to say she was shocked that I had never heard of it. She went into heated explanations of how God loves all of us, and how this man Jesus was God’s son. She explained that he performed miracles and what he was said to have looked like. We showed me pictures of a white man with a beard and long straight brown hair. And I suppose if I had been much older, I would have thought it odd that a man born of Jews in the Middle East would somehow be the spitting image of an Irish catholic Anglo-Saxon. I disregarded most of what she said, as I didn’t really care what he looked like, or what magic power it was fabled that he possessed. I had wanted to know what it was that he said that enabled his words to be remembered for so long by so many. I wondered what it was about the way Christians lived that separated them from non-Christians. Again, I was confronted with an archetype again, I saw that the Christian people throughout history had been punished for their pursuit of a compassionate world. I saw how they had come to violence at the hands of rulers who claimed that such violence existed and attempted to force belief in this notion by inflicting the violence of which they spoke.  Once again, and much further back in our history, I recognized the results of a globally relevant divorce scenario that left even the supposed children of God and country to be used as pawns against one another. I thought it was odd that Christianity taught of only a Father God, it didn’t make sense to me, that a system which claimed to elucidate the humanity within each of us, would only emulate one aspect of its behavior, where was the mother God? And this disturbed me profoundly, as I had spent many evenings watching helplessly as my father beat my mother. I had spent nights waiting to douse the flames of his comforter as he attempted to set himself on fire in his bed. I heard the cries of my siblings as they were abused by my father and ignored by mother. I saw in my mother, a woman who had come to know such pain, that she scarcely evened noticed it in others, being unable to remove her focus from the substantial suffering that was her own. And I sensed this very same dilemma to be at work within the bounds of this religion. I learned of the priests who abused children like my father abused my siblings, I learned of patriarchy, and I saw how the church treated women with the same errant disregard and contemptuous distrust that my father treated my mother. So it seemed that once again it proved true that any system or social invention which was left to its own devices, would eventually come to put itself before those it was intended to serve. This had befallen Catholicism centuries prior, and many reformations ago, however, the particularly poignant aspect these pedophilic priests represented was that their direct job was to protect the innocence of God’s children, and the evil they committed was one which stole away the innocence of actual children and avoid punishment by using God’s name. I began to read the bible some years later, wishing to find a way to believe in God, so that I could speak with it, and ask all the questions I had amassed during my limited but substantially diverse experience. I was surprised when I discovered that the message contained in the scripture was very unlike the message being peddled by the blindly faithful. I noticed a trend in the religion that caused the faithless believers to become irrationally obsessed with making others believe in a manipulative attempt to fortify their own waning faith. Incredibly the small innocuous presence of rudimentary doubt had managed to mobilize a virtual army of disparate and bigoted hypocrites against any group of beings who failed to conform to whichever norms the hypocrites desperately needed to imply their superiority. I began to see the compassion Christ apparently demanded replaced with judgement, and the requisite forgiveness his message asserted, replaced with guilt and excessive punishment. Nazism was born once more, not of course the German goose-stepping variety, this version was potentially much worse, as those who came under its thrall scarcely recognized that such a thing was taking place at all. Instead of perhaps pretending to follow suit while internally protesting as Haffner did in his famous memoir, these people are convinced of the moral superiority of their brand of bigotry, and completely disconnected from the implications of its consequences.27 Had it not been for everything I learned about Germany from my civics teachers, it is safe to say that when faced with such a paradoxical situation I may have become intensely confused. How could a message of global brotherhood, be subconsciously reformed into a system that directed hatred instead of eliminating it. However, the actual technical name of the most infamous and abhorrent example of such a deviant and toxic brotherhood in our country, is “The white Brotherhood”. I began to intensely question any Christians that crossed my path, and once again I was disappointed. At age eleven I knew of more of their saviors’ message than these people who claimed to have devoted their life to him. Many of the people I questioned had never personally read the bible, most of them showed very little excess of compassion for others that were not directly related to them. Just as with society, I saw that fear had come to power even in a message filled with the exaltation a of love. I remember growing very angry, angry at churches for failing their scripture, angry at priests for abusing their powers and the children, angry at individuals who were hollow and pretending that they could offer others wholeness. I was once more reminded of the true evil of Hitler and the Nazis, the manufacturing of hatred in order to address the installment of a passing sense of powerlessness, and its potential to find a target and decompress its repressed fury unto thereby becoming a virtual facsimile of whatever it was which woke in them the initial hatred. Of course, I had visited many different churches in my experience by that point. I did appreciate the good they did. I saw various parishes where the insecure youth of our society could go to feel accepted, I saw many followers who truly did internalize the message and extrapolate from it a sense of cosmic worth. I saw it change the hearts of many who truly wished to better themselves, and who desperately needed to feel worth. But I also saw these qualities in other religions, and thus sought after what it was which linked them all. In my early adulthood it came to pass that the Muslim people were under constant attack by the society I called home. Despite the fact that the number of radicalized Muslims was so infinitesimal when compared to the whole it could be rounded out of the number altogether. This was one of the great issues with Ideology, this notion that despite its message, it could easily be adopted blindly and employed thusly without a care for its actual meaning.

          Having lost what parcel of faith I had been able to muster, I began to search other scriptures, from other parts of the world. I learned of the Greeks and saw how they cleverly idealized emotional dispositions via their many personified Gods. This to me seemed incredibly intuitive, as I already related to the world via an archetypal framework. Instead of idealizing one disposition, the Greeks saw fit to idealize many myriad dispositions, elucidating the positive and negative consequences of each disposition by creating focused metaphors. I learned of the same type of religious organization when I began to study Egypt, there it was again, many archetypal dispositions working together, as well as in India where much the same manner of practice had been taking place for six millennia. The crux of what seemed to be represented in these archetypal metaphors appeared to be a rooted metaphor, in particular an emergent tale of the many successes and many failures that are born of attempting peaceful cohabitation while simultaneously accepting profound differences. I thought it unlikely that these enlightened people thought their Gods to be physically extant. After reading Socrates through Plato and Aristotle, I learned that the Greeks had likely understood ideas to be objects, grasped by our invisible mind. I did not know of what the Egyptians felt, as I had not adequately studied them, however later I would come to study their culture in an art history class, during which I would learn of the stark similarities in the way their cultural identity presented itself in society. For instance in the proportional standardization of artwork, and the compartmentalization of the civilization dependent upon societal role. I read Hindu scriptures, and found a similar dichotomy, with a profound twist. These ancients seemed to have discovered varied states of consciousness that contained multiple aspects simultaneously.28 Their Gods were less humanoid than the Greek deities and possessed far more depth than the Egyptian deities. Here in Hinduism, there was talk of reincarnation and the cyclical nature of time. Here the same God would live many different lives. But like the Greeks and the Egyptians, the Vedas and their various derivations lead to a need to prescribe roles to groups of individuals prior to their birth. Somehow this religion too had fallen to fear mongering, and patriarchy and slavery. It was at this point in my life that I decided, if God existed I would simply search for It. But I wouldn’t look in scriptures or the words of self-proclaimed prophets, I would instead look to the world, and the universe around me. I thought that surely, I could find God’s reflection in its supposed creation. I started by seeking to understand what all the religions I could learn about had in common, besides my earlier revelation. The crux of what seemed to be represented in these archetypal metaphors appeared to be a rooted metaphor, in particular an emergent tale of the many successes and many failures that are born of attempting peaceful cohabitation while simultaneously accepting profound differences. I would ultimately discover the single saddest thing I would ever learn, they each simply taught of compassion and being loving, and that our lives had cosmic significance. All of these ways of life at some point espoused the vast importance of doing ones duty, by acting in accordance with the principles of tolerance compassion and love. I saw that the original messages presented by the myriad scriptures failed to explain why their later interpretations had been made to bind all those that were initially meant to be set free.

I realized the issue, to be the human ego shifting the understanding of God into the realm of personification. I saw that there was no way to personify God without limiting the idea of the deity to the various pitfalls of human mortality. More than that, in order to portray the personified deity requires that it be afforded a likeness, which by its definition limited the potential relevance of the archetype. Interestingly, the eastern religions such as Tibetan Buddhism, and Hinduism managed to curtail this shortcoming of personification, by styling their anthropomorphized interpretations of archetypes in extraordinarily unique ways which managed to refrain from being indicative of any single extant appearance. That is to say, Krishna is blue, all the non-incarnate forms of the deities are many limbed and exotic. The sole Caucasian skin toned deity, Ganesh, is affixed with the head of an elephant. I even thought that our ancestors discovered this, as all the religions of which I have previously spoken had long since switched to a belief in one all-powerful God. Or otherwise reinterpret the ritualistic facets of their faith to identify the roles of duty, and morality, through devotion. Dispelling with the deification of archetypal human emotions and replacing them with transcendent conceptualizations of unity, duty and empathy. It was as though each individual culture simultaneously broke free from the cage of their overwhelming subjectivity, and for the first time ever considered what shared qualities had brought them to rule the world.

So, I figured if I was to find God, I would do so via the contemplation of unity. So that’s what I did. I tried to model my behavior in a way that brought calmness to the environments I occupied. I made it my goal to bring together groups of people who otherwise wouldn’t have become friends. I did this for two reasons. The first being that this is the person life had formed me to be. The entirety of my experience had been largely spent being forced into uncomfortable or dangerous environments and expected to cope with them. The second being that it was the only aspect of unity I truly understood at that time, and thus the only path I could think of. Though if I am being totally honest, it was mostly because I found that so many of the people I had the joy to meet were not only infinitely beyond my own level of intellect, and possessing of experiences which I myself could scarcely fathom, but in truth I found it difficult not to love them, as their uniqueness appeared to me as beauty.

***Part VI***

**Gnosis, Revelation, and the manifestation of non-dual consciousness:**

**Multicentric being and the end of the nation state.**

What follows is much less straightforward. Because it is the result of a practice, I came to develop that changed my understanding of who I was. After wandering for seven or so years and making friends and doing my very best to see who they truly were, beneath their insecurities, and without focusing on their personalities. I began to wonder about what message I wanted to communicate with the world. I went to college, being more concerned with the knowledge it would offer, and less concerned with the certificate it promised. I took psychology courses and I learned of Freud and Jung and William James. I learned of B.F skinner and I felt my existence throb as I discovered his method to be partially responsible for my treatment at the center. But it was only Jung that I understood. Only Jung seemed to see the archetypes that Plato spoke about, only Jung spoke of a collective unconscious. And I began to wonder at the nature of the zeitgeist. Only Jung recognized the relevance and preeminence of synchronicity as an a-causal connecting principle. A description it took me years to understand, but which I eventually took to mean; synchronistic phenomena are similar in function and form to street signs, or biological adaptations such as bright colors indicating poison or what have you. The extent to which one experiences synchronicity or the improbable and regular occurrence of incredible coincidences which correlate to emotionally relevant understandings of one’s role in the world.27 So I took to asking myself questions, and then expressing myself without restraint in hopes to discern answers. I would visualize my query and then pour forth in a stream of consciousness aimed at making a linguistic “sketch” of the dominant archetypes associated with the query itself. And I was amazed. I found that if refrained from making assumptions and if I just poured out sentences as quickly as I could, and with respect to the metaphorical approximations of archetypal characteristics and their potential interactions with their opposite or complimentary archetypes, I seemed to be capable of discerning answers to questions, even when they required the knowledge of prerequisite information that I didn't remember learning. Sometimes the writings would be filled with words I didn't know the meaning of, and I would have to look them up to see if my writings even made sense. Again, I would be amazed when I found that not only did they make sense, they spoke to the depth of the subjects I had sought to explore. What's more, they concisely answered my questions.

Suddenly I understood what my emotions were capable of. I realized they were the body of wisdom and that they were relevant to a much greater depth of experience than the substance of my intellect which was thought or reason. I realized there existed an awareness within me that saw much more than what made sense when juxtaposed with the notion of my ego or identity. So I began to look at my life in its entirety, as it appeared to converge and imply meaning from within each sapient moment. I focused my existence upon expressing each aspect of my journey, as it was relayed to me via empathy. That was the key, the others who passed me and sat with me and shared with me throughout experience. Because the manner in which I sought to empathize with them, dissolved myself so entirely, I had somehow amassed an internal microcosm of individuals and their perspectives. It was at that point I found the voice of God, within me. It was no minor event, the moment I realized that voice to be the echoes of many countless beautiful and unique human beings. This was the fellowship I sought, and the Ideology I desired to embody. One that implored all people, to walk amongst each other with open heats, empathizing, sharing and discussing so that to better understand our shared world. It occurred to me that a nation, better yeat a global society, which practiced this sort of radical freedom might be capable of transcending the former boundaries of limited social constructs, and actually realizing a sort of utopia. It was then that I began to express my art and to try to let it speak. For three years, I wrote, and I tried to understand the things my soul seemed to intuit. This mission is comically retrograde when one delves into it. As this segment just being finished by the reader, was written first in one sitting as an appeal to a successful author for validation. It is odd indeed, I am now thirty years old, it has been ten years since I began to write a version of this document, and only now have I rediscovered it and begun to edit it for clarity. However, the edits did not seem at first to come from anywhere else other than myself. That is, until I realized that the brilliant and wonderful individuals who sat in my classes with me for the past two years had in fact taught me all that I had come to learn. Ergo this document grew from a few pages to a few rather long chapters. It was odd at first, each time I would read a sentence that initially lacked grounding, there in the back of my mind would appear an individual from class speaking to me, as if to remind me not to leave out something important. It was such with my professors as well. Whom I would name if I had not already taken a great many liberties with the content of this document in regard to its professional nature. It was really quite overwhelming, to recognize the death of my inflated ego. A task I had earnestly endeavored to accomplish for some time, and which I can scarcely take credit for. It was only the brilliance of others which I reflected that gave weight to anything that I shared. It was only the passion borne of those whom I could only admire, which I was able to identify with in order to translate the meaning of my own. I wrote my essay about the relationship between Aristotle, Plato, Jung, Hitler, Nazism, Catholicism Hinduism and whatever else ten years prior to reading a single word out of any documents describing and explaining these things. A claim I would perhaps not be as apt to make prior to the era of technology, however currently, I have the utmost faith that it can be proven beyond a doubt that what I am saying is the truth. It is only now that I am in a comparative politics course where we have read the primary sources which provide evidence of the truth in the claims I made early in this essay. It is only after having been taught by the people in my environment, that I have been able to learn. Perhaps it is some tragically broken mechanism in myself, which prevents me from internalizing any information other than via an intrinsic hypervigilance. Perhaps it is solely that my talent, if I do possess any talent to speak of, is that when I interact with people, my intention is merely to accept them for who they are and appreciate whatever that may be. Having received this gift, of validation and meaning, as well as the clarification of my purpose, I can say confidently that the feeling I most have for these fellow beings is gratitude. Profound, unwavering gratitude. I had only thought to make them smile, and perhaps to try and be their friend while asking nothing in return. I have severely failed in the latter of these endeavors, as what I have received in return is of a value so significant, I can scarcely hope to ever repay it. As for Plato, Jung, Aristotle, Socrates and what have you, I had not actually read any of their literature until last year when I took political philosophy on a whim. Something that happened only because I switched my major from philosophy to political science for no apparent reason. It was thus, to my utter astonishment, when the professor teaching the class began to cover one by one the very topics I had broached in my writings. As though he was kindly correcting each of my misconceptions in a way gentle enough not to arouse my hyper vigilant ego. It is for this reason, that in my book Gnosis and Alchemy, I completely changed the final chapter involving the professor and what was formerly a rather arrogant discussion had between a student and himself. I should mention, having gone rather off topic, that I wrote that book long before I met the professor who actually taught me about Plato and Socrates. The statement I am making is many fold, however its summarization is simple, the more I find that I am invested in the existential “present” the wider my stance within that present grows, and subsequently the further my mind is able to reach with respect to my past and future, as well in regard to the complexity and magnitude of archetypes I am able to intuit, empathize with and ultimately interpret. However, and most importantly, the more I find I am able to understand and acknowledge and love individuals for who they are. If while reading this essay, one finds themselves intrigued at the notion I have presented, rather than abhorred by it, know that what follows is the emotional journey that transpired after the realization of this power, a power which is definable in my mind, as unconditional love, or the empathic interpretation of universal archetypes via unconditional love and the pursuit of universal fellowship. Though, in reality it is often the case that I am prone to some manner of benign delusion. For instance, even now as I write this, I find it difficult to discern whether this kindness that has taught me so much, and the compassion which seems to have been painstakingly and lovingly orchestrated by the students and teachers I was surrounded by for the past two years was intentional on their part, or merely the unintentional reflection of their innate beauty as individuals which inspired in me a recognition of the need to recognize my own arrogance. After I was able to make sense of my suffering, and after I came to understand my empathic, and highly sensitive nature. Know that if you grant me a small modicum of faith, perhaps I might teach you to speak the language of universal archetypes, or else you might teach me to internalize kindness and thus discover my own value.

There are a great many accessible and leverageable emotional states of being, as well as psychological patterns of behavior which lend themselves to the unobstructed embodiment of archetypal consciousness. However, of theses embodiments two are supreme, in that they are conducive to experiential process. If it is intended that the experiencer is not driven mad by the paranoia that accompanies the increased inception of synchronicities in the presence of a sympathy driven Identity, there must be empathy and there must be compassion, otherwise the individual will internalize these synchronicities only to eventually come to suppress themselves due to their supposed implications. There must be liberty to discover the self, it is otherwise doomed to be controlled by the whims of whichever empowered entity decides to enforce upon the masses its refusals to empathize. Finally, there must be an allegiance, or honest and unwavering dedication to the proliferation and practice of unconditional love, to the point of embodying an attitude of magnanimity and forgiveness rather than equifinality and judgement. That said, if applied on a grand scale, this manner of education could perhaps drive as many people mad as it does cause others to well with tears at the sudden recognition of their own capacity for empathy. In my case anyway, it is something I have been working at for so long I had come to misunderstand it entirely. It was only as I poured over this document in an effort to cite it, that it suddenly dawned on me that I am not a monad, and that perhaps this inseparability and universal fellowship was actually real, and thus I came to understand for the first time, what I had been trying to cause everyone I met to understand throughout my life. Thus, whether or not they ever read this, or ever truthfully intended to grant the kindness that they did, this paper is dedicated to my classmates and professors at Cleveland state university, who enabled me to finally overcome thirty years of stubbornness and arrogance, as well as finally, deeply, learn.

**Part VII: Personal reflection:**

**Social-Humanism.**

Regardless of ideological perspective, culture, religion, gender, temperament or heritage, there is one unifying fact that connects all humanity. There is only one earth, ok maybe there are two facts, we depend on that one earth for our survival. These truths appear to be self-evident, as each among us is aware that we cannot exist in the void of space, as well as we know that we require sustenance and have a myriad of basic needs that must be met in order to survive. Anyone forced to go days without water would likely find it very difficult to argue that they are some sort of transcendent closed system capable of total self-sufficiency. At the very least, they would have to admit that in order to acquire water they would need to find and gather it from the earth, and thus lack the capacity to manifest it themselves. The same interdependency that defines the necessary exchange between humanity and the planet is mirrored in every human endeavor. That is to say, the social mechanisms which we rely on in order to carryout our daily lifestyles are all intertwined and inexorably linked. Furthermore, it is not simply that we depend upon the presence of a large featureless rock floating through space, but that we depend on the planet as it is, having of a functional environment capable of maintaining the myriad systems responsible for the survival of the human organism. In contrast, this relationship is not inversely applicable. That is to say, the planet does not require humanity for its survival. Thus the relationship is teleologically deterministic, should the environment drastically change such that humanity could no longer persist, the planet would persist nonetheless. It is undeniable, humanity is a nonessential part of the environment not transcendent to it. This means that not only have human beings failed to transcend dependence upon natural forces for their survival, but by having left the natural order and instead having developed their own will informed by their own intelligence and according to their own intent, human beings are no longer integral to the perpetuation of the kingdom of life. Furthermore, because their actions are no longer governed solely by their nature, their nature can no longer be presented as the sole excuse for their actions. That is to say, while it is certainly valid that human beings are undeniably ignorant, ultimately flawed and thus somewhat prone to succumb to their lesser nature, the investment of their individual and/or collective efforts in the interest and service of their own expediency at the cost of the potential for the environment and the systems of which it is comprised to function adequately do not derive from their nature, but from the projection of their will. Therefore, humanity ought to be accountable for the consequences of such projections and any issues which arise from them. Because it is solely human beings which have so far developed intelligence of will, and thus solely human beings which are therefore capable of holding themselves accountable, the mechanism responsible for their governance ought to be composed of every human being which possesses will. The existence of human beings derives itself from nature, which is preeminent to the development of human intelligence. Therefore, human intelligence ought to limit itself to acting in accordance with the forces at work in nature, in such a way that either compliments those forces, or utilizes them in a noninvasive and ultimately sustainable fashion within reason and with consideration to the possible avenues available to the whole of humanity at any given time.

The existence of individuality relative to human identity derives itself from the conjunction of collective human intelligence and thus prescribes a distinctly “human” nature. There is no need to define or determine whether or not there exists any particularly relevant definition of what constitutes distinctly “human” nature, in order to assert that whatever that nature may be it is irrefutably present within each human being and thus imbues all human beings with the same intrinsic value or potential worth. Thus, the worth of a human being ought not to be determined by their potential benefit to any single human or collection of humans, but in direct proportion to their potential benefit to humanity as a whole. In accordance with this approximation of potential value, every individual human ought to be given the same opportunities in regard to health, education, nurturance, freedom and self-discovery. Humanity collectively requires the same basic resources in order to survive, in addition to being equally incapable of claiming credit for the creation or existence of any of these requisite resources. Thus no single human, or group of humans ought to be able to claim ownership of any resources which originate upon or within the earth. Instead, each human ought to be charged with the stewardship of an equal portion of these resources. Because this stewardship is ultimately interdependent upon the cooperation of humanity, each human being ought to be responsible for not only their own stewardship but also that of the planet as it relates to humanity.

Humanity has existed for millennia outside the bounds of these precepts, therefore, the whole of humanity ought to be made equally responsible for their implementation. Thus, there ought to be a unification of all national entities into an ultimate global entity which extends itself in the interest of all the worlds peoples, as well as engages in a systemic redistribution of all forms of resources and services which establishes a sustainable quality of life for all people without exception. Because of the intrinsic equality of all individual people, there ought not to be any individual, nor group of individuals empowered to decide whether or not any individual or group of individuals lives or dies. Furthermore, any entity which exists as a physiological extension of another, either at its expense or otherwise, and which does not possess its own faculties of free will, biological autonomy or reasonable self-sufficiency, ought not to be considered an entity in and of itself, but instead an extension of the entity upon which it relies for its survival. In such a capacity as that just described, the earth would have preeminent rights to those who occupy it and whose subsistence is dependent upon it. Once an entity, despite any symbiotic origins, achieves autonomy, is possessed of its own sensory awareness and is able to be sustained autonomously, it ought to be considered a sentient being and thus be extended all rights and services available to human beings. Because of these truths, it is undeniable that all sentient beings are unarguably equal, that they rely on the planet equally throughout their masses without any exceptions, and that the quality of their contribution is determined not by their nature alone, but by the capacity of humanity to foster their individuality, as well as empower them and provide for them an opportunity to employ their uniqueness in the service of all life.

Should it be the case that such empowerment does not naturally arise, the accountability ought to belong to humanity, and not to the individual. Furthermore, in such an instance, the collective ought to address this unique circumstance as an opportunity to adapt itself to the unique individual so far as in doing so it accords with all previously established doctrines. Despite the redundancy of the following decree, the history of humanity as it exists today requires that it be asserted, the color of the flesh covering the musculature of all human beings is arbitrary in its nature, except perhaps regarding its ability to protect from the harshness of certain wavelengths of solar radiation. Pigment itself is not in any way associated, either physiologically, socially, or psychologically with the extent of a human being’s intelligence, inherent nature, or deterministic reliance upon the basic resources required to sustain life. Furthermore, with respect to cultural or religious proclivities, so long as they do not denounce the equality of any individual human beings, or groups of human beings relative to humanity, there ought to be not restriction regarding what faith is practiced by individual human beings or groups of human beings. However, this liberty exists dependent upon its accordance with all other expressed doctrines regarding human equality. Inasmuch as it can be known with any degree of certainty, no human being currently in existence can recall deciding to manifest their own existence, or else provide incontrovertible evidence that such a desire is in anyway responsible for the quality of life offered by the locality in which they happen to be born. Nor can it be proven by any means that this spurning of existence is the intentional result of a disembodied entity acting in accordance with hereditary or historical events of either temporal and/or spatial significance. Therefore, the region in which one is born ought to have no bearing on what rights are available to them. Furthermore, there ought not to be any restrictions applied to any human being or group of human beings regarding their right to travel the surface of the planet, so long as in doing so they do not come into conflict with the expressed freedoms of any human beings or groups of human beings which exist there within. Additionally, the actions of one region ought not to be carried out in the interest of the people contained with the boundaries of that region alone, nor should any collection of regional human beings carry out in their own collective interest any actions which fail to align with the shared interests of any other collection of human beings or humanity itself. It is of no benefit to humanity as a whole, to exist according to the compartmentalization and arbitrary division of its peoples which derives itself from conflicts which came into being via the assertion of antiquated power struggles between less developed iterations of social order. In fact, to enforce and perpetuate these archaic nationalistic and/or culturally divisive practices is in direct conflict with the ultimate sustainability of humanity and human civilization.

Because the success of humanity itself is directly proportional to the efficiency with which human beings manage the planetary resources required for our collective survival, no human being or group of human beings ought to have any more or less power than any other human being or group of human beings when it comes to accessing these resources. Ergo, if there exists enough food for all people to be fed, all people ought to be fed, otherwise whichever entity proves responsible for the excess production of food ought to be held directly responsible for the starvation of those refused access to the food. Furthermore, should it come to pass than any entity for any reason intentionally inhibits its own production in the interest of the disadvantage of any human being or group of human beings, it ought to be made accountable and required to eliminate its bias. Ergo the mechanism of intentionally driven scarcity to enable unmitigated growth ought to be outlawed by humanity as a whole. Should a human being, or any collection of human beings, desire to engage in collaborative efforts to pursue the betterment of humanity, while remaining in accordance with all doctrines here within the enterprise of such collaborators ought to be governed according to the expressed will of its constituent’s dependent upon its accordance all doctrines here within. Furthermore such enterprises, should they become capable of creating a shared wealth relative to any other human beings or groups of human beings, so long as this wealth does not come at a cost to any human being or group of human beings or humanity as a whole, and so long as such a context as has been mentioned is definably sustainable as well as potentially attainable by any human being or human beings who of their own volition should desire to engage in practices which produce such standards of living without thereby rendering them unsustainable, then such circumstances ought to be allowed so long as they continue to benefit humanity.

Because the present people occupying this planet did not ostensibly choose to occupy it, and because those who shall come to occupy it similarly will do so without exercising their own expressed will, those that currently occupy it ought to do so in such a way that ensures it will be habitable for future occupants. Thus, any practice in the present which takes place at the expense of its own potential to be practiced in the future ought to be ceased and replaced with sustainable alternatives. Furthermore, should it happen that such sustainable alternatives do not exist at the time such practices are being employed, or else that practices once believed to be sustainable are revealed via progressed understanding to no longer be so, it ought to be the primary goal of the enterprise responsible for the aforementioned practices to invest itself in the development of its own sustainable alternative. Otherwise those who on account of a direct personal interest, knowingly oppose the progress of the alternative processes in favor of the unsustainable processes ought to be held accountable for the potential cost of their present actions. For example, if a fossil fuel company chooses to maintain its market value by purchasing and hiding away patents for sustainable energies, or by lobbying the current governmental bodies of humanity in order to pass preferential legislation for their enterprise, they ought to be held accountable for the deaths of all present and future beings. And thus, stripped of their ownership of such enterprises, which should then be distributed equally amongst all human beings, who thus would inherit the responsibility to invest themselves primarily in the development of alternative sustainable practices. This ought to begin by unipolar globalization, which erases the systemic conflict inherent to nationalism and the nation-state-based model of global politics. Primarily this is because the current model is based on resources, which is to say, extracting and manufacturing those resources in order to grasp at economic dominance. This literally means, our international community is racing to make the world untenable, so that its people might have the opportunity to claim superiority shortly before they experience extinction. Once again, the snake devouring itself, the ouroboros, it isn’t a magical symbol. It means a very real and pressing thing. A self-consuming system is that relies on a finite resource is doomed to bring about its own construction. Capitalism, neoliberalism, and planetary destruction are each system which rely on scarcity driven models of progress. Hence, they are self-defeating, our reliance on them more and more for survival means that our species is becoming more and more likely to end along with these systems. 29 The only feasible option open to us is sudden and radical change. The only way to ensure the conflict brought about by the experience of the consequences of this change, are our radical fellowship and cooperation in order to surmount our collective limitations.

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**The Transcendent Principle of Intuition,**

**I**

**Intuition**, understood to be the realization (or revelation) of emergent truth1, when interpreted through the discernment of compassion2, and internalized as relational experience3, begets the subsequent **gnosis** of **archetypal forms**4. Such forms can be particularly revelatory in regard to the inception of various interpretations of **nature**5. The expression of such intuitive gnosis bridges the intellectual divide separating subject, object and environment6. Thus, forming an independent vehicle which can be employed autonomously to perceive and interpret preeminent archetypes7. The subsequent wisdom derived through this archetypal perception transcends otherwise intrinsically sympathetic, and primarily anthropomorphic biases such as personification or intellectual projection8. This methodology can be utilized by the individual will in order to recognize the archetypal forms associated with such concepts as; The philosophy of the mind, The nature of cognition, The nature of awareness, The Nature of identity, The Notion of free will, The nature of suffering, and The importance of self-love9. The **dualistic** (actualized) aspect of this intuitive methodology relates to the subject of human behavior as the facilitation of **empathy**10.The Non-dual (Abstracted) aspect of this intuitive methodology relates to the objective ambiguity of **relativity**, and in particular the nature of “**relationship**”.11

Primary among these revelations is that all natures are intrinsically linked in such a way that renders them perceivable to the subjective mind via empathy.12 Empathy constructs subconscious-transient-situational-metanarratives (S.T.S.M.N) which elicit semi-conscious observations of patterns or qualities from experience resulting in a state of awareness called intuition. Intuition arises from a relationship between empathetically informed understanding (Antithesis of subjective perspective), and experientially informed insight (Thesis derived from subjective perspective) which allows for a more holistic analysis of otherwise apathetic experiences and modes of existence (Synthesis of dual subjective conditions into conditional objective perspective).The subjective nature of this intentional state of being is **compassion**, compassion is the practice of identifying with independently originating experiences as though they were internally generated. Therefore, the practical or expressional form of compassion is empathy which is to say, compassion refers to a state of being which arises from the habit of empathizing. As such, it transcends hegemony in its first stage by disassociating with individually relevant perceptions **(I.R.P**), then associating instead with independently-conceived-environmentally-dependent-perceptions **(I.C.E.D.P**), and finally combining the two in order to simulate a relative perspective entirely comprised of correlated perceptions.13 Following the creation of this situational simulation of relative objectivity, one begins to form impressions of potential contexts by which such simulation could be evoked14 . Through embodying the framework which arises from those impressions, one empathizes. Finally, the knowledge gained from the simulated conscious experience of the I.R.P (Self) , as related to the simulated conscious experience of the I.C.E.D.P (Other), from within a situationally simulated objective context (**S.S.O.C**) combine to formulate a **non-hegemonic-micronarrative**.15  Which is to say, one subsequently gains the limited ability to view oneself from the perspective of another and intuit how on is perceived by others, one gains the ability to view the environment from a multicentric state of awareness which simulates objectivity, and one becomes capable of employing the psychic framework developed via this methodology to expand the nature of their individual identity16. Thus, by conceptualizing life, knowledge, experience and existence according to a transcendent embodiment of being and investigating contextualizing reality through the cognitive framework of empathy one can employ a degree of intuitive revelation that transcends that of reductive **rationalization**. This shift in paradigm is what differentiates the postmodern worldview from that of the classical enlightenment which desensitized the individual to the implications of the undertakings of the collective.17 When empathy is implemented in place of sympathy or pure reason, (even when the relational component is not necessarily another identity but an ideal or archetype) and the experiential component results in a clarified realization of an otherwise unfamiliar experience, that is “**gnosis**”.18 One notable caveat to this practice is of course the inadvertent personification of the manifested archetypal facsimile, and the subsequent projection of this corrupted facsimile unto the environment resulting in the potential formation of a relationship akin to **victim-stance**, wherein experience is related to as though it has been “caused” by some external form of higher being or emanated as a deterministic teleology.19

**II**

The idealistic notions of love, sacrifice, and humility are efficient ways to conceptualize and recognize Gnosis. This is not because of the existence of some underlying moral hierarchy or prescriptive ideology which favors such states of being, nor is it due to the partiality of any metaphysical entity or supposed “God”. 20  It is due instead to the way gnosis is experienced and the requisite empathetic condition necessary to decode it’s logic. It is merely that the notion of recognizing other as though it were self has come to be called love in our languages, which causes the term to relate to the state of gnosis.21 For instance, when empathy is habitual, its effectiveness can be measured in proportion to **“**compassion” because compassion is the experience of suffering which is brought about by the observance of suffering. Therefore, the amount of sacrifice can be related to the impact of compassion, as sacrifice is the forfeit or surrender of personal claim to something in order to balance or influence the nature of an impersonal state. So, in that way both sacrifice and compassion are evidence of empathetic consciousness. “**Love”** is equally indicative of empathetic consciousness, because it requires at its foundation, the recognition of the worth and value of alternative being, and the acceptance of and reverence for the equanimity regarding the self and the other. Love is thus, the identification with externality as being ultimately undifferentiated from individuality.. **“Humility”** is the pre-requisite state of being necessary to enable oneself to employ empathetic consciousness. This is because in practice empathy requires observance of the value and necessity of external entities as well as respect for and acknowledgement of one’s ignorance regarding the extent and impact of such phenomena. In the absence of humility there is sympathetic awareness which evaluates the condition of an observed entity without identifying with it as a thing in and of itself. 22 A common form that refers to the triumvirate realization of: the condition of love, in a state of compassion, and from the perspective of humility is unity. **Unity** teaches us to see the impersonal as being indiscernible from the personal. By emulating a way of life which exemplifies unity, we become equipped to reveal the truth of a higher form of self-awareness, as well as potentially fulfill the growing framework of expansive and heterogenic identity. It is important that the term “higher” in this context does not imply an underlying hierarchy. Instead it implies that the conception of what comprises the identity is determined by to what degree experience is identified with. This notion of a “**higher Self”** refers to a state of awareness that allows for the dissolution of impressions which stem from one’s initial social conditions and which contribute to one’s sense of emotional separation. Thus, empathetic consciousness in conjunction with a general intention toward unity, manifests as the eventual emergence of **multi-centric awareness**.23

**III**

In various Indo-European scriptures the notion of the soul is the recognition of the atman, and it is a key recognition along the way to enlightenment. In Buddhism it is said that the Buddha possesses a multi-centric self, capable of perfect empathy. Cognitively speaking, the Buddhist philosophy was very advanced regarding the notion of the mind and the identity. Not exclusively Buddhism of course, Hinduism and Taoism both possess a similarity that defines the transcendent potential of empathetic consciousness. This is because the cosmologies of these belief systems established a non-dualistic interpretation of the source through which dualism is translated, and whose translation into dualism is responsible for the nature of reality. Whether or not this pertains to the actuality of physical existence and the material universe is irrelevant regarding what it reveals about the nature of cognition, identity and the philosophy of mind. In fact, the Human brain consists of cognitive systems which are reflective of the aesthetics of this cosmology. For instance, the metaphor of the Hindu Trimurti is thus entangled with the form and function of the human brain. Existing in its totality as (Brahman) which consists of two hemispheres (Vishnu, and Shiva) which each specialize in characteristically unique though ultimately interdependent functions, and the material component as well as the translation of will through energy into material change (Parvati, Shakti). The Human brain is one whole, split into two hemispheres, that each govern characteristically unique though ultimately interdependent functions, which are translated via the potential energy of the will into physical action. The concept of self-awareness is thus to some degree elucidated in the teachings of ancient humanity, which had been attempting to describe the origin of experience. They ultimately created an abstract metaphorical representation of the physical brain according to its composition, yet without determining its function or possessing prior knowledge of its arrangement. This makes sense, as technically speaking, from the human perspective experience originates from the interpretation of sensory information via the nervous system and the brain. However, this seemingly intuitive interpretation and projection of the brain’s infrastructure theoretically implies that self-awareness is seated entirely in consciousness itself and interacts with physiology rather than arises from within it. Consciousness is not *caused* by physiological means. Instead it is an *acausal* principle which accompanies knowledge. It is the microcosmic equivalent of synchronicity as Jung describes it in the macrocosmic form of an acausal connecting principle.xx **(***Jung, Synchronicity an Acausal connecting principle, pp 29***)**

**IV**

The understanding of “**synchronicity as an acausal connecting principle**” is important when considering the transcendent nature of empathic consciousness, partly because it depicts the subtle way consciousness is clearly able to “sense” by means of its own essence and is not thus solely limited to the interpretation of sensory information gathered by empirical faculties. xx The implications of such a proposition expand beyond the realm of empathetic consciousness as it has been discussed thus far, although it bears mentioning that current psychological issues related to cognition and identity such as depression could potentially be addressed more expansively if it is recognized that consciousness is capable of sensing pain in and of itself. Thus, the presence of conscious or subconscious cognitive dissonance could present with similar issues as those presented physiologically via autoimmune disorders, though relative to psychic phenomenon which manifest fundamentally as recurrent instances of self-rejecting consciousness. In the instance of severe depression or mania this implies that the entity which is consciousness in the state of being individuated, has disassociated from the empirical and social or causal reality so much so that the consciousness experiences its self-sensing quality as self-contained reality. In which case the experience of reality could be shaped and informed by latent emotional conditions contained within the various intrinsic mechanisms of the psyche.

**V**

Self-sensing consciousness (I am presence, self-awareness) is the seat of the **self**, or that essence which creates the subjective identity, and which is transcended via the practiced manifestation and assertion of empathetic consciousness. Furthermore, as the self-sensing awareness manages to increase its efficiency regarding the manifestation of an expanded empathetic consciousness, the function of the subjective awareness shifts from the creation and preservation of the prescribed limitations responsible for sequestering what constitutes “self”, to the realization of multicentric-being and the transformation of the formerly sequestered self into a formless conditional object of conscious potential. Which enables the mind to understand increasingly complex multiplicities, as well as recognize increasing variations of relationships and complex systems. However, one needn’t be consumed with such lofty intellectual potentialities in order to benefit from the practice of empathetic consciousness and ultimately multicentric being. As such a state of awareness simultaneously addresses the deeply personal aspects of all human experience, including the experience of suffering and the cessation thereof.

**VI**

In most esoteric ideologies, as well as modern psychology, the notion of suffering is tied to the emotional condition of desire, as well as the experience of compassion. Thus, it relates uniquely to the sequestered self, and the higher self. The utilization of empathetic consciousness addresses the condition of desire, by employing it retroactively to manifest gratitude for whatever comprises the present condition. Socially this translates into the manipulation of the condition of desire in order to address the needs of others, therefore generating the external condition of gratitude. In doing this we learn to deal with our own pain by controlling our reaction to it, as we train ourselves to focus on addressing the suffering generated via the mechanism of our compassion by aligning our intentions with lessening the pain of others. In doing so, we manage to decrease the hypersensitivity that self-centeredness charges our personal suffering with. When we do this we not only become invested in the wellbeing of those around us, who we ultimately rely on, we also learn to solve problems beyond those which appear directly within in our own subjective experience. We gain an advantageous perspective which enables us to learn from mistakes without having to make them ourselves. At the most basic level, this condition lessens the potential for suffering by requiring substantially less energy than is needed to experience the informative events. Thus, we learn to trust love, as it is an aspect of empathetic consciousness. We become **principle-conditioned,** and thus transcend the limits of our inherited **social-conditioning**. Rather than reflexively reactive, we become reflectively informed and thus practically active. By utilizing the cognitive framework established via the orientation of the mind to facilitate empathetic consciousness we become invested in fellowship and empowered by its undeniable ability to create abundance and sustainable peace. We discover that responding proactively to the circumstances made visible via our compassion, most often seeks to create prosperity in others, which systematically creates prosperity in the environment, and thus returns to us as we experience the environment.

**VII**

Love is an idea too abstract to be concretized or rigidly defined according to a singular logic. Instead the notions of idyllic Love, perfect empathy and ultimate compassion are most useful as guiding archetypal forms, and not meant to be interpreted as being the path itself. The humility that enables us to manufacture empathetic consciousness and process multicentric awareness is dependent upon our relative detachment from emotional fixations regarding our subjective experiential knowledge. Detachment does not mean separation, it instead describes a level of equanimity regarding how we appraise our experience of reality, which empowers us to take on a role in our surroundings however forces us to accept the whole of what those surroundings entail. Unity teaches us that we are part of an ultimate and ordered whole, and that our choices can make changes that reach beyond the limited individuality that is our nature. Whereas ambition and greed create transient prosperity for an individual within insignificant and sporadic contexts, often at the cost of peace and often via the destruction or manipulation of shared environments. Of course, it is possible for an ambitious decision to be rewarding for more than a single individual. However, in the context of unity, collective prosperity is the intrinsic goal of every action. Selfishness is designed to fulfill our ill-informed desires regardless of what that means regarding sustainability, thus **selflessness**, which is the awareness indicative of multicentric-being, empowers us to control our desire and temper our ambition. Furthermore, the practicality of manifesting empathetic consciousness has to do with its intrinsic simplicity. While it may seem complex at the level it has been discussed thus far, that is only because as Human beings we experience reality from the perspective of a social identity and relate ourselves to each other and the whole of society by distorting and manipulating our position within that social construct and according to social conventions which are not generated by us subjectively. Additionally, human beings are emotionally intuitive, which predisposes them to incorporate understanding derived from empathetic reflection. Thus, the simplicity arises from the intuitive cognition of relational experience as it is depicted in terms of the operation and function of the ego in relationship with the proverbial “other” and the shared environment via the observation of ourselves as though our behaviors exist as a separate entity we call our **personality**. In a sense, the personality is formed via empathizing with the projected self.

**VIII**

 When personalities are formed, self is identified by summarizing existence in general terms as being either successful or unsuccessful relative to one’s ability to extract the desired reactions from what is interacted with. As we recognize patterns in ourselves that beget personally satisfying responses from our environment and our fellow human beings we begin to identify more strongly with those patterns. The same process occurs however, when we identify consequences derived from our personal patterns which beget negative responses from our environment and our fellow humans. While both aspects of our identity are ingrained equally and thus are equal in terms of our belief that they represent who we truly “are”. We begin to try to hide the less favored habits, and to intentionally express the favored habits. Once we begin to associate ourselves less and less with the reactions we evoke from external sources, and thus begin to recognize which aspects of our personality we dislike according to our own sense of self, or which we determine no longer suit us, this is called "**awakening**". However, awakening is accompanied by various activated mechanisms within our ego. Things like pride or self-doubt can lead us to rationalize the things we dislike about ourselves and attempt to exert unnatural control over our experiences to accommodate them. Fear, paranoia, or loneliness and depression can arise and lead us to either blame, abuse, or otherwise force our accountability unto others. The manifestation of empathetic consciousness is capable of being employed in such a way that internalizes a dual self and mentally shifts one’s sense of personal accountability into our subconscious. Such a process eventually has the potential to disrupt the cognitive equilibrium in such a way that it forms psychosis or becomes disassociated with its subject. Such convoluted mechanisms derived from the latent framework inherited alongside self-preservation manifest false notions of causality which prolong our suffering by convincing us to reposition the perspective through which we view our relationship to the environment. We are misled into attempting to manifest changes in our environment, so that the environment might evoke alternative reactions from us which then overtime reinforce habits and patterns which ultimately beget changes in ourselves. So instead of controlling our consciousness by practicing the manifestation of empathetic consciousness and thus intuiting the majority of our inferences regarding the environment and our relationships, we become mislead into attempting to wrestle control over everything else instead. However, once we are able to be honest with ourselves, and willing to try to love ourselves for who we are, we gain confidence which decreases our desire to have our self-centered expectations met. Meaning, the confidence in ourselves, replaces our need to cling to the crutch of our ignorant expectations, or project a desire for our surroundings to regularly align with our comfort zone. After that we begin to meet our needs in whatever way is the most natural and most efficient in the present moment, and which considers needs that transcend our self-interest. This allows for the transcendence of duality, and dualistic understandings of reality, and brings us into the realization of the "**truth**", or the present moment. In that moment as we come to self-reflect, we begin to recognize what we are after we forget all our expectations, and our assumptions and beliefs. We begin to recognize ourselves as biological vessels, containing self-sensing consciousness, which experiences the universe by receiving and recording the intricately interconnected expressions of the delicate beauty that exists as the cosmos. In addition to such a relationship to our experience of the environment, we also manifest a profound change within our relationship to other beings as it becomes apparent that without our subjectivity, we are essentially indiscernible from each-other. As such, we all comprise one unified field of being, which arranges energy and particles according to its nature. Our individual role within that field does not pertain to how it depicts its structure, nor does our own depiction of self-pertain to our role within the structure. The purpose of the vessel of our bodies is thus presumably not to simply exist successfully, but to participate fully in the relationship between the world that serves as its environment in such a way that emulates with its expression, the reality of ultimate beauty, and thus empowers the conscious energy for which it serves as a vessel. To bring love with us on our journey through being, and to serve love by allowing it to determine what we are ever becoming. This doesn’t require astute discipline, or perfection or divinity or genius intellect. Instead, all it asks of us is to have faith in the primacy of empathetic consciousness, empathy, and therefore challenge ourselves to be as compassionate, selfless and ultimately loving as we can.

**IX**

         Usually, the active implementation of transcendent empathetic consciousness requires pursuance of two primary principles. One, letting ourselves accept love from others, despite what we may think of ourselves or the personas we project. This is what is called **unconditional love**. It is essential to the latter aspects of the process of cognitive development which require the reconciliation of egoistic patterns in judgement, justice, and humanity. Two, trying to allow ourselves and others to express their truth naturally rather than attempting to enforce conformity to hegemonic expectations. This is what is called **tolerance**. Tolerance not only serves others through respecting their uniqueness and observing their existential equality, it also serves oneself by establishing one’s own existential equality as well as ensuring that one’s actions and assumptions aren’t biased or distorted by one’s personal expectations and therefore potentially detrimental to the fostering of one’s own happiness. The first principle is generally resisted due to the **cognitive dissonance** that results from the **duality** inherent to the ambiguous relationship between our inner self and our projected persona. By projecting an image of ourselves into society which embodies all the qualities and assumptions we aspire to, we are fated to conceal or hide any facets of our self-image which we authentically might identify with, but which we fear society may not accept or value. That means that when society, (or others via social means), praises us, offers us affection, or shows us love, we perceive it as being awarded to our projected persona solely due to societies ignorance of our hidden flaws. Thus, we only pretend to accept **conditional love**, because of the persona we believe to be fraudulent. The second principle is complicated by our knowledge of the problem contained within with the first principle, as well as the cognitive dissonance that results from the duality inherent to the simultaneous desire for others to accept our projected persona as actual and the understanding that the persona is in fact fraudulent. Although we know our own persona is being faked, we simultaneously imbue ourselves with an obligation to promote whatever qualities of that persona we believe are likely to convince others that we are loyal to it. The more we exemplify what we believe to be fraudulent qualities in order to promote the superiority of particular characteristics, the more shame we accumulate from harboring the aspects of ourselves we deem to be flaws. This is the first condition that resists tolerance and it is called **self-doubt**. A name which makes sense, due to the nature of the condition, the presentation of a false self as being genuine creates constant active doubt in the validity of the self. The knowledge of that first condition becomes problematic, in that our understanding of our own persona as false prevents us from fully trusting any personas we interact with. This creates an internal tendency to misinterpret the intentions of others, or infer intentionality where there was none. This second condition is called **anxiety.** Anxiety causes ones knowledge of the ultimate falseness of projected personas to manifest itself in their relationships as **intolerance**. Beyond these two instances of existential duality, there is an unspoken mechanism which establishes a certain suspension of disbelief in regard to authenticity. This mechanism is called **social-formality,** accordance with the mechanics of social formality is called **social-conformity**.This allows us to understand that although others are most likely also projecting false selves, and therefore may be able to doubt the true nature of our projections by the same logic by which we doubt theirs. The shared desire to convince each other of the realness of our personas acts as a deterrent which prevents confrontation. When we lack confidence in our ability to project a convincing persona, or when we conceal some true aspect of ourselves in order to conform to what is associated with our fraudulent projection, we attempt to compensate for the proportion of shame we accumulate in regard to our hidden persona, by unloading or transferring that shame via **emotional projection** unto others. One way this is done involves fervently asserting the supremacy of one’s **deified persona**, this can mean degrading the values or validity contained within alternative personas or seeking out and grouping with likeminded individuals in order to disassociate from their qualitative insecurity by defining their validity via quantitative means. Ironically this only succeeds in multiplying the accumulated sense of shame proportionate to the inflated validity as one persists in knowing they themselves fail to meet the impossible standards they have pretended to embody. This transforms their self-doubt into **self-loathing** and via the mechanism of emotional projection, eventually **hatred**.

**X**

One major issue intrinsic to the triumvirate of self-loathing, emotional projection, and social conformity, is that they each reinforce the behavioral pattern which causes one to deify an unrealistic persona, hold oneself and others to a standard derived from its expectations, accumulate and project the shame which arises from failure of the self and others to meet the unrealistic expectations, socially conform to non-confrontational social formality, come to recognize the reemergence of the temporarily displaced shame as having originated externally and ultimately come to polemically oppose any who exist counter to the deified persona’s expectations’ Thus the principles of unconditional love, and tolerance have the potential to address both particularly destructive patterns of social conflict which threaten our societies, our individual selves, and ultimately our happiness. It is therefore imperative to the health and continuation of our species that we educate ourselves and each other regarding the pursuit of self-knowledge and the manifestation and expression of empathetic consciousness according to the principles of tolerance and **unconditional love**.

**XI**

It isn’t possible to address the problems inherent to self-love, and tolerance by circumventing the Persona entirely. Though if instead of perceiving the illusory nature of identity as a threat to our potential sense of belonging, we could identify with our shared limitations as well as our collective potential, and thus relate to all of humanity as though it were a single entity. Once we manage to empathize with humanity in this fashion, it becomes less imperative that others accept us as being perfect reflections of whatever archetype we aspire to, and more important that we convey to them that we accept them and value them for who they are regardless of their projected self. In addition to this, the functional consequence of fixing ones position relative to humanity in such a way requires the unconscious pursuance of both unconditional love and tolerance. Unconditional love is pursued innately because the notion of regarding the whole of humanity as one, requires that the treatments of all individuals is accordant with a singular condition, as well as it requires that the condition to which they are accordant is that of humanity itself. Because the condition is thus restricted from varying throughout the multitude, its application relative to the whole is thus unconditional, as well as it demands the unquestioning acceptance that they are deserving of all that is owed to humanity. Instead of overcompensating for the inevitable futility of pretending to be what we are not, by attempting to force others to do the same, we can choose to let ourselves be vulnerable and acknowledge our own shortcomings to invite others to let themselves be similarly unguarded. Once this happens, we have an opportunity to express acceptance for the aspects of their selves that they are normally prone to hide or deny. To empathize with them and explain that the constant sense of fear that plagues us all is truthfully just the loneliness that comes from hiding within the emotional walls we build up around ourselves. Reciprocally, the process of creating this feeling of assurance and safety in others manifests as our recognition that we have a duty to do the same for ourselves. Conversely, this disposition causes us to reject the projected personas we interact with in our experience, as well as subject our actual selves to the consequences of an environment designed to accommodate illusions. Which is just as capable of creating a sense of alienation, or insecurity as alternative dispositions. Suffering is therefore likely to plague the lives of the loving and authentic to the same degree by which it plagues the hateful and false. The difference is in respect to the way love, and happiness are interacted with despite that unavoidable suffering. The **authentically expressed self** is intrinsically able to accept the love it is shown, and to believe in the sense of belonging it experiences, as well as being relatively more vulnerable to rejection and alienation it experiences. The **self-projecting idealized persona** is not only subjected to just as much suffering, but also destined to transform attempts at accepting or loving it into suffering as well, by reshaping the love for the expressed persona into hate for the repressed persona, and by acknowledging the acceptance of the expressed persona as evidence validating the irreconcilability of the repressed persona with societal expectations.

This is a very important distinction, because pursuing individuation or enlightenment can sometimes create the false notion that there exists a duality of self, where one disposition causes suffering while some other disposition offers liberation from it. This misleading notion serves to distract us into trying on multiple personas in a search for the ultimate projection, or correct archetype to emulate to be granted external liberation. That is like associating the isolation inherent to being trapped in a cell, with the shape of the cell’s exterior and whether that shape is aesthetically pleasing enough to other prisoners to inspire them to free themselves, so that ultimately, they may free you. It doesn’t make any sense, if it is possible to free oneself this way, then why not do so simply by turning one’s attention to aesthetic pleasantries? So, we must keep in mind that there is nothing to gain from pretending our imperfections don’t or shouldn’t exist. That said, we also must keep in mind that the idea of perfection is itself the imagining of an absent condition and the relation of extant conditions to the expectations derived from the imagined ideal. Moreover, it is important not to identify the aspects of ourselves we fail to understand or of which we are ignorant as being aberrant or imperfect. Whether we appraise these aspects as such because what we deem their utility to be, or regarding the way they are received by others, we must be vigilant in correcting our assumptions. Utility is a dependent factor, and we exist in a changing environment, therefore what we may not be able to utilize one moment, could prove to be invaluable in moments to come. Similarly, what is degraded by society today, may one day prove to be adored by it. Because of the transient nature of these values, it doesn’t make any sense to prescribe them in an absolute way. If the utility or value of an object is determined by its circumstances, and circumstances are constantly changing, then it is irrational to accept or reject the worth or usefulness of that object permanently, based on its current relationship to whatever circumstance in which it is observed. Instead all objects and subjects are necessarily equal relative to their intrinsic value.

**XII**

     Individuality is important not because of its potential relationship to divinity, but because it allows for the achievement of what self-righteousness and societal-conformity only pretend to achieve. Empathy is important, because interdependence is what allows us to prosper as individuals and as a collective. Although apathy may seem to protect us from the pain of rejection or overwhelming emotion, it does so at the cost of connection and belonging. Although shrewdness may provide material success, aid in the amassing of wealth, or defend against being taken advantage of, it also offers paranoia, desensitization, and loneliness. Empathy is just as limited as any other manner of connecting to the world, however, it is concerned with interpreting what knowledge is derived from perspectives that transcend our own. Compassion is important, because the collective delusion of the idealized self as projected by the reactive and fear fueled persona, is the single greatest threat faced by our society. It has been at work for thousands of years, creating discordance, prejudice, cruelty, oppression and violence globally. Compassion, Empathy, Honesty, vulnerability, these are what is lacking, not because they are useless or weak, but because they are the answer to a problem that is present in our world. Although the development of the characteristic dispositions that caused the problem, was initially meant as a solution to a greater threat. The beauty of the truth is how simple it really is. It requires a lot of energy to harbor two discordant selves, especially when attempting to exaggerate one while concealing the other. All that expended energy creates a great deal of bitterness and angst when it fails to assuage the fear it was created to address. Imagine how much less energy it would take to exaggerate, conceal and pretend nothing, instead sufficing to express oneself authentically. Perhaps this would allow the extra energy to be put to work ensuring one acted compassionately, empathetically, and lovingly. Perhaps then, the aberrations manufactured by fear, would no longer be used as a basis from which to disqualify **peace** as being potentially achievable.

**Glossary:**

1. **Intuition:** The ability to understand something immediately, without the need for conscious reasoning. A thing that knows or considered likely from instinctive feeling rather than conscious reasoning.
2. **Gnosis:** Knowledge of spiritual mysteries. Greek noun meaning “Knowledge”. Esoteric knowledge of spiritual truth held by the ancient Gnostics to be essential to salvation. The knowledge of transcendence arrived at by way of interior, intuitive means.
3. **Archetype:** A statement, pattern of behavior, or prototypical model which other statements, patterns of behavior, and objects copy or emulate. The original parrr or model from which all things of the same kind are copied or which they are based: a model or first form.( Jung: Highly developed elements of the collective unconscious, can only be deduced indirectly by using story art myths religion or dreams. Archetypes in this aspect are universal archaic patterns and images that derive from collective unconscious and are the psychic counterpart of instinct. Inherited potentials which are actualized when they enter consciousness as images or manifest in behavior or interaction with the outside world.
4. **Nature:** The material World, especially as surrounding humankind and existing independently of human activities. The natural world as it exists without human beings or civilization. The elements of the natural world as mountains trees animals or rivers. The universe with all its phenomena. The sum total of forces at work throughout the universe. Reality as distinguished from any effect of art. The combination of qualities belonging to a person animal or thing or class by birth, origin, or constitution: native or inherent character. A primitive wild condition: an uncultivated state. Resultant of inborn or inherent qualities, innately.
5. **Duality:** The quality or condition of being dual. An instance of opposition or contrast between two concepts or two aspects of something: a dualism. The quantum mechanical property of being regard able as both a wave and a particle.
6. **Empathy:** The ability to understand and share the feelings of another. The ability to apprehend the mental or emotional state of another individual or archetype.
7. **Relativity:** The absence of standards of absolute and universal application. The dependence of various physical phenomena on relative motion of the observer and the observed objects, especially regarding the nature and behavior of light, space, time, and gravity.
8. **Relationship**: The way in which two or more concepts, objects, or people are connected, or the state of being connected.
9. **S.T.S.M.N.Subconscious-transient-situational-meta-narrative**: The notion that the self is composed in part of the product of highly rationalized discursive systems which are the effect of a modern configuration of power.
10. **Compassion**: Sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others. Sympathetic consciousness of others distress together with a desire to alleviate it. Differs from empathy in that it is not simply the awareness of other’s pain but the urge to mitigate it.
11. **Individually relevant perceptions I.R.P**: Experiential positions relative to subjective modes of being which are interpreted relative to internally generated emotional states.
12. **Independently-Conceived-Environmentally-Dependent-Perceptions I.C.E.D.P**: Experiential positions relative to the environment which derive themselves from interior impressions and subjective experiences.
13. **Situationally-Simulated-Objective-Context S.S.O.C**.: Objective positions or knowledge which simulate contexts according to unique or particular patterns in experience.
14. **Non-Hegemonic-Metanarrative**: A subaltern or dependent politically or socially relevant narrative account that experiments with or explores the idea of storytelling, often by drawing attention to it’s own artificiality. An overarching account or interpretation of events and circumstances that provides a pattern or structure for peoples beliefs and gives meaning to their experiences.
15. **Rationalization:** The action of attempting to explain or justify behavior or an attitude with logical reasons, even if these are not appropriate. The action of reorganizing a process or system to make it more logical and consistent. The action of making a company, process, or industry more efficient, especially by dispensing with superfluous personnel or equipment. The process of converting a function or expression to a rational form.
16. **Victim-Stance:** An acquired personality trait in which a person tends to recognize themselves as a victim of negative actions of others, and to behave as if this were the case in the face of contrary evidence of such circumstances.
17. **Humility:** A modest or low view of ones own importance: humbleness.
18. **Unity:** The state of being united or joined as a whole. The state of forming a complete and pleasing whole, especially in an artistic context. A thing forming a complex whole. In Aristotle’s poetics, each of the three dramatic principles requiring limitation of the supposed time of a drama to that occupied in acting it or to a single day (unity of time), use of one scene throughout (unity of place), and concentration on the development of a single plot (unity of action).
19. **Higher Self:** Associated with multiple belief systems: Describes an eternal, omnipotent, conscious and intelligent being who is one’s “real self”. Atma- the inseparable ray of the universe and one self. The form of being only to be recognized in a union with a divine source. The aspect of our identity which is derived by metaphysical means.
20. **Multi-Centric Awareness:** That which occurs inmany sites in the body, as in a multicentric malignancy, multifocal. Having more than one center, having multiple centers of origin regarding the perception of a situation or fact, or the concern about and well-informed interest in a particular situation or development.
21. **Synchronicity (as an acausal connecting principle):** The simultaneous occurrence of events that appear significantly related but have no discernable causal connection. Simultaneous action, development or occurrence.
22. **Principle-Conditioned:** The state of something, especially with regard to its appearance, quality or working order which is derived from principles or ethics. To bring something into a state of principle informed experience.
23. **Social-Conditioning:** The state of something, especially with regard to its appearance, quality or working order which is derived from social or interpersonal means. To bring something into a state of socially informed experience.
24. **Love:** A deep romantic or sexual attachment to someone. Object of attachment, devotion, or admiration. The recognition of other as self.
25. **Selflessness:** Unselfish, having no concern for oneself (having no GREATER concern for oneself than is had for others.)
26. **Personality:** The complex of characteristics that distinguishes an individual or a nation or group.
27. **(Spiritual) Awakening:** A complex mythological or cosmological drama which identifies a fallen divine element as being housed within certain human beings, and which according to a doctrine of salvation in which the divine element may be returned to the divine state through a process of gnosis.
28. **Truth:** The property of being in accord with the fact or reality. Sincere action character or utterance. The body of real things, events, and facts. Actuality.
29. **Unconditional Love:** Love which is given or shown without discrimination, and which is not influenced in terms of its intensity or applicability relative to any particular or circumstantial means.
30. **Conditional Love:** Love which is given or shown partial to a set of personal or subjective expectations.
31. **Tolerance:** Sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from or conflicting with one’s own. The act of allowing something.
32. **Intolerance:** Absence of sympathy and a refusal to indulge the beliefs or practices which differ from or come into conflict with one’s own.
33. **Cognitive Dissonance:** Psychological conflict resulting from incongruous beliefs and attitudes held simultaneously.
34. **Self-Doubt:** Tendency toward belief in the potentiality of events to transpire in such a way that is discordant to the desired path of the self.
35. **Anxiety:** Apprehensive uneasiness or nervousness, usually over an impending anticipated ill. An abnormal and overwhelming sense of apprehension and fear (often marked by physical signs such as tension, sweating, and increased pulse rate. ) by doubt concerning the reality and nature of the threat and by self-doubt about one’s capacity to cope with it. Mentally distressing concern or interest. Strong desire mixed with doubt, fear or uneasiness. Troubled or engrossed state of mind.
36. **Social formality:**  Something that must be done as part of an [official](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/official_1) [process](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/process_1) or that you are [expected](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/expected) to do in a [social](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/social_1) [situation](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/situation), often spurned by the desire to accord with the known expectations of others.
37. **Social conformity:** Acting in accordance with the tenets of social formality in an effort to meet the expectations of the socially prescribed method of formalism.
38. **Emotional projection:** A defense mechanism people subconsciously employ in order to cope with difficult feelings or emotions. Involves projecting undesirable feelings or emotions onto someone or something else rather than admitting to or dealing with unwanted feelings.
39. **Deified persona/ Apotheosis of impersonated self:** The glorification of a subject to a divine level. The raising of an idealized self to godlike stature, in which it is “worshipped” or emulated in order to associate oneself with social customs which one believes to be favorable to others.
40. **Self-Loathing:** Refers to an extreme dislike or hatred of oneself or being angry at or even prejudiced against oneself. The term is also used to designate a dislike or hatred of a group, family, social class, or stereotype to which one belongs and/or has.
41. **Hate:** Feel intense or passionate dislike. A and powerful aversion to an existential object relationship or process.
42. **Authentically expressed self:** The meaningful emulation of values and conditions which accurately represent the internal beliefs and values of an individual, and which are expressed without perturbation.
43. **Self-Projecting Idealized Persona:** The total internalization of a process or system of processes which idealize a version of the self which is meant to garner approval from social externalities, and which has come to propagate and reinforce its own projection due to the entrenchment of habitual or conditioned responses.
44. **Peace:** Freedom from disturbance, quiet tranquility. Freedom from or the cessation of war or violence. Freedom from civil disorder. Freedom from dispute or dissension between individuals or groups. Harmony, nonviolence, concordance. A natural and emergent order derived from the unity of a system or complex group of systems and their participation in a higher order or functionality.

**XIII**

**Cicero and Augustine:**

**Natural Law, Institutionalism, and societal efficiency.**

What is the “self”? This question has existed for as long as human beings have been able to ask questions. To the individual it is “who am I?” when wondering whether we are merely autonomous dust somehow capable of making choices. To the spiritualist it is “How did I come to be?” or “What created me? How do I differ from or relate to that creator?”. While to the philosopher, that form of human qualities deemed kingly by the very lips of Socrates, Plato, and even the more down to earth, Aristotle, the question is what is the “self”, how is it defined universally, personally and by what mechanism of nature should it allow itself to be attuned? Beyond this, what is the best self, and by what means is this higher self-judged, what methods is it discoverable or attainable by? It seems that the conventional wisdom derived from the mundanity of living, fails to answer these integral and important questions.

Thus, it is to the philosophers we look for answers in this matter of self. Though, to be representative in our search for truth, we must discuss both the spiritualist as well as the secularist, thus we have chosen two historical authorities on the matters of philosophy relating to this inquiry. Cicero, of Rome, and Augustine of Hippo. While it may appear that their views on the nature of self, and the notion of highest self, and how one manages to attain such a state of being are similar, this is only true of their surfaces. When investigated via the depth of their teachings and understandings, it becomes clear that the two men differed greatly, from their foundations up until just beneath the surface of their assertions. It is my belief that the reason for such differences is because the degree to which they personify the notion of God, and from what perspective they view the role of Man as it relates to their notions of God, in addition to their understandings of what duties Man owes to the various constructs of human experience, such as the state and the community.

Cicero was a prominent thinker who saw the truth of morality, and the “right” way of living as being that way which fell between the teachings of the Stoics and the Epicureans. Which translates into basically a reconciliation of the notion of Natural law, with that of absolute devotion to the principle of personal pleasure. To reconcile the two, he employed a dialectic that was in some ways rather ahead of his time. Almost Hegelian in his approach, Cicero formed his thesis by combining the synthesis of stoicism with its antithesis in epicureanism, retaining their confluences whilst disposing of their contradictions. In this way he elucidated a middle path between the two which maintained the stoic notion of a divinely ordered cosmos, without personifying that entity, instead perceiving it to be a naturally emergent edifice of laws that drove the mechanism of creation, which was at the level of its composite matter, a seemingly chaotic and randomly moving mass of mindless particles as it was seen through the epicurean lens. Leaving Humanity as the natural marriage of these two universalized notions. Being composed of both the physical, and nonphysical, chaos and order.

In an effort to reconcile pleasure with morality, Cicero describes the notions of obligation and expediency. Defining as obligatory, those actions and choices which emulate natural law, and as expedient those behaviors and choices which are carried out in service of the subjective self. He defined the concept of self as being the means by which one can direct their being to its own ends. In defining that “means” he references it as being human intelligence. For instance, when he describes the mechanism of language, and its possible origins, cicero states; “On hearing the confused and jumbled noise which Men were making with their inarticulate sounds, (intelligence) split them up and divided them into units.” (Cicero, Republic, Book 3 paragraph 3.)1. Here we get an excellent image of how Cicero conceptualizes the intellect as well as the role of natural law as it relates to self-governance. He believes that Natural law behaves in a relationship with creation, similarly as intelligence influences the chaos of noise coming off human lips into the ordered construct of language. It is by this correlation, between intelligence or human nature, and natural law or God, that he develops his concept of duty, or obligation. “The distinguishing property of man is to search for and to follow after truth (natural law). Therefore, when relaxed from our necessary cares and concerns, we then covet to see, to hear and to learn somewhat, and we esteem the knowledge of things as either obscure or wonderful to be the indispensable means of living happily.”(Cicero, On Obligations, Book I. section 13)2 Here we can see that Cicero also reconciles the notion of epicurean pleasure seeking, with that of the stoic precepts of emulating natural law, by defining the pursuit of the latter to be the essence through which, via the means of intelligence, the former is to be realized. While he employs the intellect to this end as a means, it is by the will that the means is employed, and the end is derived. Thus, it is the will which is subject to judgement, in regard to its relationship with reason. This relationship, between will and reason, Cicero establishes by discerning the validity of reason via the degradation of mechanism which employs it. “True glory strikes root, and even extends itself; all false pretensions fall as do flowers, nor can anything feigned be lasting.” (Cicero, On Obligations, Book II section 43)3 That is to say, one cannot pretend to be virtuous, because to do so would eventually exhaust the pretender causing him to act in accordance with his own notion of truth when left without the energy to both harbor it, and reflect the characteristics of higher truth (natural law). It is also inferred that should one be feigning accordance with virtue, eventually they might fail to adequately surmise what image it asks of them to project, at which point their feigning would be outlasted by the truth of their being. It is important to note that Cicero defines Human nature as being intrinsically in harmony with Natural law, and explains that it is only through expediency and selfishness that this nature is perverted by humanities flaws. In explaining the confluence of the two ideas, that of false persona, and that of skewed divinity cicero states, “(Natural) Law in the proper sense is right reason in harmony with nature…calling people to duty by its commands and deterring them from wrongdoing by its prohibitions…whoever refuses to obey it will be turning back on himself. Because he has denied his nature as a human being he will face the gravest penalties for this alone even if he succeeds in avoiding all the other things that are regarded as punishments.” (Cicero, Republic, Book 3 paragraph 33).4

Because Cicero believed that within each human being there existed a higher intelligence which was innately aligned with the wisdom of natural law, he described virtue as being available to an existing cognitive state of mind which could become accessible to one who searched for it within themselves. He asserted that the route to this manner of thinking was discoverable by the attempt to refrain from serving the interest of emotional or egocentric thinking (expediency), and thus by way of submission to the notion of the Law (Obligation), become aware of its principle virtues. He describes the virtues somewhat idealistically, likely because his stoic influence. Prudence, Courage, Justice and Moderation, are the vague and categorized representations of Cicero’s idea of virtuosity, although in the interest of practicality, he merely adopts the stoic notion that all Human beings are one collective family and as such each individual deserves respect, compassion and help should they require it.

Finally, Cicero prescribes his understanding of the self the cosmopolitan duty of being of utility to the state. A construct which Cicero believes to be inherited from superior ancestors, as well as one aspect of a dual construct which is self-supporting equally dependent upon the accordance of both the individual human being and the regime with natural law. To prove this point he references the Roman empire at it’s height, “For neither man on their own, nor the state on its own, could have founded or long maintained so great and wide ranging an empire.” (Cicero, Republic, Book V paragraph 1)5. He goes further into depth, seemingly describing a cyclical relationship between Man as the inheritor of intellect capable of interpreting natural law, and thus the ability to emulate this law by their own nature, and the state as a projected construct which is projected in accordance with the Man’s nature. However, as time passes, and degradation takes place, eventually Man and his projection become further and further diverted from the paths they once followed, requiring the renewal of the emulation of natural law, and the reapplication of its emergent precepts to the mechanism of state. “Our generation, however, after inheriting our political organization like a magnificent picture now fading with age, not only neglected to restore its original colors but did not even ensure that it retained its basic form and, as it were, its faintest outlines.”(Cicero, Republic, Book V, paragraph 2)6. This perspective is likely indicative of the time which Cicero lived, being that it was during the decline of the once great Roman empire. It is also likely that his idea of Law that transcended the authority of rulers came about as a response to the corruption of the political structure of his time.

This influenced heavily his notion of the self, as having an obligation to better themselves, and pursue their natural interests according to their own talents, and eventually choose for themselves which role they should like to play in regard to the state and the world as a whole. Thus, he doesn’t define any single character archetype, or professional proclivity as being more or less in accordance with virtue, but instead insinuates that any endeavor can be carried out virtuously so long as one adheres to the law of nature in their pursuit of it. He does define the concept of the well-rounded statesman as being the ideal state of being relative to self. Though he does not insinuate that it is the role of statesman which affords one the distinction of higher self, instead it is the way the statesman meets their task and to what degree their methods are in accordance with natural law, and vicariously human nature. “But above all we must establish who and what kind of person we wish to be, and what pattern of life we wish to adopt. This is the most difficult decision of all to reach.” (Cicero, On Obligations, page 40)7. He also describes the philosopher as being equally virtuous, but not more so, asserting that the philosopher may derive his distinction via the formulation or realization of principles, while the statesman may then derive distinction from the application of those principles.

Augustine of Hippo, a doctor of the catholic church and posthumously declared saint of that church and its associated faith, discussed the notion of self from within the boundaries of the relationship between man and God as it was defined in biblical texts, and interpreted over time by the Catholic Church. This resulted in a notion of man that saw him as unfit when compared to the personification of God, in who’s image it is said that man was created. In addition to the direct relativity which arose between Man and deity, there was another consequence to the personification of deity which rendered the notion of natural law as being emanated by, or prescribed by the will of a personified God. Included in his theologically motivated conceptualizations of the role of self, were the notions of original sin, as well as salvation through submission to God through worship and via the endeavor to emulate the will of the Christ whom they literally believed to be the son of the literal personified God. However, much of Augustine’s intimations relating to the self are derived from the rejection of his former learning which had its origins in Manicheism, as well as Platonism. In reference to such learning Augustine describes the knowledge that came of it as being a poor reflection of the truth that is contained in the scriptures asserting the prominence of the Christ figure. “Food in our sleep appears like our food awake; yet the sleepers are not nourished by it, for they are asleep.” (Augustine, Confessions, Chapter VI paragraph 11)8. Of the two schools, he rejected the Manichean concept of the duality of being intrinsic to humanity, and of the ultimate role of the impersonal archetypes as depicted by the Platonists. Regarding the duality of being, Augustine rejected the Manichean concept of a demiurge, or inborn corrupt essence as being responsible for humanities divergence from harmony with God. Instead prescribing that role to the self entirely, inseparable from will and resultant of the human tendency to pursue pleasures and sin in ignorance of the will of their creator thus not in response to natural law., A state of being which all humanity was subject to because of their inheritance of the consequences issued on account of original sin.

When it comes to the definition of the self in its natural state, Augustine seems to entertain two notions. On one hand he describes the collective “self” of Mankind as being naturally in harmony with the will of God, while on the other hand he cites the ancient participation in sin against the will of God via the inception of knowledge of Good and evil as being responsible for the current subjective state of Man in which the self is, by nature of human error and not in accordance with its creator, naturally discordant with the will of God. Overall he seems to assert that human nature defines the higher self, while the lesser self is defined by its unnatural divergence from that natural state. To that end he defines the path to a higher state of being as singularly accessible through submitting oneself to the will of God. “Lord…You are wrenching me back toward myself.” (Augustine, Confessions, 158)9 In this case he defines the higher self as being certain and in effect, the natural state of being relative to humanity. Thus the influence of God only results in a *return* to oneself, and not in the creation of that self as a state of being. Additionally, Augustine describes the boundaries of the human soul to the same end, “The house of my soul is too small for you to enter; make it more spacious by your coming.” (Augustine, confessions book I paragraph VI)10. So again, it is not that through harmony with God one manifests a new soul, comprised of a new substance, but instead widens the existing soul in response to God’s influence. Augustine follows this trend, of defining the notion of self in its personal form as it relates to the conception of a personal relationship with the transcendent God. This sense of communion with a higher power deters Augustine from validating the pursuit of recognition by humanity or individual human beings. “Yet allow me to speak, though I am but dust and ashes, for it is to your mercy that I address myself, not to some man who would mock me.” (Augustine, Confessions, Book I paragraph VII).11 It is through the avoidance of fulfilling desires or unnatural hungers which arise from the corruptible state of the human soul, which Augustine concludes as being the cause of the fleshly corruption of Human beings. “It was not the corruptible flesh that made the soul sinful; it was the sinful soul that made the flesh corruptible.” (Augustine, City of God, Book XIV chapter III)12. By which he both reveals the belief that prior to original sin, the literal physical form of man was immortal, being subjected to the workings of mortality and death only after his fall from grace. A notion he is unclear about in regard to whether it derives from his conception of the Incarnated Christ as having existed literally as a man, or which he means to symbolically attribute to the idea that one without knowledge as that gained from original sin is incapable of recognizing the reality of their eminent demise, and thus is intellectually immune to death. Although it is likely the latter, being that most of his reasoning comes from a place relating the etheric of the human soul to the mechanism of the human body. “Boasting is not something wrong with the praise of man; the fault is in a soul which perversely loves the praise of others, and cares nothing for the witness of conscience.” (Augustine Book X chapter IV)13. Here Augustine shows that it is not the existence of societal or interpersonal validation which carries with it the sinful state of being he attributes to such things, but instead that the sin lies in it’s pursuit and the elevation of it as being akin to that of the validation offered by God.

It is by the pursuit of this harmony with the will of God, which is definably, acting in accordance with Natural law from Augustine’s perspective. His understanding of societal attempts at defining evil in secular terms, or by way of purely empirical means, runs the risk of denying the infallibility of the form of God. It seems very advanced of Augustine to define such a potentiality within the human psyche, as it appears to describe the psychological tendency or mechanism of self-ignorance referred to as “projection”. Essentially, he recognizes that in their ignorance human beings are likely to recognize the existence of evil within themselves, and their reality as being derivative from the will of God as it is God who has created all manner of things that exist. Thus, he rejects human philosophy, and notions regarding good and evil as being inferior to the notion of God’s perfection. “I saw that through their inquiry into the origin of evil they had waxed full of malice; more ready to claim that your substance was vulnerable to evil than that their own created it.” (Augustine, City of God, Book I page VIII)14. This evolves in Augustine’s ideology, eventually manifesting itself as questioning of the concepts inherited from philosophical teachings of his time, as well as a conceptual interpretation of the path to attaining a higher state of being or projecting the highest form of self. “Tell me, I beg you, tell your miserable supplicant, O merciful God, whether my infancy was itself the sequel to some earlier age, now dead and gone? Was there nothing before it except the life I have lived in my mother’s womb?” (Augustine, Confessions, Book I page VIII paragraph IX)15. A statement which reveals that Augustine participated in a form of Christianity that predated its modern notions of everyone having one life, by which all eternity is to be decided. Although in it’s interrogative form it does not assert an acceptance of the alternative. However, it does pose an important issue regarding the notion of the human soul, and body, which arises from Augustine’s discussion of transforming the coarse self into the eternal self, through the sacrifice of each.

Augustine identifies the concept of self-acceptance, or self-love, as being possible only when it exists in the form of contorting one’s soul, so that to seek God’s approval. “Have compassion on your own soul by making yourself acceptable to God.”(Augustine, City of God, Book X, Chapter VI)16. Which alludes to the idea that it is only through the dissolution of Man’s physical self as well as soul, in order to allow them to be made impersonal to some degree by replacing their relationship with subjective will, with the objective form of God’s will. Augustine sees this pursuit not only as being indicative of service to God through one’s self via actions, but as sacrifice of the self entirely in order to more perfectly receive and emit the Nature of the Transcendent God. “Our body also is a sacrifice when we discipline it by temperance, provided we do this as we ought for the sake of God, so that we might not offer our bodily powers to the service of sin.” (Augustine, City of God, Book X, Chapter I)17. Augustine thus establishes the heightened importance of intention relative to action. The way that he does this, however, is by narrowly defining the sort of intention, and interpretation of natural law which is necessary in order to effect righteous change. That is to say, in accordance with Christian scripture, Augustine holds that it is only through the worship and emulation of the singular notion of God as defined the Bible, and via the interpretation of natural laws that emanate from that singular notion as they are defined and expressed by the organization of the Catholic church. Via this logic Augustine defines natural talents or callings by describing them as being indicative of grace in terms of the particular talents or proclivities. Therefore, they are understood by Augustine as gifts inherited from the creator. “We are members of one another, possessing gifts differing according to the grace which has been given us.”(Augustine, City of God, Book X, Chapter VI)18

In terms of the transformation of the human soul, into the substance of higher self, or in accordance with higher virtues, Augustine describes an absorption into the spirit of God, in such a way that it indicates a total exchange of one’s individual substance for the substance of God, and through which one exchange achieves unchangeable, and worthy form before God. However he does not assert that it is necessary to develop or renounce one’s natural gifts in order to overcome their flawed humanity. Instead he describes a transformation of soul through sacrifice of its individual motivations. “How much more does the soul itself become a sacrifice when it offers itself to God, so that it may be kindled by the fire of love and may lose the form of worldly desire, and may be reformed by submission to God as to the unchangeable form, thus becoming acceptable to God because of what it has received from his beauty.” (Augustine, City of God, Book X, Chapter III)19. Thus, it seems that Augustine conceives of a method by which one transcends the bounds of their humanity by changing in actuality into the literal substance of the form of God, through emulating the disposition and message of the Christ. A method of self-actualization which Augustine and the faith to which he subscribes terms, salvation.

When the two are related, Cicero and Augustine’s notions of self have a lot of general characteristics in common, while their perspectives regarding how to interpret and practically apply the concepts the relate to self are extraordinarily different. In general, the two both have similar conceptions of Natural Law being transcendental order which is prescribed to the structure of reality via the intention and will of a supreme, ultimately benevolent deity. However, Cicero interprets this supreme entity as *being* Natural Law, which in and of itself orders physicality, and which is reflected in Man as Human nature which in and of itself comprises intelligence. While Augustine personifies the supreme being as a conscious God, who through its essence wills Natural Law into existence, and by it’s orders prescribes the role of Man as being in service to this emanation. Both men define humility and selflessness as being essential in order to perform “good” or “right” acts. Cicero, by differentiating between obligations that are inspired by natural law, an expediency as defined by selfish ends. Wherein one’s performance of obligations is superior to their performance in the interest of expediency. Cicero goes further to explain that right action is not even possible in the presence of selfish desire. Augustine similarly proposes that a “good” act in and of itself does not derive its goodness from the act itself or it’s consequences, but from its relationship to the will of God, regarding the intention by which it was carried out.

About the relationship between the self and the state, the two differ greatly. Each man presenting his own distinct notion of the role played by collective human endeavors. Cicero describes the role of the state as being a necessary construct through which one can potentially elevate themselves to superhuman means, either in service to or through the expansion of the state. “I am speaking of the art of governing and training peoples, an art which in case of the good and able men still produces, as it has so often in the past, an almost incredible and superhuman kind of excellence.” (Cicero, Republic, Book III, Page 61 paragraph V)20. Augustine describes a similar relationship, however he doesn’t mention the state, instead preferring the relationship between the Christians, Christianity itself, and the church. What he describes, at its foundations reject the authority of states when it comes to the prescription of status, or collective sense of belonging. Describing a boundary-less community of compulsory participants which inherit their status and societal belonging from God, through the structure of the Church. “This is the sacrifice of Christians, who are many, making up one body in Christ. This is the sacrifice which the church continually celebrates in the sacrament of the altar, a sacrament well-known to the faithful where it is shown to the church that she herself is offered in the offering which she presents to God.” (Augustine, City of God, Book X, Chapter VI)21.

The relevance of this last distinction plays quite a significant role in the future interrelations between the Church and state, especially in respect to Rome and the Catholic Church in particular. The eventual formation of the roman Catholic church is indicative of the innate irreconcilability of the authoritative state, and the existence of a clandestine organization which derives its authority directly from the divine, and thus surmounts the state from within. Presenting a sort of internal pressure among the citizens, and the organizational state, through which the tenets of the Church are adopted by secular establishments in the interest of securing the loyalty of its public. Just as well, the state could adopt the Churches precepts to secure power over the individual. Of course, during Augustine’s time this notion would have seemed farfetched, with the Church being comprised mostly of monastic components, ultimately disinterested in ruling citizens other than by influencing them to seek harmony with God. Cicero had described the politics of the roman empire as having been inherited from superior ancestors, but as having been subsequently eroded by time and the lethargy and ignorance of subsequent generations. It is perhaps, the solution to this problem, which the Church was erected to address. Considering that it requires singular acceptance of a particular divinity and promotes itself as being subject to the unchangeable and infallible contexts present in scripture, one can ascertain its intention as being one of immutable longevity and constancy, much like what Cicero finds the state to be lacking.

In conclusion, both Men say basically the same things. There is truly a definable self, as it exists naturally. This is apparent as Human nature and can be observed as either intelligence, or free will. There is also a higher power, by which the patterns and characteristics of the lesser self can be held relative to and by which knowledge of the self can be discerned. Regarding both Men, the barriers which prevent us from attaining a higher state of being, or which prevent us from coming to know our true divine selves, are those of selfish desire, mindless pursuit of bodily pleasures, and indifference to the needs and roles of others. These barriers are surmountable via the emulation of principles which are established as perfect, or righteous by their being inherited from Natural law. To that end, it is the internal pursuit of virtue, and the relationship one has with oneself from which arises the best or true self. Cicero and Augustine define this in terms of both discovery, and transformation. Cicero by describing the existence of an innate cognitive function capable of intuiting virtue through reason and discovering one’s human nature by its accordance with natural law. Augustine describes the absorption of the spirit of God into one’s soul and body, which he both describes as transforming the soul, and as calling one back to themselves. Regarding the self as it relates to society, both men establish a ground by which the individual may utilize the increased capacity of collective establishments to foster growth and education as well as selfless service, and to achieve higher states of self and pursue one’s own benefit as well as the benefit of the higher organizational authority. In Cicero’s descriptions this defines the state, whereas in Augustine’s it defines the Church. Eventually the two come into cooperation and each, the state and the Church respectively, serve unique and interdependent roles which function via multifaceted society to promote a multicentral notion of how one ought to pursue the realization of their best self. Or as it is commonly referred in modern colloquial phrasing, through service to God and Country one can become the best that they can be.

**XIV**

**Devotion, the Bhagavad Gita and liberation.**

Within the philosophical poetry of the Bhagavad Gita, there exists a certain tenacity regarding the role of “Dharma” and the implications that correspond to acting accordant to dharmic obligation. Krishna confronts in his conversations with Arjuna, the same basic questions of sacrifice, duty, and devotion that are present within the hearts of all human beings. Specifically, the Gita divides Krishna’s teachings into several sections, each corresponding to an aspect of experience and the role played by the individual relative to cosmic balance.

In the first six sections of the Gita Krishna elucidates the role of self-knowledge as it relates to action. Thus, establishing one possible path to liberation which insists that one ought to discipline their actions to unfold in accordance with ordained obligation as set forth in the Dharma. To do this however, requires a sharp grasp of what constitutes the “self” and how the knowledge of the self can lead to irrational or self-serving sentiments of inaction which masquerade as moral indignation. Krishna addresses this in Arjuna when he points out that the prince is only reluctant to do battle because of his transient emotional rejection of the task, and not due to his understanding of any demonstrable higher order. This is built upon within the text to further elucidate a path out of suffering which incorporates the role of sacrifice as it relates to action via the notion of obligatory participation in the balanced expression of what is ultimately thought to be a cosmic ordering principle. In this case, Krishna is asking the prince to sacrifice his personal misgivings and reluctance in exchange for faith in Krishna’s omnipotence. Thus, having personally detached from the consequences of his actions as they appear subjectively via sacrifice and ultimately devotion to the plan revealed by Krishna, Arjuna can fulfill his societal and cosmic roles without necessitating the internalization of the suffering which arises from these contexts. Furthermore, there is the description of the path to liberation which comprises itself within the tension extant between the dichotomous principles of action and renunciation. Here Krishna develops for Arjuna a description of his roles and obligations which honors the renunciation of samsara as a psychic or personal disassociation with the implications of the role played in accordance with Krishna’s cosmic ordering principle. This relationship between Individual and divinity is fulfilled and exemplified in the notion of bhakti or devotion. The implications of this principality are twofold. Firstly, one can engage in bhakti in such a way that supersedes the mundanity of common experience, and thus transcends social conditions. Secondly, the devotional practice relies primarily on one’s trust in a benevolent teleological mechanism which is responsible for the ultimate manifestation of reality at all levels. Bhakti as it is espoused by Krishna develops two conditions relative to human nature; the condition of social obligation which allows for action without requiring subjective accountability, and the condition of a deterministic reality which calls into question the extent of free will.

Additionally, the notion of the role divinity plays regarding human life is edified more distinctly within the context of the Gita than in the other Vedic texts and puranas. Krishna and Arjuna present a unique duality to that of the puranas in that the pair metaphysically signify the relationship between the various levels of consciousness within a human being as well as the roles played by that being in society and regarding cosmic balance. This relationship between the charioteer archetype and the archer archetype wherein arjuna as an archer is poised to act by aiming at and firing at what appears within his view. Krishna is Arjuna’s charioteer and thus is ultimately in control of what comes into view as well as responsible for the actual steering and moving of the pair. That is a lot to unpack, but the symbolism is obvious. Krishna shows Arjuna his cosmic form, and thus elucidates for the prince that while he (Arjuna) may indeed be acting in accordance with his own will, the future fates of his foes are already determined by Krishna. Interestingly this archetypal manifestation ties into the path of bhakti as it is espoused in the Gita. Where in the roles of archer and charioteer, Arjuna is literally allowing his devotion to the will of Krishna drive him through experience. His subjective state of being relative to that relationship is also indicative of the qualities that make him central to Krishna’s plans. In that he is a uniquely noble, capable, and humble being. His reluctance to fight, though pointed out to be selfishness by Krishna, is also indicative of kindness and therefore to some degree validates Arjuna regarding why he may have a unique affinity for interaction with the divine.

Ultimately the Gita derives a singular path to liberation that is condensed in the notion of bhakti. In the final six sections, Krishna goes on to incorporate each of the previously elucidated teachings into the framework of a path which derives its prominence through the practice of bhakti. In many ways this teaching lean on the intrinsic framework of the human psyche, in order to manipulate unavoidable habits in thought in such a way that they are able to bring about the condition of bliss that accompanies confidence. The psychological instance of emotional projection is used in this way to allow Arjuna to project accountability for his actions unto the archetype of Krishna, thus allowing continued participation within the world of pain without necessitating the suffering of despair. Therefore, the path revealed in the Gita that leads out of suffering is one in which the individual unites with the divine via the principle of devotion to accord with cosmic purpose and become liberated from the binding subjective attachments responsible for making all mortals susceptible to suffering.

These Notions as espoused in the Gita, directly translate to an empathetically informed conscious awareness of the archetypal roles played out in various patterns within and outside of one’s direct environment. The notion of Bhakti is essentially the Hindu equivalent to Cicero’s notion of natural law, Augustine’s conception of absolute humility before God, and what I define in this text as being the relationship between the empath and compassion as it relates to the unconditional practice of love to embody the principles of unity and thus achieve satisfaction via the inception of multicentric awareness. All are forms of the same enlightenment, with the key difference being the degree to which the ideologies are personified metaphors.

**XV**

**Slavery: African slavery versus colonial slavery, the degradation of community via oppression:**

As long as there have been civilizations, there have been slaves. In some instances, the concept of slavery is seen as a humane practice, an alternative to massacring prisoners of war. Whereas in others it was instituted as a punishment, or to pay a personal debt. Still, in some it existed as a predatory practice of dehumanizing an entire cultural group in the interest of providing a source of constant cheap labor to empower industry. Because there are so many incarnations of slavery, it is important not to simply apply the word carte blanche. For instance, relative to the European notion of slavery, African slavery is so dissimilar, it scarcely appears to be slavery at all. Africa and Europe provide us with two diverse examples in history relative to slavery. Where in Africa there are many societies that practice slavery while adhering to egalitarian values and promoting a sense of community and shared responsibility, European nations serve as examples of societies that, being charged with a sense of superiority, use their advanced means to justify the inhumane acquisition and subsequent enslavement of peoples for the sole purpose of economic gain. Perhaps this innate difference between the two societal structures can be attributed to the nature of the social practices responsible for orchestrating the public cohesion in respect to each society. For instance, in Europe the nations were considerably more economically advanced, and certainly more industrialized, which formed socioeconomic dissonance among the populace, thus intrinsically reinforcing the notion of inherent inequality among peoples. That In addition to the concept of property and capitalism, as well as the privatization of resources, leads to a culture which deifies luxury and therefore creates a circumstance wherein many must labor so that a few may enjoy paradise. Whereas in Africa life was still in the early stages of civilization, the tribal societies had relatively recently taken root and asserted themselves as fixed structures, only recently forming actual kingdoms, which though extant, were still in their infancy.(Equiano 32)1 Everyone labored, and each individual shared in what the community defined as the “Natural bounty of the land”(Equiano 35)2. Thus, the concept of individual worth was intrinsically associated to one’s utility and ability to serve the community and participate in utilizing the natural products made available through the environment. Diverse societal roles had not yet evolved to the level of social dissonance. When discussing the reality of slavery in Africa as it relates to that of America, one need keeps in mind the motivation behind each enterprise. As it is described in the classic slave narratives, by Olaudah Equiano, African slavery served as a method of punishment as well as a societal role which offered an individual a place in the community. (Equiano 33)3 Some of the basic characteristics which differentiate African slavery are obvious. Things like the fact that masters and slaves enjoyed the same level of respect within society, wore the same types of clothing, ate the same quality of food, lived in the same or similar quality housing, and even performed the same amount and type of work as their masters.(Equiano 40)4 The most important distinction lies in these qualities, because this illustrates that the community served the same values, and slaves were essentially citizens who were forced to adhere to the societal norms. Whereas in the Americas and Europe for instance, a slave existed outside of the normal societal structure, and was forced to perform difficult industrial labor to maintain an industry within the society itself. Slaves were objects, which could be bought and traded as a means of production. Oddly, Equiano describes a circumstance in his society, where the transgression of kidnapping, is punished with slavery, (Equiano 32)5 as well as circumstances wherein his village encountered slave owners from other societies and thoroughly investigated the circumstances under which they acquired their slaves.(Equiano 33)6 The point being, none of the locations where Equiano visited during his time as a slave in Africa treated him as though he was less than human. Instances where chieftains sought to profit by trading their people into slavery were not distorted via discussions regarding natural roles, or the inferiority of certain groups. In lieu of the traditional western need to rationalize immoral behaviors, or transform them into just acts via language, African culture merely addressed such acts as being what they were. Selfish behaviors carried out in the interest of personal profit, at the expense of human liberty. For this reason, the chieftains were often met with opposition, and put to death should that opposition prove successful. Thus, establishing that not only the individuals, but the community itself opposed the concept of treating any individual as being an object to be sold.

The second most glaring difference between the two manners in which slavery was propagated regarding the two nations, concerns the nature of the labor asked of the enslaved individuals. More specifically it deals with the variance in societal roles necessary to allow for the operation of such a system of labor. In Africa, slavery was essentially subservience to the community. Although slaves would be owned by families, and would serve those families specifically, they would also enjoy the same privileges and societal benefits offered to the family they served.(Equiano 41)7 Thus, in a society that isn’t polarized economically, slavery is able to be propagated without creating intrinsic inequality, or presenting itself as a scenario wherein a particular group of individuals is being intentionally oppressed and stripped of their liberty, as well as dehumanized socially, in order to better enable other members of the community accomplish their industrial or economic goals. Instead slavery presents itself as an egalitarian effort to enforce the cultural and social norms of the village absolutely throughout its populace. This is not unique to the practice of slavery however. Equiano describes every citizen being trained in the art or agriculture as well as warfare. There are no farmers, there is no militia, the community itself works together, and assumes these roles when necessary. Thus, the survival and success of communities such as that of Essaka where Equiano was born, depends upon the citizen’s willingness to act in the interest of the collective needs of the group. Therefore, should individuals become part of the community as prisoners of war, or should individuals within the community present unreasonable reluctance or opposition to the practices of the community, it is rational and humane to institute some method of enforcing the societal roles, or otherwise removing the problem citizens from the group. Equiano describes situations wherein his father, a prominent and influential member of the community, would trade problematic slaves to the passing merchants who managed to satisfy his inquiries relative to the nature in which they acquired the slaves they already had. Basically, it isn’t even able to be defined as slavery, what was going on in Africa. It was more akin to some sort of dual system of law, wherein common law was the general rule, however if members in the community either didn’t respect the common law, or originated outside of it, there was a more formal legal structure within the society to hold those individuals accountable to. Whereas within the Americas and Europe, there was a clear and definite assertion that because of their skin color, culture, and industrial disadvantage, the African people were demonstrably of lesser worth, and farther from being human beings than the peoples originating from Europe. This sort of ideology escalated as well, throughout the slavery era, culminating in the harsh mistreatment of slaves. For instance, some slaves were forced to wear iron muzzles over their faces to prevent them from talking, as well as other torturous contraptions. (Equiano 65)8 In addition to this mistreatment, slaves were regularly flogged or violently beaten for minor infractions such as not wanting to change their names, or making small mistakes while working, or even asking for food when starving. (Equiano 60)9 To think, that on account of not sharing a similar religion, or interest in the unnecessary luxuries afforded to society via industrialization and exploitation millions of innocent human beings were abducted against their will, systematically subjected to inhuman conditions, treated as merchandise possessing value related solely to their capacity to further production, and forced to spend their entire lives performing difficult and singular labor, whose fruits they did not directly nor indirectly benefit from. In Africa, a slave that wove and dyed cotton, would be clothed in woven dyed cotton. A slave that maintained the fields would eat the food produced in the fields, and so on. In the Americas and Europe, slaves working on plantations, or in the homes of white citizens as servants, did not share in the profits of their labor, nor did they profit from their labor in any capacity.

Overtime it seems, villages such as that of Essaka diminished even in Africa as the slave trade took over the coast, and essentially created an increasingly widespread demand for slaves, even threatening the communities themselves should they refuse to participate. In conclusion, I think it needs to be said, often and loudly, that this work by Equiano is of such a poignant beauty, that it transcends its era. It is important to keep in mind that the Europeans painted these individuals, entire cultures, as being savage war mongering heathens. However, when we read the simple, innocent recounting of Equiano, who is even more innocent in his recollection as he is recalling his youth, we become privy to a powerful truth. These people were maintaining peaceful tribal societies, each having diverse and extensive cultural practices, while participating symbiotically within their environment, and taking pleasure in the minimalistic simplicity of comfortable survival. They believed in a God, and practiced rituals nearly identical to the Judean/Christian tradition. They promoted the values of interdependence, and respect, having refrained from even creating the words necessary to degrade substantially. Alas, they became the victims of a predatory and indifferent race of technologically superior savage’s incapable of recognizing their fellow human beings for what they were. Instead seeing fit to exploit and ruin a once peaceful and prosperous people. It is even more interesting, when we consider that the religious justifications for the enslavement of the African races originated from Leviticus, and other old testament documents. However, as Equiano eloquently establishes, his community was far more like that of the ancient Jews than that of the Europeans. (Equiano 45)10 By which logic the Europeans themselves were the savages, inflicting their greed and heathenistic practices unto the otherwise pure societies of the African continent.

**XVI**

**Dehumanization of endentured community and the impact of oppression upon the nature of familial attachment:**

During the period of American slavery, the mechanisms intrinsic to human beings, such as family and community, were distorted and influenced by the practice of slaving. The daily lives of slaves were arduous and all consuming, and the superiority of their masters was recognized legally, as well as socially enforced relative to each plantation. In this era, “Families provided a crucial, if fragile buffer, shielding slaves from the worst rigors of slavery.” [Kolchin, 138]1. This refuge of familial unity was present throughout the southern states and resembled the free white family structures present at that time. “Slave owners were usually aware of, and in their own estimation, supportive of slave families.” [Kolchin,139]2 However the actual translation of this “support” came into conflict with itself regularly in their society. With circumstances ranging from the punishment of adulterers and divorcees by masters, to owners urging couples to marry while young. Although, when it comes to Frederick Douglas, the depiction of family life among slaves appears to be altogether disconnected from this idealistic interpretation. Douglas speaks much to the contrary, elucidating various instances where the owners interfered with the familial practices within the slave population, going so far as to beat a woman violently as punishment for consorting with her love interest, separate children from their mothers at birth, and fornicate with enslaved women either consensually or otherwise, occasionally begetting children with these consorts.

The slave owner-slave dichotomy presented itself as an obstacle to the formation of normative familial practices within the slave culture for various reasons. Firstly, it was exceedingly apparent throughout all the enslaved community that the prominence of the master’s family took precedence over that of any individual familial unit comprised of slaves. While the masters would knowingly allow, and at times even support the formation and progression of families within their slave population, they would also interfere with these families in several ways. Firstly, although a slave family may produce its own children, when it came to the raising of those children the master would often decide to raise them indifferent to the input of their families. For instance, the master would sometimes rename the children despite their parent’s wishes. [Kolchin, 142]3. More invasively, the masters would also regularly disrupt slave families by separating them via the sale or trade of individual family members or forcing them to engage in intercourse outside of their familial unit. [Kolchin, 143]4. Beyond that they engaged in various sporadic interferences which blatantly opposed the cohesion of families, such as separating children from their mothers at birth. Although, “In the south as a whole, separating young children from their mothers was relatively unusual.”[Kolchin, 140]5.

Despite this interference by the masters, slave families managed to flourish and were considered regular or common relative to the enslaved peoples occupying the south at that time. Not only did slaves form families, they did so according to modern conventions, for instance they far and wide adhered to the nuclear model. [Kolchin, 141]6. The experience of the varied members of these families differed as well, regarding the age and gender of their members. Children of slave families would spend a great deal of their days experiencing a similar degree of freedom as that enjoyed by their white counterparts. Historical research purports that a considerable portion of slave children may have literally been unaware that they were slaves at all during their youth [Kolchin, 143]7. Regarding the role of women in marriages, the female participants in marriage within the slave community tended to enjoy relative equality to their husbands. This contrasts with the southern white society, which at the time afforded a great deal of authority to men in marital relationships. [Kolchin, 143]8. In addition to this differentiation, slave families also practiced stricter rules when it came to incest, restricting even first cousins from marrying each other. A practice that was considered not only acceptable, but which was often encouraged in southern society at that time. [Kolchin, 145]9 Beyond that, slave families tended to be large, consisting of seven or more children, families were assigned to individual cabins relative to familial connection, and marriage between slaves was recognized by their masters as legally binding. At times the slave families even managed to circumvent the master’s attempts to separate children from their parental influence or lineage by secretly ascribing their children with a surname, or a first name that matched that of their fathers or grandfathers. That way they would maintain a sense of connection with their family regardless of their location or circumstance. [Kolchin, 143]10.

Frederick Douglas was something of an exception to the circumstances. He was taken from his mother while still very young and given to his grandmother to be raised. Stating regarding the matter; “I never saw my mother…Other than four or five times, and always at night and never for very long.” [Gates, 316]. So, although such practices were uncommon in the whole of the south as noted above, with respect to Mr. Douglas they proved to be relevant. Further separating him from the general population was his heredity. Frederick Douglas was the child of a slave and a master, resulting in what the communities both referred to as a mullatto. Because of his particularly incendiary heritage, Douglas submits that his abuse at the hands of the slaveowners was greater than that of his non-mullatto peers. [Gates, 317]11. In addition to this differentiating status, the circumstances of Douglas’s upbringing were relatively unique to that of most slaves. For instance, he was taught to read, and less in touch with his home, or his role among his slave family. Stating, “The ties that ordinarily bonded children to their homes were all suspended in my case.” [Gates,334]12. Even members of his family, though not participants in his daily life, proved to be relative exceptions to the notion that the southern slave owners were supportive of slave families. In the instance of his aunt Hester, a particularly beautiful woman, Douglas recounts the event of her violent beating as punishment for consorting with “Lloyd’s Ned’. “Which circumstance if found from what he said while whipping her, was the chief offence.” [Gates, 319]13.

Despite this departure from the norm in Douglas’s case, he also describes various individuals which seem to have been participants in familial practices more in line with what is reported to be the norm. His mother for instance, although estranged from him and his two sisters and brother, was the progeny of a married couple which she to some degree was associated through lineage. [Gates, 334]14 As well as he describes sharing a cabin with his siblings prior to being separated from them while still young. Beyond that, Douglas explains the relationship between master and slave as being more akin to that which binds the society and the individual than the manner of relationships at work among family. The masters would provide minimal supplies for survival, such as clothing, food and housing. [Douglas, 24]15 While it was left up to the slaves themselves how to consort and organize within the boundaries of their servitude. Thus, although they were in fact subservient to their masters by law, and despite the enforcement of this subservience via violent and often treacherous means, there existed a degree of limitation when it came to the ability of slave owners to control the family life of slaves. In many cases, slaves did in fact manage to circumvent the ritualistic deprivation of familial ritual and culture formation within their families by establishing subversive practices. [Kolchin, 142]16 Of course, that is not to say that they did so without much effort. In conclusion, while familial practices among slave communities differed throughout the whole, and whereas there were many instances where the ability to participate in familial practices were diverted by the authoritative influence of the slave owners, the notion of “slave families” is one of profound relevance. As such families managed to overcome the considerable sufferings and trials of their undeserved torment, to create a sort of peace within such chaos, that they might be freed from the dehumanizing rule of their captors to some degree. This is an achievement of significant magnitude, as it depicts the ability of culture to overcome dominance without directly confronting the dominating force.

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**XVII**

**Nationalism: Collective conditioning, the German example.**

There are three theories regarding the nature and origins of “Nationalism”. They are; Primordialism, Ethno-symbolism, and modernism. These each address the phenomenon of nationalism in a unique way, primordialism assumes that it, in some form, has always been around and is a natural characteristic of society at any level, Ethno-symbolism insists that nationalism is an evolutionary phenomenon that is given meaning by complicated historical factors, and modernism states that what we call nationalism is the consequence of the creation of the modern nation-state around the time of the signing of the peace of Westphalia in 1648. I believe each of these reflects to some degree what constitutes nationalism, however the best definition of the phenomenon is in my opinion an amalgam of the last two, ethno-symbolism and modernism. Nationalism *did* evolve over time and was most certainly shaped by complex events in history, however, nationalism as we know it today (in a form that is distinct from basic patriotism) didn’t truly come about until the peace of Westphalia. Prior to that event, wars were fought mostly over religion. Even then, the treaties and guidelines established then only laid out the theoretical framework for what a new type of societal actor should look like to allow for balance among societies. As for “Distinctly German” nationalism, and it’s apparent role in the circumstances which took place during the notorious third Reich, I believe Haffner sums it up succinctly when he proposes,” In Germany, nationalism kills the basic values of German national character.”(Defying Hitler, Haffner, P224)1. He goes further to imply that the most inherently German characteristic is proficiency without regard to purpose. This state of being, in conjunction with the intrinsic changes that accompany a rising nationalistic culture, is largely responsible for the Nazi movement gaining so much power so quickly, as well as it explains the way the Jewish citizens were dehumanized and ultimately exterminated.

First, we must consider the notion of “proficiency” as it relates to the German culture, then we can apply that consideration to the notion of nationalism and ultimately the alienation and dehumanization of the Jewish population. The notion that the German people are above all else, proficient, is taken to mean that despite what task they are given, they aim to accomplish that task efficiently and completely. Beyond that, Haffner describes most of the German population thusly, “Germany’s innermost character is openness, expansiveness, even in a certain sense selflessness.” (Defying Hitler, Haffner, p224)2. Interestingly these last three characteristics are in absolute conflict with the primary components of nationalism. The tenets of any nationalistic culture demand closed-off-ness, concentration, and ultimately a singular fixation upon self-interest. In addition to these more abstract aspects, nationalism also tends to draw distinct lines of separation regarding what constitutes a “National”. In Germany in the 1930’s this nationalistic uprising was catalyzed by the presence of the nationless, nonetheless uniquely nationalistic Jewish community. Going back to what it would mean to proficiently manifest a nationalistic culture, one can understand that the efficiency and totality of such an endeavor would at its most basic level remove non-nationals from within the nation’s borders. Along with this idolization of the nation state comes a troublesome notion of infallibility regarding the state. In Germany during the rise of the third Reich this posed a substantial issue, the nation having just lost the first world war, and had its economy all but obliterated. In lieu of accountability, the state chose to scapegoat their largest minority group, particularly a minority group who identified themselves as a “stateless nation”, and whose culture and religious belief system contended with those backed by the newly faultless state.

When reading the great German philosophers like Lichtenstein, Kant, or Nietzsche it is apparent that even the most abstract realms of the German zeitgeist are painstakingly, and efficiently defined deontology. Rules are derived from the derivation of rules in deontological philosophy. The most efficient forms of this philosophical understanding are comprised in the three formulations of Kant’s categorical imperative. Even the terms “categorical” and “imperative” carry a distinctly German idealism. Moral or otherwise, maxims must be universally relevant or else they are inefficient. Along with this universalized conceptualization is the imperative to act according to whatsoever may be determined just via the universalized self-propagating ideology. These philosophies even removed the individual from the center of their own experience. With the critique of pure reason, Kant identified the individual as incapable of determining the nature of their reality merely because of their own experience and feeling. This sort of thinking requires an allegiance to some higher echelon of logic, proficiency for its own sake, the notion that one ought to determine the reality and validity of existence as well as the nature of morality and justice via the intellect alone, and despite subjective emotions. Nietzsche seemed to have even less faith in man’s ability to discern accurately than Kant, as his notion of perspectivism declares that even the deontological is incapable of revealing the universal from within the constraints of individuality. Perhaps the most influential of his contributions to the cultural identity of Germany was that of the Ubermensch. Nietzsche defined this concept in a manner that gave a new perspective on the notions prevalent throughout mythos regarding humanity and man’s ultimate destiny to devour itself. Symbols like the ouroboros come to mind, however regarding the Ubermensch Nietzsche defines this self-destruction as a method of creation or overcoming of the prior states of being. “Man is something that must be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?” (Thus, spoke Zarathustra, Friedrich Nietzsche, pg. 4)3, a line which presents the individual, and thus the collective, with a means to transcend morality altogether. Hegel is another excellent example of how German Idealism made itself susceptible to such radicalization as that which took place during the reign of the third Reich. While Kant attempted to manipulate causality to determine the viability of universalized maxims and thus derive practical reason, and Nietzsche was determined to differentiate between the right to enforce ones will, and the responsibility to overcome one’s limited humanity, Hegel merely sought to bind it all together. Hegel challenged dualism, presenting a notion of “spirit” which united all levels of experiential reality from religion, to the state, to the individual, to the cultural climate. Specifically, regarding the state Hegel crystallizes one of the central notions responsible for the German susceptibility to the plight of nationalism when he decrees that “An Individual’s supreme duty is to be a member of the state.” (Philosophies of the right, Hegel, section 258)4. Here Hegel has outlined the role the state played in German life, as one aspect of a trinity of social constructs being congruous with the combination of one’s familial and civil identity, where the state subsumed both and thus left them fulfilled. His oversight, in my view, has to do with the state’s potential to narrow its affiliations in a way that manipulates that “supreme duty to belong” in order to radicalize the public against whatsoever fails to satisfy the narrowed criterion.

That is not to say that the susceptibility of the German public to rapid and holistic indoctrination, in addition to their subsequent compliance with and participation in gruesome crimes against humanity somehow directly stems from a handful of philosophical dissertations. Aside from the abstract, the domestic and global political machinations of early to mid-nineteen hundred certainly played a role in setting the stage for the Third Reich. It is important to note, that despite the illusion created by the compiled works of history, the notion of a “state” and the social, hereditary, geographical, cultural or theological unity it derives itself from is far more convoluted than what ultimately is presented as grounds for modern nationalism. However, for the purposes of this discussion the sole concern with the political atmosphere of Germany and the global community post 1648 has to do with the sovereignty and compartmentalization of the nation-state. Germany seems to be unable to abide in the ambiguity of general classification. It goes back to their characteristic proficiency for its own sake. This is evident in the state’s historical struggle to identify itself in nationalistic terms. In nineteenth century a prominent German thinker by the name of Moser essentially argued that Germany lacked a national identity entirely. (Jansen, Christian (2011) "The Formation of German Nationalism, 1740–1850,")5. This was due in part to the ubiquitous nature of classifying the state via loosely relevant trends in cultural, economic, theological, and historical contexts. It was too vague for the deontologically minded German culture. Eventually the need to ultimately answer the question of nationality without leaving any ambiguity results in the creation of Nuremburg laws. While on the surface they may seem terrible or monstrous, their origin followed the same path as most German systemizations, the inability to settle for the ambiguous notion offered by the generalist interpretations of what constitutes nationality, the German society continued to isolate and identify constant, universally relevant factors to successfully define nationality, even linking it to physiology. Ultimately, as is often the case with such excessive hyper literalism, the Germans missed the point entirely. Rather than define their nation, they proceeded to divide it according to increasingly irrelevant differences among social groups. World war one did not aid the German state regarding edifying a clear and sensible national identity. Instead the great war succeeded in making a pariah of the German nation, so much so that they were excluded from foreign aid, restricted from organizing a military, and economically destitute. The German people became accustomed to the practice of conflict, the feeling of hunger and an environment of somewhat stifled yet persistent civil conflict. These conditions ultimately lead to the social development of an entire generation of German youth who perceived war to be a largely intellectual endeavor full of statistics and stratagems. There was a societal disconnect between not only the people and the powers that be, but between the nation itself and the culture and community that comprised it. From within this existential abyss and in the absence of a viable system of social class, most of the German populace resigned themselves to their respective Hegelian duality of familial and civil identity, while essentially ignoring whatever the combined circumstance of those two constructs implied about the condition or nature of the state. Perhaps this was due to the instability of the government and thus the uncertainty regarding the eventual establishment of a collectively adhered to national identity. Perhaps it was merely the consequence of being denounced by the global community and left in ruins. Either way, the fact of the matter is, when there exists a void, whatever gains the most support and amasses the most power the fastest within that void will likely come to power. Once empowered, such ideological movements are difficult dissolve or repeal. They become more and more entrenched with each passing moment, in which otherwise rational humane citizens, are being coerced into seeing themselves as superior to the strangers that they saw as equals moments prior.

In conclusion, to address the question of how it is the Nazis managed to come to power and wreak as much havoc as they did, I believe we must move past the notion that German people are somehow innately concerned with proficiency for its own sake. While there is certainly some truth to that stereotype, it would be ignorant to hold it responsible for a circumstance which was brought about by a confluence of events spanning multiple levels of being. The compartmentalization of the nation-state and the global consensus allotting sovereignty to each nation respective to what went on within its borders, coupled with the socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic familiarity shared by the prominent largely white imperialist nations comprising Europe, created a situation in which the Germans were left to their own devices. Though they were blamed for the first world war and alienated by the global community, this only made it easier to ignore them entirely, as well as underestimate them and consider them non-threatening. The philosophical ideology of Germany as it had developed over the previous century had its basis in deontology, existentialism, perspectivism, and the deeply seated insistence that humanity was a thing to be overcome and its moral and socio-political attributes a thing to be transcended. Additionally, the German nation was Christian, although in the most intellectual secular sense of the term. Nonetheless, the culture was ingrained with the concept of the fall of man, original sin, and the need to bridge the imperfect human reality with that of the perfect reality of the divine. Perhaps it is best to say that they translated many of these Judeo-Christian ideals through the more structurally sound notions put forth in Hegelian philosophy. Either way, so long as the ends were ultimately positive (according to however one desires to discern between societal good vs. evil), the means employed to bring about those ends were justifiable. Of course, the final piece to the puzzle consists of a generational factor, the youth of the early nineteen hundred had become the adults of the nineteen thirties. An entire generation exposed for the first time in human history to the horrors of trench warfare, chemical and biological weapons, machine gun fire, the collapse of the religious powers, the destitution of post-war abandonment, decades long political chaos, and a profoundly malfunctioning economy. A class of individuals defined by the basic stereotypical norms that constituted what made a German citizen, while simultaneously conditioned to exist in an environment of endless conflict and brutishness. This is the Germany that gave way to the Third Reich, a Nation which succumbed to the imminent development of an ignored, alienated and psychologically unstable generation of hyper masculine, incredibly angst ridden and hateful bullies. Just as you’d expect, those who fit this description were eager to line up and pay homage to the Uber-bully, as was their custom. The intellectuals failed to act, the wealthy found themselves utterly powerless considering the chaotic economy, and the middle class was mobilized under threat of violence to mercilessly exterminate any parts of itself that failed to fit the archetype of the sociopathic bully. Those who failed to fit such an archetype, yet who managed to at least look the part, and possessed the desired genetic material, were subsequently shaped into the role by being pitted against the defenseless minority that were the Jewish people. That’s why it worked, Nazism, because the Jews were close knit among their own community enough so that they could be easily sorted out. But also because of their limited access to the means of production, and the potential inability for them to fight back. It had to be that way, because if the Nazi’s had identified some group capable of defending itself as being deserving of eradication, the conflict would have felt all too familiar to the German people, they would have known a civil war and been able to snap themselves out of it and potentially unite. The Nazis succeeded because rather than draw a dividing line and starting a conflict, they drew a target, and forced those who weren’t being targeted to participate in the sycophantic unity that accompanied the wanton extermination of their neighbors.

Thus the situation was three fold, the post war environment as well as the social conditioning of the generation of Germans who matured within that environment, the philosophical and intellectual fixation on deontology and other hyper secularized coldly rational approaches to the human condition, and the formulation of a nationalistic ideology which sought to define itself so clearly that it managed to separate an immense portion of its population from qualifying as human beings. Perhaps there is a fourth harmony there as well, one that shows the German public being alienated and scapegoated for so long and to such devastating extent, that their first collective act as a reformed nation following such mistreatment, saw them immediately displacing the shame accrued over nearly three decades, unto a scapegoat of their choosing Perhaps the collective German society managed to present with the very same flaw so many human beings throughout our history have succumbed to. They projected their shame onto someone or something else, and once projected they sought to eradicate it, to exterminate it. Perhaps it is their penchant for proficiency that is to blame, having projected their collective sorrows so efficiently they lost sight of the human beings they projected them unto, and found themselves standing alone face to face with everything they had ever wished to be rid of while the loud maniacal voice of the worst among them goaded them to kill. There is no event in all of history, that propagated without substantial aid from all events preceding it. No one’s hands are clean in this conflict, the Germans are of course especially guilty for exceptionally terrible acts. Yet, the world that watched and thought to let it continue, comforted by the thought that such atrocity wouldn’t reach them, indifferent to the struggle of a people that failed to fit within the mold of whichever national identity comprised their society. They are guilty of dangerous and vile nationalism as well. That is what plagued the Germans ultimately from Haffner’s perspective, they put so much effort into their nationalism that it surpassed their humanity. That is also, however, what the rest of the world did before they were directly struck. They each in their own way, allowed their nationalism to surpass their humanity, thinking it convenient at the time, until it unexpectedly placed the entire world on the brink of destruction.

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**I**

**A. Harnessing intuition:**

How we feel reflects how we think, and how we think reflects how we act, the two states of being reflect a self-reinforcing illusion of permanence relative to identity. However, intuition as a construct subverts these mechanisms, and semi-consciously announces the unadulterated nature of subtle experience. Generally, our emotional responses to information simply reflect our past experiences, call to mind non-personal accounts of experiences we have gained from relationships and interactions, or cause us to form assumptions about the information to understand it. Intuition is what is at work in the latter event, when our assumptions take shape in a way that seems to reflect truth although being pulled from our imagination. The harnessing of intuition is at hand when we begin to practice following those imaginational threads of realization in a way that enables us to interpret reality rather than create illusory reflections of it. In simple terms, it is becoming familiar with the substance of knowledge to the point that we become capable of recognizing when it even unfamiliar information seems to contain truth, or lack truth. That is just the logical aspect of intuition, the emotional reflection is much more convoluted. Beyond the interpretation of esotericism or recurring symbols and the like, there is a layer of our emotional selves that occupies a relatively unique portion of our identities. It is the shadow of understanding that builds itself out of the vague experiences and recollections of the onslaught of daily emotional states that shift in and out of being between the infinitesimally small and innumerable moments that comprise our lives. On some level, these two functions of intuiting information (emotional and rational) create a relativity between the two of them, a relationship which when understood and made visible to our consciousness, enables us to access the hidden understandings that exist as subtle patterns amid the maelstrom of experiential being.

Although it isn’t necessarily important to directly interact with these forms in any absolute manner, it is possible to hold them as constructs in our awareness to employ reflexively when they appear in our environment or experience, enabling us to manage a certain level of peace or faith as well as function exceptionally well in more and more of these subtle unnamable patterned events. That allows us to relate or identify with the presented information. The last aspect of harnessing our intuition is purely theoretical on my part. I believe that practicing this notion of “going with the flow” or allowing oneself to absorb into their environments or what not, one can become capable of intuiting super subtle parcels of information that are contained within our DNA as genetic memories. This means, that should we maintain objectivity, while remaining aware of our subjective emotional impressions, we are innately capable of relating data based, emotionally subjective, experientially gathered, and subconsciously stored informational stimulus to ourselves holistically as well as participate as holistic actors in our given realities. Via these methods we not only achieve a more complete understanding of any information we potentially come across, we also become able to participate in an otherwise invisible practice of faith which gives us access to a level of wisdom which transforms our individual subjective identity with that of the greater zeitgeist of humanity itself.

Key points:

. *Separating knowledge into truth vs. perception*

*. Identifying subjective knowledge vs. objective knowledge.*

*. Maintaining an emotionally detached perspective.*

*. Discerning emotional relevance, refraining from judgements*

**B. Controlling our individual awareness:**

What is “Awareness”, can it be controlled, if so how? These questions are at the center of every human quandary. When attempting to answer them, it becomes increasingly easy to fall away into confusion at the sight of difficult junctures such as what may or may not be real, or what the extent and limits of our awareness are.

Key points:

. *Identify balance as Empathy vs. sympathy.*

*. Divide focus between content and context.*

*. Recognize patterned sequences.*

*. Identifying learned patterns, vs. willed patterns*.

**C. Applying Self Knowledge:**

It is important, in the terms of self-realization, to be aware of our personal psychology, as this is the easiest and most intuitive way to understand how we act, as it relates to how others act. This allows us to recognize the projections of ourselves as they appear in the thoughts we have about others. By directing our focus in this way, we can make it natural not to judge others, and mandatory to confront ourselves. This circumstance merely demands a small bit of bravery, and a great deal of honesty. In terms of inner process, it’s important to remember, that the intention is to avoid judgement altogether. Thus, we must confront ourselves, and recognize our judgments as clues to our own personal self-image. And we should focus inwardly on self-betterment. Meaning we try to be self-accepting. Relative to ourselves and other selves.

**II**

**Logical perspective:**

*Introduction:*

While emotions, or feelings, appear to be merely a result of the "autonomous" limbic system sending unconscious commands throughout the whole of cellular being. The autonomy is illusory, wherein the subconscious mind of an individual determines the "characteristics" or “Chirality” of their emotions, and the actual limbic system appears autonomous only because it is constantly performing tasks. While all subjective perspectives, or perceptions can be said to differ and contradict each other quite a bit, such potential conflict is also a potential leverage point of unification. Ergo, if you have four things that are unrelated and accepted as mutually exclusive, it is much more efficient to understand them based on finding their shared commonality and utilizing that common vantage point to validate each truth to the full extent of our capabilities, rather than arbitrarily choose one and imbue it with factual authority. In the specific circumstance of this breakdown, I aim to logically establish a method that takes advantage of the intrinsically interrelated mechanisms that can be harmonized within the individual awareness, by establishing the synchronisms and intangible fixtures of being in in such a way that they participate with each other to balance out their respective deficiencies and capitalize on their respective strengths. One can facilitate the intuitive navigation of the various internal dimensions of identity, to practice a method of self-control that results in the unintentional individual, or personal acknowledgement of collectively relevant symbolism. By reflecting on the self and its tendency to show how our personally constructed symbolism is expressed reflexively as emotion. Expanding upon Jung's concepts of introversion and extroversion, I hope to reveal that the only difference between most states of being can be logically traced to an innate tendency toward either: Where A-C can be interpreted in one of three ways respective to each basic state of being. Additionally, there is a higher state of being possible relative to each state of being which I term its “Selfless state.” A frame of mind indicative of an empathetic compassionate or otherwise multi-centric point of view.

**III**

**Three prelingual responses to Stimulus: These transcend logic, and ultimately determine the quality of experience had by the subconscious**

A. Fear

B. Ignorance

C. Indifference

*These three varieties of human interpretation of the emotional response or emotional memory can define the nature of their relationship with experience in general as it relates to empathy and anastomosis.*

***Formulations of fear***

1. **Fear**
2. **Defensiveness**
3. **Aggression**
4. **Anxiety**
5. **Courage**

*Where:*

**Defensiveness**: translates into victimization, indignation, self-preservation and the like. Someone operating from a defensive state of being takes the position of being "pursued" by or threatened by their own fear which they fail to take responsibility for, and instead project unto their environment in any number of ways, be it unto another individual event or object. This state of being is a mechanism which attempts to achieve security by eliminating risks and can be exceedingly efficient as a lifestyle. However, it can very suddenly and without warning shape itself into the fixation on, or manifestation of myriad rituals or habitual responses to recurring assumptions and thus become obsessive or begin to interfere with day to day functionality. The problems that arise from these complications, as well as the operant mental state at work constantly in the subconscious and can severely decrease self-esteem, as well as cause one to perceive the world as dangerous and predatory along with its people. In fight or flight, (or freeze) defensiveness is the flight function. It is that constant alert sense of needing to be prepared to escape at any point which keeps an individual on edge and ready to point out threats in their environment. Wants to be in control of the environment.

**Aggression:** can be a bit misleading as a term, because it calls to mind the notion of violence, or shouting, or some other overt challenge being presented to another. However, it doesn’t have to present that way, the aggressive stance generally can just as easily lead to micromanagement or verbal power struggles. Not necessarily even arguments, someone who is being aggressive doesn’t have to be intending to inflict harm of any kind, it could just present as refusing to admit a wrong, arguing rather than apologizing, being stubborn or obstinate when feeling challenged, or constantly correcting others, and just being obnoxious. Sometimes aggression doesn’t even come from a position of anger or fear directly, the response could just be the habitual form employed to meet circumstances good or bad. An aggressive person can be insistent and determined as well as confident. The problems that arise in the subtle experience from this sort of thing are numerous. One who habitually responds aggressive my just talk loudly or be socially coarse in the moment, leaving them to embarrassedly reflect on it later. Feeling like everyone was quietly judging you, while you are alone, can easily lead to resentment in anyone. Someone who is aggressive can also cause themselves to meet danger in an attempt to confront it rather than deal with it in its potential form which can be incredibly dangerous obviously. As well as they can be quick to act on assumptions and construct their own skewed conceptualization of reality prior to having all the information. Wants Nobody to be in control of the environment.

**Anxiety:** obviously refers to the irrational or neurotic states of being that pepper our awareness as a result of accumulated or repressed stress. But it can also allude to a subtle and constant subconscious experience of fear. Unlike Defensiveness or Aggression, Anxiety is not the reaction to a present, or assumed to be present threat. Anxiety is the manufacturing of one’s own personal threats in response to external factors of any sort. Anxiety is the silent and secret danger of the three. While someone may be defensive and take a bit to warm up to an environment or what have you, or Aggressive and call into question many harmless instances as being challenges of their personal sovereignty, anxiety acts by meeting EVERY event as though it were an imminent threat. Anxiety functions by leveraging the latent or subconscious alertness indicative of the fear response and using it to shift the attitude of every reaction to fright. One might see a spider and become fearful for hours of where the arachnid may have gone or where it could be now, or they just as easily might take the news of having gotten the job they wanted as being incredibly overwhelming and likely to result in failure or negativity of some kind. Anxiety doesn’t deal with self-preservation or assertiveness, it deals with the notion that negativity is unavoidable and ever present. Whereas the former examples were states of being that in some way altered or manipulated perspective, Anxiety is a readily available perspective that operates by altering one’s state of being. Wants negativity to be ruled out as a possibility.

**Courage:** Is for all intents and purposes the transmutation of anxiety. Where Anxiety infects each thought with negative context, Courage challenges each of those negative contexts. The reason that it sits outside of the triad of the first three states of being, has to do with its practical form. One employs courage by devoting their defensiveness to being wary of anxiety when it creeps up, and their aggression to that anxiety should it show itself, culminating naturally into the reversal of anxious negativity into potential success or positivity ( or neutrality). It is a selfless state, because it doesn’t place the self at the center of any particular method of reaction, instead it organizes the multiple aspects of the internal dimensions of self in such a way that it exhausts either of the states of being from dominating behavior, and manages to balance oneself and their emotions by keeping their fear center constantly occupied checking and limiting itself. Wants to exhaust the capacity for fear by employing its various forms against each other.

**Formulations of Ignorance**

**B. ignorance**

**1. Contextual naivety,**

**2. Subtle naivety,**

**3. Acknowledged naivety**

**4. Wisdom**

*Where:*

**Subjective naivety:** Ignorance that develops from over identifying with one’s own personal experiences and failing to acknowledge the limits of an individual perspective, as well as the experiences of others. Someone is being subjectively naïve if they assume their experience is indicative of experience in general, or if they believe their feelings or thoughts about a matter to be of exclusive authority or factuality. Another of the issues with this mental state, is its tendency to assume one’s own experience is indicative of that of others and therefore they judge others without considering their personal struggles.

**Objective naivety:** Ignorance that results from failing to empathize with humanity or human beings as individuals. Ignoring the role or extent of the environment on individuals or events and what have you. Someone is expressing objective naivety when they fail to recognize the human component in a situation. For instance, they recognize religion in it of itself as being capable of achieving ends on its own, or as being responsible for positive or negative behavior of its members.

**Subtle Naivety****:** Ignorance of subtlety or the nature via which small instances of experience relate to the greater experience. An example of subtle naivity is where one is prone to forsaking small kindness or making choices that are trivial or detrimental in some very seemingly insignificant way, these however pile up over time and can create a sweeping greater ignorance which may cause collective trouble.

**Wisdom:** Wisdom as it relates to ignorance is actually very simple. It is the recognition of one’s own ignorance and the acceptance that one cannot know everything. Wisdom in ignorance is the acknowledgement that forces beyond you are at work at any given moment, and that ultimately faith is required in something greater than ourselves to facilitate an enlightened state of being.

**Formulations of indifference**

**C. Indifference**

**1. Material indifference**

**2. Emotional indifference**

**3. Acceptance.**

**4. Detachment**

*Where:*

**Material Avoidance**, generally results in frugality, or extreme aversion to the acquisition of collectively adored "things", wherein one vilifies allegiance to items or synthetic structures, and takes a stance that presupposes the superiority of organic or natural substance. Unfortunately, comfortable existence within society requires the use of various materials, confining a materially detached individual to struggle against the societal norm. However, its subtler meaning alludes to the material world or reality, and our tendency to project out impressions gathered from experience or constructed for future desires unto it in a habitual manner. Material avoidance is also where on unknowingly or subconsciously manufactures emotions in response to material stimulus causing them to either ignorantly pursue or avoid the stimulus. Distracts from emotional reality by focusing on control over material reality.

**Emotional Avoidance**, is simply the opposite of the prior term, wherein one regards "things “to be of greater importance than feelings, generally as it applies to circumstance. It can result in greed, selfishness, and loneliness, as it attempts to determine emotional temperament by replacing happiness with dopamine induced pleasure. This assumes happiness to be a momentary sensation of euphoria, and all lesser sensations to be, therefore, less than happiness. It is also the subtle reflection of the former term, in that it can present as the requirement for a material relationship to beget or experience a particular emotional state of being. Safety blankets are a mild example, addiction, or impulsive acquisition of goods can be another example. Although the esoteric realm of emotion invites many opportunities for the translation of avoidance or pursuance. One could require certain characteristics or qualitative measures to be present or absent to experience a sense of personal security for instance. Distracts from material reality by focusing heavily on ones emotional states.

**Acceptance**: Non- avoidance could be another way to phrase this term, in simple words, it is allowing oneself to experience entropy as it results from both emotional and material substances or events and thus invite an objective stance. Because judgement requires one to take a stance, and support it as being superior to some other stance, and acceptance regards all stances as equal, the relevance of a conclusion, or fact, is to be determined by the individual perspective from which it has its origin. Acceptance is not necessarily passive or numbness as it may appear to be. Being detached from an emotion does not mean refraining from experiencing it. It’s more related to the pursuance or deterrence of *potential* experience(s).Distracts from Avoidance altogether by refraining from reaction.

**Detachment:** Once again, like acceptance, detachment is not meant to mean vapid or numb or oblivion. Instead, it is a perfected form of acceptance which employs emotional avoidance as a mechanism with which to ascertain the emotional relevance of material objects. By employing its framework in respect to the material reality, one can determine their subtle emotional responses to stimulus they may have otherwise failed to associate with their response. Vice versa, the application of material avoidance to one’s emotional dimensions, can elucidate for an individual the origins or manifestations of their emotional identity as they relate to their material experience. Although this wording is a bit convoluted, it is similar to the previous examples where the selfless aspect of being is achieved by completely exhausting the self-centered mechanisms via pitting them against each other, In this case the function results in a level of mindfulness that forces oneself to confront truth, thereby begetting detachment through preventing an individual from making assumptions or pursuing or avoiding any external objects or events. Because of the behavior that comes from pitting materialism and emotionalism against one another, one is left with no option but to follow their truth. Acceptance is employed to resist the urge to manipulate the truth regardless of what one wishes it to have been or to be. Facilitates honesty, as well as pursues truth via the avoidance of dichotomous or dual interpretations of good and bad.

**IV**

**Clarification of Kantian Deontology**

***Premise:***

An individual finds themselves able to save only one of two other individuals, simultaneously as refraining from action altogether will certainly result in or allow the death of both individuals. What is the morally correct decision according to Kant? Should the individual in question choose to save one of the threatened people? Should the Individual refuse to make a choice?

1. **Important considerations; Things we must address prior to our investigation:**
2. **Critique of metaphysics**: An assertion by Kant which states, basically, that in any case regarding actual human experience, the full implications of actions and their consequences cannot be known prior to their culmination. Therefore, one must account for the inherent limitations of the human capacity for knowledge. Thus, to determine morality, we must seek out principles supported by knowledge based on experience.
3. **Critique of practical reason**: Kant tells us that practical reason is unable to compel individuals to act morally, because it is incapable of clarifying what constitutes a moral act in an absolute manner. This is because practical reason establishes morality relative to hypothetical imperatives, which are contingent upon personal motivations, self-interest or the presumed interests of a greater whole.
4. **Moral Relativism/Rejection of the Summum Bonum or happiness principle**: Kant asserts that the moral “good” of an act is a result of its adherence to the “form” of a moral imperative. Whereas the former philosophies established the “good” to be indicative of the amount of happiness an act provided, and the moral imperative to be relative to that happiness.

. “The error of all past philosophical investigations into morality is that they have tried to define the moral in terms of the good, instead of the other way around. In this way they have all fallen victim to the same error of confusing pleasure with morality. If one desires the good, one will act to satisfy that desire, that is in order to produce pleasure.”

. The moral law is equivalent to the idea of freedom. Since the noumenal (thing in it of itself) cannot be perceived. We can only know that something is right by intellectually considering whether a certain action that we wish to commit could be performed universally.

. The idea tha the only way we can determine the morality of an act is via the categorical Imperative, and while utilizing only empirically available knowledge, is called “moral relativism.”

1. **Issues with reason:(meaning reasoning itself, not in regard to practicality):** The object of pure practical reason must lie in the Highest Good ( no able to be empirically experienced), good actions depend on the highest good to make them worthwhile. However, assuming the existence of a highest good is not able to be verified empirically so the notion is paradoxical, conversely, it is equally paradoxical to assume the non-existence of a highest good for the same reason.
2. **Two senses of the Highest Good:**

**. One sense** Where the highest good is defined as**;** That which is always good and which is required for all goods. This is equivalent to dutifulness or having a duty.

**. Another sense** that refers to the best of good states, even if part of that state is only conditionally good. In this case the Highest good connect virtuousness with happiness.

**.** Kant warned against teaching morality via the use of two particularly problematic examples. One in which morality coincides with self-love, *and one in which morality was explained relative to extraordinarily moral heroism.*

1. **The formulation and application of the Categorical imperative:**
2. First formulation ““Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law [of nature]."

1a.) To determine the morality of an action, we must subject it to two tests after translating it into the context of the first formulation of the categorical imperative.

2a.)In order to translate our proposed maxim, it is extrapolated to create a model of the world after being made to comply with the universalized maxim, Kant calls this model the “Perturbed Social World”(PSW).

3a.) There are then two perspectives or “routes” which can be used to determine whether the Maxim passes or fails as a moral law.

**. The contradiction in conception test**; Could one rationally act on the proposed maxim in the P.S.W?

. **The contradiction in will test**; Could one rationally choose the P.S.W as one in which oneself would be a member?

**A Ex.)** Kant gives us an example of how this process works, and fortunately in our case, it addresses our own premise. Because it concerns the problem of “Indifference to the needs of others.” (which is the moral issue that our premise deals with.)

. Proposed maxim: “In order to advance one’s own interests one will not do anything to help others in need unless one has something to gain from doing so.”

. Universalized Maxim: “To advance their own interests, everyone always refrains from helping others in need unless they have something to gain.”

**Contradiction in conception test: Passes** There is no problem in conceiving of such a PSW, ( So as a universal principle it isn’t self-negating), Therefore it would be rational to follow the proposed maxim in the PSW, since if everyone refrained from helping others without the promise of personal gain, the best way to advances one’s interests would be indifference, because one would gain nothing from the reciprocity of others by departing from the maxim.

**Contradiction in will test: Fails** One could not rationally choose such a PSW since, “A will which resolved itself in this way would contradict itself, as cases might often arise in which one would have need of love, sympathy or aid from others, and in which one would deprive oneself by such a law of nature springing from ones will, of all hope of the aid one wants for oneself.” That is to say, it wouldn’t be rational to choose in which one would not be helped when they were in need, and no one was in a position to gain by helping anyone else.

. To be considered a moral law or categorical imperative, a maxim would need to pass both tests. If it fails one of the tests and passes the other it can still be considered a hypothetical imperative, at which point we can discuss its ethical implications by illustrating it as either a Perfect or Imperfect duty.

. **Perfect duty:** If a maxim fails the contradiction in conception test, one has a perfect duty not to follow that maxim. (So, it stipulates that one NEVER acts on the maxim.)

**Imperfect duty**: If a maxim fails the contradiction in will test, but passes the contradiction in conception test, one has an imperfect duty to refrain from acting on that maxim. (So it stipulates that one should SOMETIMES act on that maxim, so long as doing so does not conflict with perfect duties.)

1. **Applying this to our premise:**

*Premise:* An individual finds themselves able to save only one of two other individuals, simultaneously as refraining from action altogether will certainly result in or allow the death of both individuals. What is the morally correct decision according to Kant? Should the individual in question choose to save one of the threatened people? Should the Individual refuse to make a choice?

1. First, we must devise a maxim which addresses our premise. In this case I believe what we are looking for is provided in Kant’s example. We know that our duty to help others in need is conditional, and therefore moral, if it does not cause us to act against any moral laws or violate a perfect duty.
2. Then we must consider whether performing our imperfect duty, and saving one of the individuals, would either cause us to refrain from adhering to a categorical imperative, or to act in a way forbidden by some other perfect duty.

. Choosing to save whatever individual we could would be an instance of helping another in need, but it would not be for personal gain. Therefore, it would not violate our perfect duty.

. Choosing to save one of the individuals would not require us to lie, commit murder, use an individual to an end, or prevent someone else from acting on their own free will. However, the motivation behind which individual we choose to save could make us guilty of placing the value of one life above that of another, which would be a violation. Asking those in the position of either dying or being rescued to choose among themselves is a violation of the principle of free will as set out in the categorical imperative, since they would be unfairly coerced by their circumstances. Also deciding not to act at all to avoid the emotional fallout from having to make such a choice, or to avoid being personally responsible for either life, would violate the categorical imperative.

. So the moral act would have to be thus: It would be moral to save however many lives one is able to, so long as those saved are chosen at random, and not on account of their comparison to those not saved, and so long as the motivation behind the act was ones duty in it of itself. It would be immoral to allow both individuals to perish through inaction, because in doing so one has refrained from helping another in need because of the potential gains it would deliver. That is to say, choosing not to save one life, because you could not save two, is to ignore one’s duty to others, on account of ones duty to others, which is a self-negating contradiction and therefore irrational, as it presupposes the possibility of one life having been of more inherent importance than the other, or otherwise equates the loss of two lives as being more practical than the loss of one life, which is logically invalid, as well as irrational.

. In response to the question. “which person do you choose?” The answer is you don’t choose them, you could implement some mechanism to randomize the choice, like a flip of a coin.

. Also, it is important to note that regarding our prior investigation, the premise itself is inherently flawed, and therefore a logical fallacy in it of itself. You can’t be able to choose between two lives or allow both to perish where you are the sole decider, because it is not possible to know the consequences of events prior to their occurrence according to the critique of practical reason. There is no rational choice other than to refrain from making a choice, because it is an irrational situation that doesn’t make any experiential sense.

. suppose you were trapped in a cave, with two individuals who had both broken their legs, and you only had the strength to carry one out with you to safety. it would seem like an impossible choice. But it wouldn’t be an impossible moral choice, so long as your intention was to save both, but you understood rationally that you could only save one at a time, so you acted with the intention of coming back to get the other person once you had gotten the first to safety. That action would be moral. If as soon as you got to safety the other individual died, or the cave collapsed, or the person you left in the cave was eaten by a dinosaur etc., you would not be morally responsible for the event itself, nor would it have been possible to know those things were going to happen.

. See what I mean? When it comes to actual experience, the dilemma dissolves, and the dilemma itself only exists in the first place because of an overextension of pure reason, which has been addressed in Kant’s critique.

**V**

**Combatting moral relativism.**

Moral relativists present a sort of logical apathy and claim it to be inherent objectivity. This is because they have mistakenly assumed a situational truth to be an absolute form. Noticing that the literal idea of good and evil possess a linguistic counterpart is one thing, while assuming that counterpart to be the absolute point of origin regarding the term is something altogether different, and more complex. For instance, identifying an absolute point of origin, requires a decent understanding of temporally relevant information, whereas regarding the fact as valid in general requires only the vaguest of familiarity, or simply the absence of knowledge which directly negates the information relative to the presented context. Essentially, moral relativism is vividly aware of the fact that morality is a willful construction of the human experience, and as an erroneous logical conclusion, relativism presents the fact that each culture differs in their values on a societal level similarly to how individual perspectives differ in terms of value, but not content. With only a few simple pools of information, such as these we have mentioned, it is difficult to address the nature of their categorical origin without first confronting the questions from which they pour forth. And so we must first identify the complex algorithm that is human existence.

What is being missed in moral relativism is the notion of unity so far as it is applicable to reality, and it is being purposely ignored in favor of subjectively formed perspectives intent upon undervaluing all archetypes that do not specifically, or intuitively relate to the preeminence of the social condition and its role in informing the ego. It is also true that humans are self-aware and have both internal and external emotions. Humans are also empirically inclined to both internal, and external observations. Whereas humanity is a product of compiled observances and their agreed upon designations and symbolic relevance, both unified throughout the species, and classified amid various cultural groups that exist as comparatively subjective realities, such as culture, or arbitrary groupings dependent upon shared experience. Moral relativism refers to a methodology, and defines it ignorantly as being an absolute casual structure.

It is also true, that morality exists literally and symbolically only because it also exists emotionally and cannot be identified as exclusively conceptual without being extremely limited about its universal applicability. As a matter of fact, the only truth pertaining to the ability of anything to exist in a solely conceptual form, is any truth which regards the relationships between the literal linguistic substance, and the form it wishes to convey. That is to say, when referring to the alphabetic nature, or phonetic depiction of the medium through which humans are able to communicate with each other, or the numerical linear system used to describe (conceptually) the representative units associated with differentiating quantities or predictable qualities of observable patterns contained within nature, It is true to say that these mediums don't actually "exist" in terms of immediately observable reality. Thus, were one to state that these mediums were not real, they would have to qualify the statement by clarifying that real-ness regarding the mentioned circumstance is dependent upon whether one is referring to the medium of language or the knowledge, which the medium is intent to convey.

Where moral relativism is found wanting, is where it attempts to present its observation as comprehensive, because the entire concept is just the unnecessary expansion of the observation that differing perspectives exist. Followed by the arbitrary association of this observation to the unrelated truth, "people generally tend to possess their own opinions." Though all these things are definably true, and they do in fact exist and deserve respect, none of them is absolute. However, there are greater truths, such as the idea of good and bad. Which is capable of being an evolved paradigm, whose intent is to spur growth and cohabitation, and eventually compassionate expression. Though, this does not exclude the idea from the potentiality to be used as an oppositional construct to facilitate an emotional conflict. There are also undeniable truths, such as; we are alive, the world is real in some absolute form, we know these to be true because we experience them in our own way, and we know them to be absolute because myriad observers come up with similar data, but only when the emotional experience, as it relates to the data, is processed introspectively.

We feel an intuitive connection, however, when we find others whose emotional perspectives are like ours. What is being felt in this circumstance, is the presence of two naturally occurring thought patterns, whose form is similar while their causal relationship is irrational, or nonexistent. However, taking the knowledge of the observed expressed emotion, and relating it to the classifiable emotional evidence. One may also, compare the idea they are conveying, to their evident emotional disposition, however the general idea is to do so without showing the obvious signs associated with the emotion, as this has an uncanny tendency to bias the listener. The simplest way to do this is to ask the question; "what does the emotional observational stimulus have to do with the presented informative conception.” This answer will present a truth which pulls equally from both sides of the objective reality, whatever that may be.

We call this, gaining perspective, or possessing contextual awareness. In short, moral relativism simply makes the case that any unifying moral order dissipates should it be regarded from an objective vantage point. However, objectivity exists, and so moral relativism is more like one piece of a whole it couldn't hope to contain.

**VI**

**Plato: Wisdom Knowledge and the role of Love**

When discussing what Plato’s notion of wisdom or knowledge is, one must investigate the concept from three distinct perspectives. Plato illustrates these things solidly in his later works, such as the Republic, however, in the interest of staying well within the confines of “the apology” and “Symposium” it is necessary to elucidate from these works what appear to be the less stable forms of spirt, will, and hunger. To answer the question posed by the initial sentence in this body of text, I would propose that Plato’s notions of wisdom and knowledge are, respectively, the awareness of that which is true regarding one’s experience of oneself, and the awareness of that which is true regarding one’s experiences as oneself. In general Plato asserts that knowing one’s own limits is akin to wisdom, whereas accepting one’s ignorance, and subsequently questioning the nature of subjects from a position of assumed ignorance is defined by Plato as the just pursuit of knowledge. To simplify it, both constructs are aspects of truth as it relates to reflection on both the nature of being, and experiencing, as opposed to assumption as it relates to denying one’s ignorance or prescribing one’s misinformation unto one’s environment. This is seen as being independent of conscious will, or effort regarding the acquisition of facts or the performing of experimentation or anything of that nature. As Socrates, himself expresses in various passages that it is his awareness of his intrinsic ignorance, that makes him wise, and that what disqualified those he questioned from being having wisdom, was their inability to acknowledge this same intrinsic ignorance or display this same self-awareness. “The very fact that they were poets made them believe that they had a perfect understanding of all other subjects, of which they were totally ignorant.”[Symposium Line 22c]. In the same line of reasoning, it is shown that this sort of ignorance is not limited to those who profess understanding they do not possess but extends also to those who profess nothing of the sort, while being inherently mislead because of social conditioning. “They got hold of you since childhood, persuaded you and accused me quite falsely.”[Apology 18b]. Finally, It is shown that yet another obstacle to individual wisdom, could be something emotional and innate, such as the primal nature of love itself. “The main point is this; every desire for good things or for happiness is the supreme and treacherous love in everyone.” [Symposium 204b]. Thus, according to Plato, real wisdom presents itself as a willingness to acknowledge one’s own ignorance, as well as the futility of subjective knowledge altogether because of the possibility for variance in perspective and the limits of human perception to warp knowledge relative to truth. “The mind’s sight becomes sharp, only when the bodies eyes go past their prime.” [symposium 216b].

Beyond these direct statements regarding wisdom, one can also interpret more nuanced conceptions of the archetype by looking at the way the information itself is organized and presented within these two dialogues. Symposium presents the concepts of love as they relate to myriad individuals with unique ideas and perspectives, without ever really categorizing the ideal specifically as being one way. The most particular specification comes from the speech given by Ditoma wherein she proposes that “There is something in between wisdom and ignorance…”” It is judging things correctly without being able to give the reason.”[symposium202a] Where intuition is presented as sort of a marriage between wisdom as it is in practice, and love as it is by nature. Or it is an example of how the prescriptive sort of ignorance that Socrates so often associates with the absence or lack of wisdom, should not be mistaken for the intuitive sort of innate wisdom that comes from instinct when guided by experiential information. Both Ditoma and Socrates present their forms as being inexpressible in some way, and therefore determine the truth of their expression via the individual’s recognition that their personal will or individual identity was not at work regarding the expression itself. Ergo for Socrates the evidence of wisdom is the recognition of the futility of knowledge, as it is intrinsically limiting, thus questioning it is wise whereas presenting one’s knowledge as absolute is foolish. Ditoma understands love as being the intuitive capacity for truth that exists in between knowledge and ignorance, and therefore cannot be presented as either form absolutely. The two notions of course come into confluence with each other eventually. “It follows that love must be a lover of wisdom, and as such is in between being wise and ignorant.”[symposium]. As if to say that the essence of love is an intuitive wisdom in it of itself which is not graspable by the human capacity for knowledge, but which can be obeyed as a primal sort of urge if such urges are recognized and discerned wisely when it comes to reason in it of itself.

It can be seen from the various individuals Plato describes in Symposium, as well as via the various foes he presents opposite Socrates in the Apology, that for him, the concept of wisdom is more about listening to and building off of the experiential accumulation of knowledge that takes place on account of individuality via questioning and seeking to discern the essence of the primary driving forces behind the formation of each individuals conceptions. So, while it is presented repeatedly that wisdom requires the literal acknowledgment of personal ignorance, it is also shown via the various dialogues in practice as the projection of sort of introspective analysis unto a group setting. It is also important to recognize that the furtherment of knowledge and understanding took precedent over the rhetoric itself, and rarely was any individual criticized for their beliefs, other than by nature of failing to adequately justify said beliefs. Even when it comes to someone like Alcibiades, who arguably gives the least inspired, and sort of most ignorant conception of love and wisdom, there is little rebuke from the group. Most of the rebuking in fact comes from himself regarding his own shortcomings regarding following the path presented by Socrates. “The moment I leave his side, I go back to my old ways. I cave in to my desire to please the crowd.” [Symposium 216 b]. Regarding the intrinsic worth of such discussion, or the need for such debate, even in the instance of each individuals conflicting ideology being allowed to present itself without being vilified or otherwise deified relative to the others, I think the best summation of worth can be found near the end of the Symposium, in a statement Socrates makes in reference to a proverb he had shared which lent itself to this point. “Remember our torments, be on your guard; don’t wait like the fool in the proverb, to learn your lesson from your own misfortune.” [Symposium 222c]. Which is to say, it is important to discuss and learn from the reflection upon and questioning of one’s own experience, as well as experience in general. As to fail to do so would result in one being fated to only learn from misfortune, without ever gaining the capacity to prevent, or prepare for it in any way.

Wisdom is also presented, in a prescriptive sense, as being the elixir by which the maladies of human ignorance or mortality itself can be overcome. As well as by which love itself, which is presented as having the capability of being either refined into the shackles of misinformed vice, or the garments of truth empowered virtue, can be discerned and followed. The most poignant statement made to this regard I believe can be found in the Apology when Socrates submits, “To fear death, gentlemen, is none other than to think oneself wise when one is not, to think one knows what one does not know.”[Apology line 32a]. Here we see the presentation of the primal fear or supreme ignorance of mankind, the fear of the unknown, as being a product of the illusion that is “to know’. We are all ignorant in the eyes of wisdom, as to what befalls us after death, it cannot be discovered by the senses available to life and therefore to postulate on its possibilities is to practice futility while believing it were progress. This section of the apology is actually, one of the most beautiful depictions of enlightenment available to literature. In my opinion. We see the protagonist, of sorts, eschew the social misinformation responsible for corrupting the human identity, eschew the ritualized adherences to socially restrictive habits which lend themselves to the pretense of possessing sublime knowledge, as well as portray the utmost humility expressed in the admittance of one’s own absolute ignorance. These build throughout the work as Socrates discusses the case against him, the flawed grounds upon which it stands, and the futility of his appeals to the crowd for they have already decided what their verdict will be. Yet, he develops this mechanism of retrospective truth, asserting “When I leave this court, I shall go away condemned by you to death, but they will go away convicted by truth herself of depravity and wickedness. And they accept their sentence even as I accept mine.” [line 39b] a statement which seems a bit out of context until it is followed by the capstone, “Now it is time that we were going, I to die, and you to live; but which of us has the happier prospect is unknown to anyone but God.” [apology 42a}. Here, Plato recounts the sort of synchronistic justice which is inherent to the ideals presented in Socratic wisdom, that by action, and circumstance, truth should erect itself immortally, while the fleeting nature of emotionally driven choices, or deceptions in feeling brought forth either by societal conditioning or by rhetoric aimed at manipulation would be subject to the same mortality from which they were born, and therefore perish alongside the immortal truth. Whereby in retrospect, the image of Socrates should outlast the vileness of his oppressors, and achieve eternal victory, where his oppressors had only managed to garner the mere taste of it. Thereby solidifying his conception of love, and the truth of his idea of wisdom in that, “Anyone will do anything for the sake of immortal virtue and the glorious fame that follows it; and the better the people, the more they will do, for they are all in love with immortality.” [Symposium 208e].

**VII**

**Aristotelian and Platonic deconstruction of democracy**

The year is 1787. A handful of formerly British colonies have just won their independence from the English monarchy. Now faced with the monumental task of creating a new country, the most prominent among them gather together in a town called Philadelphia to form a government and establish the laws by which it’s now liberated people could live. Seeking to distance themselves from their former oppressors, to ensure the longevity of their newfound liberty, and in order to transcend the limitations suffered by the governments of their time, these men looked to the ancients for wisdom and guidance. More specifically, they turned to the society of ancient Greece and its invention, “democracy’. Of course, we all know how this story ends. There is no place on the globe that hasn’t heard of, or isn’t influenced daily by the country these men created, The United States of America. A nation so convinced of the superiority of democratic rule as well as personal freedom, that it has spent three centuries spreading these notions globally. So, what is it about democracy, and the ancient society that spawned it which allowed the concept to remain relevant nearly two millennia after the end of the civilization it hailed from?

Perhaps the answer to this question can be found in the works of ancient Greece’s two most influential thinkers, Plato and Aristotle. Interestingly, when it comes to the notion of democracy, Plato and his former student were dramatically divided on the subject regarding; the regime’s capability to efficiently rule its people and enforce its laws, it’s susceptibility to tyranny via demagogic usurpers or in the aftermath of revolution, what nature of citizen such a regime would foster, and what precautions must be taken to ensure the sustainability of the regime as well as guard against its potential shortcomings. However, where they diverge from each other most substantially is regarding role of the middle class, as well as the potential relationship between the relatively few affluent members of society and their relatively plentiful impoverished counterparts.

Of the two thinkers, Plato is most opposed to the idea of democratic rule. He characterizes democracy as being akin to anarchy, the result of a crumbled oligarchy. He describes democracy’s citizens as having descended into an addiction to freedom, and prone to reject authority of any sort.” Doesn’t democracy also describe a good for which it has an insatiable greed, and which also destroys it? (Freedom)”[Republic 220 c] It is unsurprising that he feels this way about the regime, after all the Athenian assembly was responsible for voting to execute his mentor and father figure Socrates. A punishment he received because of his precociousness. That is to say, at least in Plato’s eyes, an ignorant mob murdered a man he loved for being wiser than them and therefore making them uncomfortable. Though even without that personal experience, the notion of Democracy simply flies in the face of what Plato described as the “Ideal state”. In his mind, such a State would be comprised of three classes of citizen, of whom the most prominent should be the guardian class. A class of civilians charged with providing the utopia with protection as well as stability. However, the guardians would not be allowed to own anything themselves, nor would anyone under his “Timocratical state”. Plato proposed total communion, even the sharing of wives and children. Additionally, he asserted that the role one played in the ideal society would be determined by their birth. It could be said that Plato’s ideal regime was essentially the polar opposite of democracy, where the citizens position in society depends upon their ability to conform to predetermined classes, and where property belongs to the state and the state is obliged to care for the individual.

Meanwhile, Plato saw Democracy as being all but destined to produce a populace comprised of a multiplicity of unique individuals, which seems like a bad thing relative to the idea of an aristocratic regime which relies on the class system to sustain its happiness. Regarding the democratic civilian he says, “ He lives from day to day gratifying whatever desire happens to turn up how drinking to the sound of flutes, now wasting away and drinking only water, now excising, now laying around indifferent to everything, sometimes pretending to dabble in philosophy.”[Republic 279d] Plato’s Timocracy would see all property made communal, and all citizens ordered into three distinct socioeconomic groups maintained by heredity, thus a citizen such as just described would pose a problem for the entire society. Democracy would invite its constituents to play whichever role they desired and to change this role on a whim. He posits that the larger implication of this would be

Just as well, democracy, according to Plato, would be susceptible to tyranny, either at the hands of the poor who he insists would leverage the power inherent to their majority status, to strip the wealthy of their property and redistribute it evenly among the people, or in response to the guile of a demagogue aiming to manipulate the poor into fearing the wealthy, before promising to defend their liberty in exchange for absolute power. Beyond that, he refers to the potential class of citizens such a regime would foster, as being akin to “Lotus eaters” or drones. He believes there to be no innate accountability in such a system, “Haven’t you noticed how in a democracy criminals condemned to death remain at large?” [Republic 215c] In Plato’s deconstruction of democracy, he posits the existence of a middle class of sorts, describing them as being the naturally organized citizens among the population. However, in his depictions, this middle-class structure is quickly diminished on account of their being drained by the poor who desire handouts, and sabotaged by the wealthy elite who frantically amass control of as much capital as they are able, so to provide themselves a bit of distance from the less fortunate . Thus, Plato predicts the middle class will be absorbed into the poor after being bankrupted by the shady dealings of the wealthy, simultaneously as the gap between poverty and luxury widens immensely. Subsequently, the “spoiled” wealthy, having been rendered fat and vulnerable by their luxuries, shall find themselves sat beside the hardship hardened poor only to be overtaken. Alternatively, he does present a scenario where the wealthy, in deference to their being conquered by the poor, shall hire for themselves body guards to protect them. Thus, creating a new class, wherein the impoverished have an opportunity to aid their oppressor in exchange for superior status to their brethren.

Essentially Plato believes that our character and therefore our proper role in society is predestined. His epistemological philosophy asserts the existence of transcendent forms which reflect imperfect images of themselves into reality to beget substance. Thus, all material being is inherently flawed or lesser to some degree than the actual reality which is inaccessible empirically and apparent only to reason. This cosmological stance purports that knowledge precedes existence, as it is an extension of higher form, therefore providing an apt basis for Plato’s deterministic disposition. Although, he also describes the potential for society to diversify incrementally under the guidance of an extraordinary aristocratic regime, until degrading into an honor society.

Aristotle on the other hand, characterized Democracy as being entirely comprised of its citizens. For instance, he believed offices of authority should be elected by all out of all. That each citizen should have a turn at ruling. That all skill-based offices should be made by “lot”, although not according to property ownership. He also asserted the importance of rotating the positions of power, so that no one should maintain rule for too long. He summarizes the necessary principle for a sustainable democracy as being democratic justice, or the concept that all people should count equally. Which begs the question; “How should equality be obtained?”.

Aristotle approaches the question more optimistically than his former teacher, conceiving of a successful democracy. Arguing that basically, the poor should rule and not the wealthy or the presumed “best”. In line with his philosophical work, he attempts to illustrate the necessity of a sustained middle class to represent balance with respect to the impoverished and the wealthy. Defining both walks of life as being subject to excess and therefore difficult. “Many things are best in the mean, I wish to be of a middle condition in my city.”[ Politics, 169 IV 10). He also believes that in order to establish an adequate system of law, the electorate would need to establish and ratify a constitution to which all citizens are equally subject. As well as he asserted that citizens should need to bear arms in order to maintain their power. “Since it is an impossible thing, that those who are able to use or to resist force should be willing to remain always in subjection; from this point of view the persons are the same; for those who carry arms can always determine the fate of the constitution.”[Politics 275 VII]

Aristotle describes what he calls the best scenario as being one in which most of the democracy is comprised of citizens who practice agriculture. “There is no difficulty in forming a democracy where the mass of the people live by agriculture or tending cattle.”[Politics 243 VI] He posits that such a class would be more concerned with immediate practical circumstances than the ongoing bureaucracy. That is, other than to vote and choose magistrates. Perhaps it was the likely hood of a middle position to be absorbed now and then into the duality of its’s extremities. Or that during he and Plato’s time, regimes naturally shifted and decayed so constantly. Aristotle’s main concern was in deference to the sustainability of such a government as democracy. “Democratic legislators should not make laws that provide the greatest amount of democracy or oligarchy, and instead focus upon what will make them last the longest.” [Politics 247 VI]. As the electorate diversifies, the husbandmen would become under represented, and eventually the population would grow too large to assemble them without the offer of payment, which would be too substantial for the state to afford without resorting to corrupt methods.

When describing the ideal state, Aristotle spends less time discussing the subjective parts of the city itself. That is, instead of discussing the manner of classes or citizens, he establishes environmental and societal conditions capable of rendering myriad regimes ideal. He believes a city should be mercantile, so long as it profits the city. Maritime, as such a position would lend itself to the mercantile success. The factors that follow afterward included things being able to defend itself with a navy, being friendly as a whole to achieve diplomacy, and having of a strong militia and qualified judges to orchestrate order domestically. That said, Aristotle considers democracy to be the most just form of government. He summarizes this by claiming that dispersing the power among those it is meant to rule present the opportunity to eliminate the pervasive influence of private interest.

While Aristotle and Plato did clearly possess significantly different concepts of democracy, there are a few areas where they did agree. Both men shared the view that slavery was a natural state of being, and that slaves were ostensibly of less worth than their masters. Which is intriguing, considering that Aristotle seems to believe that rule should come from the lowest classes. Neither of the philosophers seems to afford much worth to the concept of individuality, describing their citizens in terms of how they were of use or detriment to the state. However, in terms of the implications of giving people the power to govern themselves, the two are staunchly opposed to each other. As can be seen in the earlier digressions regarding their positions on these matters. In the end, their most substantial dissonance comes from their most basic position regarding epistemology. Aristotle believed that the essence of phenomena derived itself from empirical being, whereas Plato believed the empirical was derived from the transcendental. This dichotomy of belief reveals itself in their positions relative to democratic rule.

Considering all this, it is no surprise that those men discussed prior, who gathered in Philadelphia and sought out the wisdom of our two philosophical savants, managed to work out an adequate impression of both ideologies. That is, neither establishing an extreme democracy or a staunch republic, but instead a democratic republic, founded on the notion that the poor ought to rule themselves by choosing leaders from among their lot by way of election. Somehow, although separated by thousands of years, it happened that a gathering of men who only just escaped the tyranny of monarchy found themselves sovereign and positioned on the other side of the globe, gave heed to the wisdom of their ancient ancestors and brought life to their musings. Even today, the truth contained within the words of Plato regarding the lackluster, disorganized daily life fated to the democratic citizen ring true. Very recently we have seen the dangers of the susceptibility of an uneducated electorate relative to the election of a demagogue. And even the most short-lived immersion within the media regarding our nation’s economic policies reinforces the idea that the middle class is the backbone of a sustainable economy. How wonderous indeed, that by some unknowable magic, the dreams of two wise men from antiquity should be manifested with such vibrant efficacy.

**VIII**

**Buddhism and the complexity of nonviolence.**

When discussing the elements at work behind the notion of nonviolence, one often finds themselves suddenly fixed at the center of an invisible nexus of logic, convention, culture, and societal norms. The single thread linking them all seemingly, the supposed utility of properly applied violence, and its potential to bring about or serve ultimately peaceful ends. In tribal societies there is the notion of the warrior, who masters the application of violently contrived methods in the service of collectively beneficial goals. From the famed Native American Apache warriors, to the legendary Norse warriors, the Vikings and their fabled berserkers, there is no shortage of deified archetypes with which to explore our worlds rich heritage regarding the glorification of violent deeds. There is even a glimmer of beauty afforded to these forms, the “Warrior Poets” of William Wallace’s revolutionary Scotland, the mythic Shaolin “Warrior monks” of Mt. song china, or the more modern propagandized versions of the soldier as a “national hero” whose sole purpose is the defense of freedom in all of its incarnations. Among these innumerable examples of beatified combatants, and their paradoxical fixations regarding the violent pursuit of peaceful ends, there are essentially two common justifications for the application of violent means shared by all of them. Either to defend one’s self, one’s property or one’s citizenry, or to bring about peace via the conquering, or forced assimilation of similarly violent ideologies. It was at the height of this worldview, within the palace of a warrior king, during the reign of sacrificially centered theologies, that Siddhartha Gautama was born. A prince meant to inherit rule over a warrior society. It is said that during his youth, Siddhartha’s father believed his son would come to renounce the ways of the society and turn to a spiritual life as had become a common practice among the Vedic practitioners of the day. To dissuade his son from developing this way, Siddhartha’s father kept the prince completely shut off from the realities and harshness’s of the outside world, maintaining for his son instead a worry-free existence within the walls of the palace, replete with every pleasure the era had to offer. Despite his father’s efforts however, Siddhartha eventually managed to leave the palace, and during his outings he came across the various types of suffering that plagued humanity. Old age, sickness, and death chief among them. In addition to these sobering realities, the young prince also came upon a traveling renouncer (or monk, religious archetype) and when he asked the man what he was doing, the renouncer replied, “contemplating nothingness.”.(1) The story is well known enough that it can be said that after these experiences, the prince went on a sojourn to discover the cause and means by which to bring about the cessation of suffering. He traveled to various teachers and became adept at the myriad religious practices of his day, eventually discovering each of them to be less than enough, until he chose to sit at the base of a bodhi tree for seven days, refusing to move until he came to understand everything. At which point it is said that he attained enlightenment and became the Buddha or “awakened one”, and subsequently set out to teach the world the things he had learned regarding suffering and how to overcome it. The question of how the concept of nonviolence evolved within the tradition begun by the teaching of the Buddha, in my view, stretches back to his youth as a warrior prince, even before his enlightenment. For instance, being protected within the walls of his father’s palace, the young prince was able to experience an unnatural and extended experience of safety, as well as the absence of conflicts, even those as mundane or ordinary as age, sickness and death, much less violence conflict and murder. Even when he traveled beyond the walls of the palace, it is said he only witnessed these sufferings in their natural forms, an elderly man aching from the effects of aging, a sick individual caught in the miserable throws of illness, and the death of a stranger by non-combative means. These instances alone in and of themselves appeared to the prince as suffering, despite the mechanisms by which they had been brought about. Thus, violence being unable to do anything but spread these suffering states and lacking the means with which to bring about their cessation, is automatically rejected as a viable practice in any context. Thus, the Buddha’s first teaching of the four noble truths, began with the notion that all life is suffering. Though in truth the Buddha termed the four truths the four “noble” truths, because they were applicable to a so-called Noble person. This was not unique to his time, however, his approach to dealing with suffering by changing one’s self, and the way one reacts to the world rather than appealing to God(s) or attempting to gain control over some externality which was afforded the blame for suffering, was revolutionary. This aspect of the Ideology also lends itself to nonviolence. Because the necessary effort one was required to exert was over oneself, and because of the first noble truth which revealed the innate suffering going on in the lives of any others, an individual practicing the eightfold path of Buddhism was required to refrain from violence due to the fact that it would require them to enact their will in order to surmount the will of another being who was known to be suffering similarly as themselves, presumably in an effort to cause a change in the quality of their own experience. This methodology was wholly rejected by the Buddhist “Dharma” or teaching, as being a distraction from the realization of selflessness. Finally, although not exhaustively, the Buddha taught what he described as the “Middle way”, which represented a rejection of all extremes regarding thought, emotion, action and lifestyle (2). Regardless of which culture it is viewed from within, violence to any end is objectively extreme, as an action, lifestyle or practice in any of its forms. Very basically, the notion of suffering is tied intrinsically to that of harm, with suffering being, itself, the causal function definable as a response to the presence of or experience of harm. Thus, within the Buddhist rhetoric, the Sanskrit term “Ahimsa” meaning no harm, is erected as a core principle requiring the Buddhist to facilitate a disposition promoting nonviolence toward all living beings.

This notion of nonviolence in Buddhism goes far beyond the concept of simply harming another individual physically however. The eightfold path concerns non-physical acts, such as thoughts and speech as well as actions. (3) Buddha described the world we live in as being both a region to escape from, and the nirvana realm we seek to escape to. A seemingly paradoxical notion, until one investigates it from the context of the mind. Buddhism focuses on gaining control over oneself mentally and emotionally, while practicing a behavioral method that utilizes empathy to offer worthwhile compassion. The primary drive for this way of life is described as “enlightenment”. The idea of enlightenment is that once an individual manages to practice the dharma efficiently and effectively enough they become aware to such a degree that they attain an understanding of all things and the order and causes of all events so much so that the suffering which was a product of their former ignorant state of being dissolves entirely. While these claims may seem fantastical or unattainable by modern standards, for the purposes of nonviolence they don’t need to be attainable. When one considers that, via these teachings, it is unacceptable to be mentally violent to oneself, or to harbor something as seemingly mundane as the emotion of desire in its unactuated state, it becomes glaringly obvious that the concept of justified violence or aggressive use of force to ultimately noble ends are dismissed as distractions from and violations of the way to enlightenment.

When discussing the practical capabilities inherent to the Buddhist practice regarding non-violence, there are several historical, as well as modern examples of the ideology’s transformative potential. First, there is the Tibetan Buddhist practice, which presents a unique context wherein a massively successful warrior society manages to convert its civilization to a nonviolent monastic vehicle for the proliferation of peaceful tolerance within roughly one century. (4). Fast forward to the modern era, in the 1950’s shortly after the end of World War Two, Communist China invades Tibet, over the next three decades the Tibetans are forced to submit to Chinese authority under duress, their Leader the Dalai Lama is forced into exile and the people themselves are subjected to cultural, and literal genocide. (5). However, due to their Buddhist principles, the Tibetan people remain committed to nonviolent resistance. Rather than committing organized acts of violence, the Tibetan people protest, refuse to cooperate with china’s policies, refuse to denounce the Dalai lama, as well as continue to practice their culture and religion even under threat of violence. The Dalai Lama himself speaks about the circumstance compassionately and with understanding to the Chinese, his approach offers them forgiveness and appeals to their morality to change their minds by behaving in a way that convinces his enemy that the way of life practiced by his people deserves their compassion. In 1989, the Dalai Lama received the Nobel peace prize in recognition of his efforts to liberate Tibet via non-violent or peaceful means. Here we have a warrior society, introduced to Buddhism in the ninth century, completely transformed by Buddhism by the eleventh century, and possessing a government established in the thirteenth century which asserts the leadership of the Dalai Lama, subsist for more than seven hundred years while practicing non-violent ideology in both its culture as well as its governance. Reaching back to the 1920’s and the era of Mahatma Ghandi, who once even declared himself a Buddhist in spirit, saying that Buddhism was based in Hinduism and comprised the crux of Hindu teachings. (6) If these examples aren’t enough, then one need only look to the Buddhist teachings to determine the practicality of the method in today’s world. Buddhism accepts the existence of Gods from all walks of life and is not in fact atheistic as it is often misconceived to be. However, Buddhism rejects the notion of a creator God, (7) instead establishing a cosmology that rejects the notion of an initial cause. Thus, despite one’s religious ideology, or theological considerations, the individual is ultimately causeless and thus subject to the middle way, and their God’s are not exempted from the moral constraints that arise from the Buddha’s Dharma. Which is a long way of saying, Buddhism while refraining from converting religious followers, manages to simultaneously diffuse the tenuous conflicts which plague opposing or apparently paradoxical religious ideologies. The central principle of Buddhism to develop a selfless way of life, through the practice of individual development. Much like what Rosenberg tells us about the power of empathy, and the importance and potential efficiency of Non-violent communication, is mirrored in the philosophy and teachings of the Dharma. The notion of empathy as the ultimate tool with which to understand and participate with others regardless of our preconceived notions about them or the urges we may have to look on them with disgust or horror, is a notion central to Buddhism as well as Rosenburg’s nonviolent communication.(8) .The Buddhist concept of liberation even describes freedom from the socially conditioned responses of the human ego, as well as the rejection of the impulses brought forth by our limbic system (namely fight or flight). (9) These tenets are almost identical to the conditions Rosenberg sets out as being necessary precursors to the practice of N.V.C. Thus, there exist both modern, historical, and ideologically valid supports which present the notion of Buddhism and its efficacy as a nonviolent practice as being relevant even in our world.

Probably the most poignant example we can find of Buddhism’s potential as a nonviolent practice today, is the Tibetan struggle against communist china. Despite being occupied and controlled by a foreign force, the Tibetan people have not resorted to terrorism or guerilla warfare. Instead they have employed their Buddhist ideals and resisted nonviolently, heeding the words of their ousted leader the Dalai Lama (6). Though it is important to point out that no school of thought or system of belief is capable of overwriting human nature, thus even those raised within the culture of Buddhism are still capable of pursuing aberrant paths or reacting violently to circumstances they deem deserving of violence. For instance, in the country of Myanmar, it is the Buddhists themselves who are guilty of committing genocide against Islamic believers. (10) Thus, any system of belief is limited by the will of its individual followers. Buddhism is no exception to this rule obviously, however the structure of the ideology is unique to that of the western theological model in several ways that in my opinion make it more practical to the modern pursuit of non-violent alternatives than its competitors. First, there is an expectation that followers of the Buddhist path will not practice what is called “Blind faith”. This translates into two uniqueness’s, firstly buddha did not ask anyone to believe he was superhuman or pretend to carry the keys to everyone’s personal eternity, nor did he ask to be worshipped in any way. Secondly, the teachings of the Buddha are not to be taken at face value, one must investigate the dharma as well as they must investigate themselves. To some degree it appears that the Buddhist path is a method aimed at making the subconscious to consciousness, which is similar to what Rosenberg teaches in his non-violent communication courses in that it allows one to deal with their own emotions in a way that halts projection and allows for the relation to another being despite whether or not that being is acting rationally or harmfully toward oneself. In addition to these differences, Buddhism does not require priests, or a central theological authority, to maintain its faith. This means it doesn’t conflict with whatever external systems of rule are in place within a society. The individual becomes their own priest and learns to meditate on and practice what is essentially self-control and an aversion to greed or irrationally driven motives. Tolerance and acceptance are the pinnacle virtues at the heart of the Dharma, as well as they are the pinnacle virtues required to actualize peace in any context. There is of course the violence driven model we have on large today, which hopes to assimilate the entire world by force, but the reasons which invalidate this quest are numerous and apparent.

At the individual level, when it comes to the modern need our world has for nonviolence, as well as change in general, Buddhism is a fitting answer to our global troubles. The control of desire and the fashioning of individuality into a tool for the benefit of all beings answer the current worldly issues of greed and disconnectedness or apathy that envelops the hyper modern world of today. The fact that one can practice this system of belief without needing a church, or temple or priest, enables it to reach far and wide without the burden of an infrastructure. Finally, the notion that empathy is a route through which we can come to accept and cooperate with all living beings is, in my opinion, a much-needed alternative to the materialistic mentality that dominates the present era.

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Empathy and Anastomosis: Transcending Ideology



Poetical, abstract, universal emotional perspective:

**Witness**

I

Don’t you know,

I saw God peering in,

There was this mist,

Risen, from the wet asphalt,

Capturing the golden slivers,

cutting like a holy blade,

cleaving the gray.

The frozen glint,

the forest lit,

a kingdom set away,

beyond the foreign lanes.

Wind devised therein,

touched my joyful skin,

just then,

music became hymn,

for a minute I witnessed,

being glimpsed.

[**Presence**](https://jeff-childers-b6k3.squarespace.com/blog/2018/9/23/presence)

I

Imagine an immeasurable, endless,

unbroken thread,

woven through the edges,

of infinite dimensions,

eventually connecting the ultimate,

everchanging essence,

to each infinitesimal second,

binding the past,

with what has yet to pass,

In such a way that collapses,

thereby by forever fashioning,

an absent form,

within a formless moment,

the pair of which give form,

to all that transforms.

That is presence.

[**Transcend:**](https://jeff-childers-b6k3.squarespace.com/blog/2018/3/29/transcendence)

I

Once awakened we begin to see ourselves

as little more than the ashes of ancient suns,

Having been cast adrift in an aimless mist

from which existence could one day become,

A process which gave birth to magnificent,

virtually limitless systems of intricate elegance,

Culminating in a creation

blessed with enough intelligence

to discern its own genesis,

Whilst steeped in such ignorance, so to miss

one of the universe's most beautiful instances.

An instance wherein this creature

Looking out at endless distances,

feels insignificant,

despite being inspired by the lights of fires,

whose ashes now form its witnesses.

**Survival**

I

We wear our scars, like armor.

To alert potential harmers,

Of the harm our hearts have harbored,

whose imparted darkness we have bartered

For the myth of being martyrs,

Who could have met hardship with departure

Yet who chose to be harmed farther,

to be disarmed, and forced to wander

with their bodies underwater,

Ruled by moons, and prone to bother.

II

Wondering, if hope could make them stronger,

Until every dream that haunts our sleep screams,

That some were simply meant for hunger”

How Hard could it be to feed each other?

What if we each agreed to free the other?

alas it seems that age has torn our whole asunder

So we wander, while we wonder.

While we wonder where we’ll wander,

As our minds grow soft, and our hearts grow harder,

Along our journey back to harbor.

[**Detachment:**](https://jeff-childers-b6k3.squarespace.com/blog/2018/3/29/detachment)

I

"You can't take it with you"

Six words that stick to death's truth like wet tissue,

Soaked with whispers,

since gathered from lips damp with virtue,

warning you "Don't waste time cursing what irks you.

Don't be bitter in failure,

nor let fear come to rule you.

" Words claiming, you are what love does its work through,

Despite the worth, with which your belongings imbue you.

That your purpose exists absent from your patterns in youth,

II

That fate is a shadow,

cast by faith placed in fractured truths,

While the future is reflective of the routes that you choose.

Words shared to purge you of the thirst that consumes you,

urging you return, to learn from the garden that grew you,

To be renewed in the womb of the wild that once knew you,

Apart from your thoughts or the feelings that move you.

Free from the promises both use to trick you,

having learned that whatever wealth it might win you,

You can't take it with you.”

[**Empathy**](https://jeff-childers-b6k3.squarespace.com/blog/2018/9/23/empathy)**:**

I

I will take the flame,

that burns beneath the surface,

touch it to my tender flesh,

taste the sense of coming death,

I will give my breath,

surrender the moment,

allow myself to stretch,

bend around the breadth,

of whoever birthed this dread.

II

From within that pain,

I will find the strength

to win the fires gaze,

to learn it’s name,

I will explain the nature,

of the flame, of death,

even of breath,

until the moment ends.

III

I will stay,

await another flame,

should its victim remain,

unable to withstand the blaze,

I will take the flame.

[**Acceptance**](https://jeff-childers-b6k3.squarespace.com/blog/2018/10/3/acceptance)**:**

I

Acceptance,

is the practice of temperance

whose essence coalesces,

in the presence of sentience.

Which scarcely condenses,

To fit in one sentence,

instead it expresses

in endless conceptions,

via the constant surrender to

II

senses.

Whose consequences,

Leave the surrendered

rather defenseless and,

left to Imagine the present

in the magic of seconds,

which amass timidly and collect,

III

transforming,

to realize immense width.

Which makes breath of the seconds,

Folding minutes and moments,

stored, in order to be later unfolded.

And from whose unfolding

There comes to be holding.

IV

Beings,

Intent upon growing

Glimpse the soul of what's flowing,

become enamored with, knowing,

searching the whole thing,

and showing the folders

what fabric they’re folding,

which, more or less, is,

hoping

[**Humility**](https://jeff-childers-b6k3.squarespace.com/blog/2018/8/23/humility)**:**

I

The spirit that we sit within doesn't see us all as citizens.  
 Sometimes I feel it's light attempt to suppress my civil whims.  
It disagrees with all the things that our society is smitten with.  
 seeming to think success was never best defined as "fitting in".  
It quiets all my wants, and stops the thoughts that fear is living in,  
splitting them apart until the heart is all Im listening with.

II  
Of course it doesn't speak in words, or voice  what it's opinion is.  
instead It shows me images that sway my sense of separateness.  
While intellect expends itself dissolving my defensiveness.  
And I am able to suppress the need to bend what I'm presented with.  
I find that I've been blind, and prone to lie about my ignorance.  
So I close my eyes until my mind is silent, still, and limitless.

III  
As the symmetry that hides while I'm awake and shifting distances,  
slips into my space somehow, and shows me true significance.

Where once I saw myself, I see the skin that I've been hiding in.  
I see the soul I stifle, and the shell that it’s imprisoned in.  
I start to blame dark feelings, and my tendency for giving in,  
but grant myself forgiveness, knowing pain can turn us all to sin.

IV  
I feel the truth insist that what we are is not a mystery,  
implying that the present doesn't have to echo history.  
This spirit that I heard revealed that it had always been with me,  
reminding me that each and every day could be a gift to me.

It painted me a picture of the power of the present tense

Inspiring me to sacrifice my arrogance for confidence.

**Renewal:**

I

Sheltered by the shadows cast off smoke trailing forgotten dreams,

Capturing the mists afloat amid the endless meadows of worlds unseen,

Such is what pervades the fates of begotten then abandoned things,

II

Wandering forever through the labyrinths carved callously by humanity,

Forced to live entire lives while ostracized, labeled as damaged beings

This is what awaits those who have been brought to life haphazardly,

III

Yet Beauty shines it’s brightest when born defiantly from tragedy,

Just as hope achieves its greatest feats when fashioned from calamity,

Such is the potential of one formed in darkness and catastrophe,

IV

To overcome the gravity of their circumstance with valiance and tenacity,

Transforming the shackles of their past into the garments of their majesty.

Such is how those starved of love, yet who love, extract magic from calamity.

**Purpose**

I

All this talk of heaven

Of angels and demons,

Saviors, sacrifices, sins.

most of them speak of,

Something else, superior,

Seeking out it’s slaughter

So to save the Sinners.

Selflessness snuffed out,

For the sake of the selfish.

II

But why then don’t we smile,

At strangers, when we see them

Saved, spared, Still scared,

Most of us meekly seek love,

Starving, and feeling inferior,

Peeking through dark water,

Trying to brave the winter,

Selfishly pointing out,

Failures that plague beginners.

III

Catching ourselves somehow,

Enraged at the loss of Eden,

Enslaved by original sin,

Mostly afraid to be loved,

Striking out at what’s similar,

Squinting to see farther,

Silently craving the familiar,

Jealously dealing out

Shame to forsake the other.

IV

Death dissolves us kindly,

Uncaging us, offering freedom,

Graves marking what has been,

“Forever” a phrase that we loved,

Pain, Pleasure when remembered,

Spinning a tale of being larger,

Failing to find our harbor,

Carefully peeling off armor,

Leaning against each-other.

V

Everything exists to be loved,

Each piece, perfectly in place,

Ever deserving our concern,

Extraordinary things dreamed up,

Echoing peace to all beings,

Even the Earth, as she bleeds,

Embraces those holding blades,

Effortlessly forgiving her enemies,

Ensuring a purpose for everything.

[**Liberation**](https://jeff-childers-b6k3.squarespace.com/blog/2018/3/29/liberationfreedom)

I

I am of dreams who’s skies taste of temperate weather,

alight upon wings, painting the breeze in fading feathers,

Falling forever.

II

I am of hope who’s ends are untethered,

Since weaving long severed seams together,

Nature unfettered.

III

I am of tears formed in fear, and shed in the face of failure,

Laying tracks in the wake of luminescence grown paler,

Tyranny’s jailor,

IV

I am the untamed master-less masses of members,

Who ache at the thought of the chains they remember,

Death’s sole endeavor,

V

I am of worth beyond that of all earthly treasure,

Whatsoever pulls at the threads that men measure,

I am its lever.

[**Nature:**](https://jeff-childers-b6k3.squarespace.com/blog/2018/3/29/nature)

I

Lift me up into the breeze,

Cradle me in the arms of the wind.

My body is covered in burns,

And I can't seem to forget the pain.

I try, but I always remember.

I grow so tired of bad dreams,

Even sleep won’t allow me to rest.

II

Please don't pull me into the past,

It always provokes my demons.

My memory is marked with scars,

And I can't seem to avert my gaze,

I try but I always look into them,

I flinch when I see their contents,

Terror, there is always terror.

III

Dip me down into the stream,

Wash me in the blood of the river,

I think sometimes that I'm empty,

And I can't seem to fill all the holes,

I try, but they drain me completely.

I think life is a difficult thing,

But death may not be an adventure

IV

Leave me to dry in the sun,

Warm me on the hearth of the earth,

My mind Is still trying to heal,

I try to keep hold of the wounds

But at times i can't stop the bleeding.

I don't think they ever stop hurting,

But eventually the pain gets familiar.

V

Teach me to sing with the storm.

Calm me with its voice and passion.

My self still fights for its birth,

I often try finding, and setting it free,

But I mistake it for something else.

I don't always know who I am,

But I think that I’m getting better.

I think that I'm trying to remember.

[**Suffering:**](https://jeff-childers-b6k3.squarespace.com/blog/2018/3/29/pressure)

I

The air tastes like iron, and it smells like sulfur,

Cold clicks ring out, soon followed by sobbing,

Angry glares follow the shadows of the ignorant,

Reprimanding them for not knowing any better.

Yet although the angry stare, they do not act,

They move with their words, and their thoughts.

Their emotions swirl within their stationary forms,

Growing till their size surpasses their container,

And they explode in conflict forcing a reaction.

Like a bullet, in a chamber, struck by a hammer.

II

The air tastes like smoke, and it smells like fear.

There is ringing in our ears, tears are in our eyes,

Sympathetic frowns offer comfort to the harmed,

Apologizing to them for not having done more,

Yet while the sympathetic frown, they do not act,

They move with their eyes, and their feelings,

Their thoughts swirl within their frightened minds,

Accumulating until their chaos becomes doubt,

And they are forgotten to preserve an illusion,

Like a lie, told to a child, with the best intentions.

III

The air tastes like salt, and it feels like grief.

There is violence in our city, rage is in our hearts,

Empathetic embraces offer hope to the weary,

Strengthening them for the times to come,

Yet while the empathetic hope, they do not act,

They move with their hearts, and their intentions,

Their love swirls within their peaceful messages,

Speaking until their meaning becomes clear,

being formed into the presence of a choice,

Like a test, given at random, to provide direction.

IV

The air tastes like blood, and it burns like fire,

There is death in life, dreams are in our sleep,

Ignorance offers bliss to the blindly faithful,

Protecting them from the truth of their behavior,

Yet while the ignorant smile, they do not act,

They move with their beliefs, and their memories,

Their denial swirls within their experiences,

pooling until it totally drowns their reason,

Leaving behind a wake of empty assumptions,

Like answers, that are trusted, without question.

V

The air tastes like nothing, it chills like loneliness,

There is pain in joy, freedom comes at a price,

Reason offers answers to the confounded,

Teaching them to understand their suffering,

Yet while the rational understand, they don't act.

They move with their logic, and their perspective,

Their reasoning devours their uncertainty,

Until their knowledge feeds their arrogance,

Teaching them to reduce what they witness,

Like an acid, dissolving a solid, until it is invisible.

VI

The air is gone, it's absence teaching gratitude,

There was comfort here, there is hunger here,

Silence offers honor to the departed,

Showing the world the weight of their voices,

Yet while the silent are honored, they do not act,

They are motionless, frozen as is their legacy,

Their absence swirls in hearts they've touched,

Until their remembrance becomes a body,

Reminding us of what it is to be mortal,

Like a mirror, that's cracked, reflecting an image.

**Essence**

I

When I am rage,

body is a cage,

bars that shake,

jailing me,

the space between us,

a lock to break,

purpose is escape.

II

When I am joy,

body is a toy,

Games to play,

entertaining me,

this little distance,

a field to run,

purpose is fun.

III

When I am fear,

body is a spear,

enemies appear,

chasing me,

their proximity,

danger lives within,

purpose is to win.

IV

When I am hope,

body is a home,

dreams freely grown,

guiding me,

the separateness is lust,

Sensing what is just,

purpose is to trust.

V

When I am hate,

the body is a weight,

unable to relate,

erasing me,

the emptiness,

renders effort vain,

purpose is pain.

VI

When I am Love,

Body is above,

aloft beside the dove,

revealing me,

the void erodes away,

part of all that lives,

purpose is to give.

[**Immortality:**](https://jeff-childers-b6k3.squarespace.com/blog/2018/3/29/the-indestructible-drop)

I

Witness a single drop of water

Cascading into a body of liquid,

Become immersed in its world.

Listen to the water speaking of souls.

II

The drop collides with the water's surface,

Witness the lake reach up,

Tossing it back into the air, renewed.

Weightless for a moment

Hovering,

Above a pedestal of its brethren.

Collapsing into itself,

Creating Ripples,

Reaching infinitely

Beyond a single drop.

III

Look closely,

Witness how each, Individual

Though Seemingly Insubstantial,

Drop,

Contains innumerable,

Invisible, ripples.

Potential which

Empowers each one,

To move oceans.

IV

In the dripping water, find species,

In the shimmering surface,

The rise and fall of empires.

Exhalations of compassion,

Rising and falling, splashing on impact,

Whilst the multitude

Lifts the individual to grace,

A soul absorbed

By the whole of the universe.

The beginning of life,

The gaining of speed,

The plateau of terminal velocity.

Followed by

Inconceivably complex experience,

And the universal reach of death.

V

In the body of water,

Rests the spirit of all drops,

A whole without potential,

Creating potential.

Suddenly one life seems small.

Following the shining bubble,

As it is pulled into the mud of the earth,

Absorbed and then condensed by climate.

Eventually coming to rest upon some foliage,

Soaked up by a willow tree

Who's whips hang freely over a lake

Follow the shining sphere

Through photosynthesis, as it is dematerialized,

Made to be its most basic components,

Destroyed and recreated,

Becoming energy,

Communing with the sun itself.

Taking part in a universal plot,

Sustaining life.

Participating with the earth,

Pursuing the path of nature.

VI

Swirling for ages,

Making more than ripples,

Moving more than oceans.

While the sky pours with fire and smoke,

Clouds blasting lightening.

The liquid being brought together

Bonding it to the earth, and to nature.

Creating life, beneath the shelter of the sky,

With the energy light.

Covering the surface of the earth,

Prevailing over entropy,

Until the drop is forgotten.

Made to feel small,

Invisible.

VII

We are called back,

To the journey of the drop that has met the sun,

That has helped nature to bring life.

The drop that has forgotten its worth,

That has forgotten itself.

Becoming freed from the willow,

Escaping unto the surface of the bark,

Letting gravity pull it onward,

Becoming free from itself.

Gliding in effortless circlets around the vines,

Free to return to the lake

From which the sky pulled it not long ago.

Free to be renewed by its spirit,

Welcomed back to itself.

Free to make ripples, and to move oceans.

Free to be lifted once more into the sky's embrace,

And to aid in natures experiment called life,

Ignorant the whole while,

Of the peace that awaits each drop,

Of the transcendent whole,

Poised to renew it for eternity.

VIII

Life is not so complicated.

When Even a single drop of water,

Can show us how to love.

How to trust.

We are an enigma beyond a liquid orb

Only in that we can see ourselves

.That Our will is free,

But perhaps it is not we who are blessed,

As a drop of water cannot limit itself,

Fear for its fate,

Contemplate its demise.

Or conceive of its failures.

IX

Remember,

You are a soul

That you fit within a drop,

That you are only pretending to have a body.

As a soul you are always becoming,

As a mind you are pretending to be,

A soul is timeless.

Soul has seen the universe in the drop,

Mind has seen only water and trees.

Soul has spoken to the earth,

And the earth has answered it.

Mind is merely the bowl that holds the answer.

Life enables us to understand our role.

However, the nature that we see,

And commune with,

Is no different than that,

Which compels the drop to leave the ocean,

Only to return to it again.

And in your heart

You begin to sense the truth.

This soul,

Is spirit visiting nature?

[**Enlightenment:**](https://jeff-childers-b6k3.squarespace.com/blog/2018/3/29/selflessness)

I

I am awash in the waters of the human spirit,

approaching the shores of knowing.

And I know only that I know nothing.

And this knowledge does not weigh upon me,

Instead it lifts a weight I never knew was there.

II

I am awake in a world I have failed to notice,

Even having wandered its surface,

I know I have been blind to its depths.

But this knowledge does not frighten me,

it only reveals the limits of my sight.

III

I am engulfed in the noise of this human soul,

Bellowing from within this body,

Speaking to the world on my behalf.

And this cacophony does not disturb me,

It only seeks to make harmony with chaos.

IV

I am alive in the cities built by my brethren,

Tall synthetic symbols of our humanity,

Pointing out the power of cooperation.

And these behemoths do not intimidate me,

Instead they whisper t of hidden potential.

V

I do not fear the world, because it cannot see me as I can see it,

I do not fear the spirit, because it cannot move without me,

I do not fear the soul, because it is bound as I am it's will,

I do not fear the buildings, because they cannot act for or against me,

VI

But my brethren, are deserving of fear,

They can see me as I see them,

They move without me,

They are unbound by my will, They may act as they please.

VII

But my brethren, are deserving of love,

They can see me as I see them,

They move without me,

They are unbound by my will, They may act as they please.

VIII

I am moved by the motion of my thoughts,

As they rush to understand two extremes,

And this does not sway me either way,

But reminds me to remain in stillness.

IX

I exist to be seen in the eyes of my brethren,

And they to be seen in mine,

Our being, evidenced by our recognition.

And this makes me feel neither meek, nor proud,

But it reminds me of how simple things really are.

X

We are, because what is not, cannot be named.

Our journey is determined by the directives we set.

And this does not elevate our meaning,

It does not justify our need to be in control.

It merely alerts us to the power of our choices,

And forces us to accept our fates,

As it is we,

who are the architects of our experience.

**Nirvana**

**I**

Why so somber, little being?

Had you forgotten this was a fantasy

That you aren’t what you pretend to be,

Of course you were imagining,

That is what *pretending* means.

**II**

Why do you mourn, waking being?

Had you begun to love your little scene

Did you forget that it was just a dream,

Do not lament it being a passing stream

That is what it means to *dream.*

**III**

Why so shameful, lonely being?

Of course what’s been trapped must be released,

Had you thought it captured for eternity?

My love, you know you must set it free

That is what is meant by *liberty.*

**IV**

Why so doubtful, foolish being?

Of course you don’t know everything

There is mercy in forgetting things,

There is no truth but rediscovery,

*Beauty* is what remembering means.

**V**

Come take refuge, fellow eminence.

Witness this passing of our ignorance,

Do not grasp after it, lest it persist,

Have courage, don’t fear your own significance

That is what being *enlightened* is.