

RECLAIMING OUR INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEW

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Reclaiming our Indigenous Worldview:

A More Authentic Baseline for Social/Ecological Justice Work in Education

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A baseline is a clearly defined starting point (point of departure) from where implementation begins, improvement is judged, or comparison is made. (from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/baseline.html#ixzz31hHf6g4H>)

All humans have a two million year-old person inside and if we lose contact with that part of us, we lose our real roots.—Carl Jung¹

...the most practical and important thing about a man is still his view of the universe... We think the question is not whether the theory of the cosmos affects matters, but whether, in the long run, anything else affects them.

—G.K. Chesterton (1986, p. 41)

I think we're on the brink of disaster on many fronts. I believe that the Native people can help us out of that, help push us back away from that brink.--N. Scott Momaday (1992, p.89)

A More Authentic Baseline

We hypothesize that once humans began their anthropocentric journey toward feeling superior to non-human forms of life, we also opened the door for similar attitudes toward Nature as a whole and toward other humans as “different” and “lesser” groups of people. This shift from

¹ This is a secondary source quote and we have put it into plural form rather than the original “man” and “he.” We think Laurens van der Post, who offered his recollection of his good friend’s original words at age 87 during a 1994 interview, would approve. See http://www.ratical.org/many_worlds/LvdP/quotations.html

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an *Indigenous Worldview* to what has become our *Dominant Worldview* may be the foundation for violence against all forms of diversity. Until we learn to understand, respect and reclaim the worldview that operated for most of human history, whether comparing levels of warfare or numbers of fish in the ocean, social/ecological injustices and environmental degradation will continue unabated. We need to return to a more authentic baseline so as to better establish our goals.

Unfortunately, most theorists today ignore or keep shifting the baseline used for comparison. Future planners assume that today's human behavior is normative, explaining it as adaptive to current conditions and part of a line of progress from prior Western or Euro-centric existence. There is a lack of awareness of how "worldview" has influenced the state of affairs in the world today. By using "Indigenous Worldview" to describe that which guided human existence for around 99% of human existence, we offer possibilities for achieving relatively peaceful, joyful and sustainable communities using an authentic model that has for too long been ignored, dismissed, romanticized or ridiculed.

We refer to such a worldview as "authentic" because it is more true to our human nature. It emerges from deep integration with the Earth and humanity's place in it (all other animals have this perspective and we are related to them all). It may go all the way back, as far as we know, to Homo Erectus, referred to by anthropologists as "tall and immensely strong, walking upright, traveling far, with large brains, rich diets, cooking hearths, pair-bonding bands, simple and efficient technology-and nearly two million years of success" (Sale, 2006, p.112). That is a lot of generations to have produced without destroying Earth's life systems as we have managed in a very short time with the escalating consequences of our Dominant Worldview,. The good news is that we are still connected our original ways of understanding the world. Paul Shepard explains,

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“We are attached to that primitive way of understanding, of double being, in spite of our modern perspective” (1992, p.45).

Our Neanderthal relatives, who lived from around 40,000 to 350,000 when our own Homo Sapien variety of humans came upon the scene, were also successful. Consider, for example, the Aboriginals who once populated the entire continent of Australia from at least 50,000 or 60,000 years ago with many language and culture groups. In spite of the continuing genocide, ecocide and culturecide against them since the 19th century, they are still with us. What might we learn from them to help undo the damage our more contemporary selves have done in only a fraction of our time on the planet? Along with those of other indigenous societies, we can examine commonalities in social structures and attitudes as we seek an authentic baseline.

Small-band hunter gatherers (SBHG) managed to maintain societies that kept population in check, avoided hoarding, and maintained respectful relations with human and non-human others. Many American Indian societies fit this category before contact with Europeans. Among small-band hunter-gatherers, hunger and famine do not lead typically lead to environmental destruction or warfare. Some SBHG still survive, refusing to be civilized, giving testimony to such successful living. In fact, 75 % of hunter-gatherer cultures have met criteria for being labeled a “peaceful societies,” and also more than half of Indigenous *agricultural* societies were as well (Leavitts, 1977). Although we can blame overpopulation on moving us away from such values as led SBHG, we feel overpopulation may have been a produce of the shift in worldviews- a shift that was as much a psychological separation from the natural world as a material one. Perhaps a group of humans felt we could do better with more detailed information about the mysteries of life and set out to learn them. Perhaps unaware of the potential risks, we were seduced by our seeming superiority over nature. The Law of Nature was replaced by the laws of men.

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Ecological wisdom from more than a million years of observation and implementation all but vanished and the seeds of our current crises were planted.

As a result of the stressful lives that seem to stem from the Dominant Worldview, things were made worse with resulting child development. We started to neglect a more “evolved developmental niche” (EDN) (Narvaez, D. 2013). EDN is a form of early caregiving that matches up with the maturational schedule of the young child, including such things as natural childbirth, 2-5 years of breastfeeding, responsiveness to child needs, nearly constant touch, extensive free play, multiple adult caregivers, and positive social support. Early life experience sets the trajectory for multiple systems, including emotion and self-regulatory systems, with epigenetic effects on systems related to social wellbeing (e.g., vagus nerve) and peaceful capabilities (e.g., stress reactivity can foster aggression).

Since history is largely rewritten by the conquerors and science is filtered by this history, we may never know all the factors that relate to the worldview shift. We do have a solid sense, however, of how life was generally lived during the majority of human history. Noted environmental philosopher, Paul Shepard, describes it in his essay, “Post-historical Primitivism”:

It is not only, or even mainly, a matter of how nature is perceived, but of the whole of personal existence, from birth through death...In the bosom of family and society, the life cycle is punctuated by formal, social recognition with its metaphors in the terrain and the plant and animal life. Group size is ideal for human relationships, including vernacular roles for men and women without sexual exploitation. The esteem gained in sharing and giving outweighs the advantages of hoarding. Health is good in terms of diet and as well as for social relationships. Organized war and the housing of nature do not exist. Ecological affinities are stable and non-polluting. Humankind is in the humble position of being small in number, sensitive to the seasons, comfortable as one species in many, with an admirable humility toward the universe (Shepard, 1992, p. 43).

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Here we pause to recognize the possibility that you believe that Shepard's positive picturing of the ancient past is merely a romantic notion. We bump into this often in our work and rely here on Shepard's words to counter this notion:

The legacy of History with respect to primitive peoples is threefold: (1) primitive life is devoid of admirable qualities (2) our circumstances render them inappropriate even if admirable, and (3) the matter is moot as "You cannot go back." This phrase shelters a number of corollaries. Most of these are physical rationalizations- too many people in the world, too much commitment to technology or its social and economic system, ethical and moral ideas that make up civilized sensibilities, and the unwillingness of people to surrender to a less interesting, cruder, or more toilsome life, from which time and progress delivered us (p. 44).

David Abram's words as offered in his award-winning book, *Becoming Animal* offer a similar perspective:

There are many intellectuals today who feel that any respectful reference to indigenous beliefs smacks of romanticism and a kind of backward-looking nostalgia. Oddly, these same persons often have no problem "looking backward" toward ancient Rome or ancient Greece for philosophical insight and guidance in the present day. What upsets these self-styled "defenders of civilization" is the implication that civilization might have something to learn from cultures that operate according to an entirely different set of assumptions, cultures that stand outside of historical time and the thrust of progress. (2010, p.267)

Being very aware of the problem of "romanticizing the Indigenous," and in spite of likely episodes of violence, greed or vanity that have likely marked all human beings, there can be little doubt that our ancestors who lived with a nature-based worldview lived more happily, more sanely. Sadly, there are relatively few Indigenous groups left whose cultures have not been largely destroyed. Those still struggling to survive amidst the oppression often are unable to live

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according to them. Indigenous languages are disappearing, and with them goes their associated cultural wisdom. Yet there are many who still do remember the old ways. It is past time for an authentic dialogue to commence between the many cultures under the umbrella of both worldviews before it is too late. Rather than spend time on rebuttals to hundreds of years of anti-Indigenous literature, movies, academic publications, hegemony and folklore, in this essay we focus more what may be a healthy baseline with which to plan for the future. We offer three charts to help with this. The first contrasts modern society with that of hunter-gatherers, humanity's 99%, based on anthropological research.

Comparison of Two Types of Living

	<u>Small-band gatherer-hunters</u>	<u>United States Today</u>
Social embeddedness	High	Low
Social support	High	Low
Socially purposeful living	Normative	Non-normative
Community social enjoyment	Every day	Rare (spectator sports, religious services)
Boundaries	Fluid, companionship/kinship culture	Rigid kinship culture, social classes
Physical contact with others	Considerable (sleep, rest, dance, song)	Minimal
Relations with other groups	Cooperative	Competitive attitude, cooperative action
Individual freedom	Extensive, no coercion	Free to make consumption choices if adult, coercion
Relationships	Egalitarian (no one bosses anyone)	Hierarchical
Contact with other ages	Multi-age group living day and night	Rare outside of family home
Role models	Virtuous Frequently	Vicious within popular media
Cultural mores	Generosity and cooperation are fostered and expected	Selfishness and stubbornness fostered and expected
Immorality	Cheating, abuse, aggression not tolerated	Cheating, abuse, aggression expected
Natural world	Embeddedness/ in partnership with Nature	Detachment from, control and fear of Nature

(Narvaez, 2014, p. 342)

Some readers may feel that we have the same values today as the hunter-gatherers had or have. After all, are not good role models important to us as well? And who likes a cheater? It is true that in the dominant culture, we have a cognitive awareness of such values as honesty. However, unlike indigenous cultures where lying was seen as a form of mental illness (Cooper,

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2008), it is woven into the fabric of the dominant cultures on many levels. The realities on the left side of the chart tend to define too much of the thinking and too many of the institutions of modernity. Discovering and using a more authentic baseline may be a key to addressing the contradictions and absurdities that have accompanied the remarkable inventions and technologies of our current paradigm.

Another chart describes two worldviews without assigning the partnership model to our 99% of existence. This has the disadvantage of not giving us an information base to access in the living models of this worldview, but perhaps has the advantage of letting us know the worldview does not belong to any race or culture. We refer to Riane Eisler's work as presented in her book on partnerships (2002).

Domination System	Partnership System
Authoritarian and inequitable social and economic structure of rigid hierarchies of domination in <i>both</i> family and state.	Democratic and economically equitable structure of linking and hierarchies of actualization in <i>both</i> family and state.
High degree of fear, abuse, and violence, ranging from child and wife beating to other forms of abuse by "superiors" in families, workplaces, and society. Children grow up in punitive, authoritarian, male-dominated families where they observe and experience inequality as the accepted norm.	Mutual respect and trust with a low degree of fear, abuse, and violence because they are not required to maintain rigid rankings of domination. Children grow up in families where parenting is authoritative rather than authoritarian and adult relations are egalitarian.
Ranking of the male half of humanity over female half, as well as rigid gender stereotypes, with traits and activities viewed as masculine, such as "toughness" and	Equal valuing of the male and female halves of humanity, as well as fluid gender roles with a high valuing of empathy, caring, caregiving, and nonviolence in both women and men, as well as in social and economic policy.

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conquest, ranked over those viewed as feminine, such as "softness" and caregiving.

Beliefs and stories justify and idealize domination and violence, which are presented as inevitable, moral, and desirable.

Beliefs and stories recognize give high value to empathic, mutually beneficial, and caring relations, which are considered moral and desirable.

A third chart comes from a text offering critique of European cultural thought and behavior from the Yurugu's perspective, an Indigenous Peoples of Africa. The author refers to the book in which this graph appears as "an intentionally aggressive polemic" (Ani, 1996, p. 1) in light of the continuing assaults stemming from the dominant worldview. Here she offers a description of the "Indo-European" cultural expressions as being a result of the Yurugu word, "Asili," meaning "lacking spirit and seeking power to fill the void" (p.ix). We consider the idea of lacking spirit associated with the separation from Nature aspect of worldview that has, does and may continue to express itself in the negative ways revealed by Ani below.

European cultural thought and behavior

Institutionalized Religion (Christianism):

proselytizing, anti-nature, hierarchical, white supremacist, patriarchal, non-spiritual

Ideology and Values:

money= symbol of value, materialism, universal dominance, white supremacy, devaluation of spirit

Aesthetic:

Artificial, non-spiritual, white pristine, rational

Self-Image

Controlling nature, superior, rational, white

Image of Others

Inferior, natural, object, irrational, black

Intercultural Behavior

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No cosmic self, isolated ego, conflicting, competitive, aggressive

Behavior toward others

Non-human, exploitive, imperialistic, genocidal

This last list is particularly critical of what many of are immersed in. But it is important to self-reflect on current beliefs and alternative possibilities. The bottom line is that before we can use our baseline for redirecting our beliefs, we have to use it to recognize just how bad things really are as a result of having used a different baseline more recently.

The Importance of Worldview

“Worldview” may not be the best word for describing the source of the Indigenous baseline for cultural development, but comes the closest as a term in the English language for what we intend. In the last chapter of *Unlearning the Language of Conquest*, contributor Bruce Wilshire writes, “The first thing to be pointed out is that “worldview” is a European idea, specifically German (*Weltanschauung*= world looked-at). So we must recognize initially that in speaking of an Indigenous worldview we may have already generated an egregiously distorted account, determined in advance by a European bias that gives priority to seeing and vision...the price paid is that knowers must mask out the whole emotional and cosmological context within which knowing and living occur” (2006, p. 261). Wilshire later offers an example of this contrast between Western and Indigenous worldviews:

It is difficult to imagine any of the three great Western religions seconding Black Elk’s insight that the roundness of teepees corresponds to the roundness of bird’s nests: “Birds build their nests in circles for there’s is the same religion s ours.”

From this primal original point emanate salient features of the West’s worldview.” It is hierarchical, dualistic, exclusivist, and divisive (p. 266).

In other words, the deep, compelling conclusions about living life in balance handed down in our 99% did not result from the “viewing” sense alone, but from using all the senses.

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Indigenous languages even minimize “seeing” applications because they are verb-based rather than noun-based. Nouns tend to describe “seen objects” whereas verbs describe processes that can’t be seen with the eyes. Many indigenous languages use active terms (e.g., the equivalent of “tree-being”) instead of static ones to describe the world. Indigenous ways of thinking are more concerned with the forces that interact with objects than that which can be seen with the eyes. (Later we propose that this visual and imaging priority as it relates to hypnotic, trance-state “learning or unlearning” is a factor in the sudden emergence and contradictory nature of the Western Worldview.)²

Because more and more people are blaming the dominant worldview for the violence, inequalities and ecological disasters of our time, Annick Hedlund-de Witt thought it important for her doctoral studies to research the influence of worldviews on our ecological crises and its possible solutions. She thought the data might contribute to sustainability efforts. Speaking on the importance of her exploration while at the University of Amsterdam, she writes in her 2013 dissertation, *Worldviews and the Transformation to Sustainable Societies*:

Worldview is a concept ‘whose time has come,’ and its increasing appearance in the contemporary climate change and global sustainability debates can be understood as both response to, and reflection of, the challenges of our time and the solutions they demand. One of the main arguments and premises of this dissertation is, consequently, that an understanding of worldviews has a major role to play in addressing our highly complex, multifaceted, interwoven, planetary sustainability issues (p. 3).

Unfortunately, worldview understanding has been stifled in recent years by beliefs among many that there are countless numbers of them. People use “worldview” to describe religious,

² Four Arrows first introduced this idea in his doctoral dissertation and subsequent book, *Primal Awareness* (1998). In this text, he shows how positive transformation toward and maintenance of appropriate ways to conceive of fear, authority, words and Nature are mediated by intentional or spontaneous hypnosis processes and that Indigenous approaches to understanding these four forces result in very different hypnotic outcomes.

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cultural and moral beliefs. Some academics and psychologists have viewed humanism, post-modernism, nihilism, existentialism and many other “isms” as worldviews as well. We think these terms fall short of seeing the word’s deeper foundational meaning. Hedlund-de Witt supports a deeper view:

The concept of worldview may appear to be similar or even interchangeable with concepts such as ideology, paradigm, religion, and discourse, and they indeed possess some degree of referential overlap. However, worldviews can nonetheless be clearly distinguished from these concepts (p.19).

She concludes that Koltko-Rivera’s definition of worldview³ comes close to fitting her conclusions when he describes a worldview as a “foundational assumption or perception regarding the underlying nature of reality, ‘proper’ social relations or guidelines for living and the existence or non-existence of important entities” (2004, p.5). Robert Redfield, a leader in worldview studies at the University of Chicago in the 1950s, writes “a worldview is the totality of ideas that people within a culture share about self, human society, natural and spiritual worlds” (Wilco, 2004, p.146). It is the organization of ideas which answers the questions: “Where am I? Among what do I move? What are my relations to these things” (Redfield, 1953, p. 30)? Thus a world view goes deeper than a religion, an ideology, a belief or even a culture. It is the hidden level of culture and controls our thoughts and our behaviors.

When seen in this way, the concept is more useful. Cobern, in his paper “Worldview, Science and the Understanding of Nature,” talks about using worldview theory as a framework for “investigating people’s understanding and valuation of both science and Nature” (2005,

³ Koltko-Rivera’s article, “The Psychology of Worldviews,” is without doubt the most thorough overview of worldview research compacted into an article imaginable. The Society of General Psychology awarded him the Miller Award for an Outstanding Article in 2008. He offers various constructs that different theorists have offered for what makes a worldview, such as the “man-nature” and “relational” dynamics we have emphasized.

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p.22). For example, without aligning Western civilization's great religions or philosophers with one worldview or the other, we cannot fully evaluate their impact on cultural assumptions.

Diversity of cultures is just as vital as biodiversity, but uninvestigated cultural assumptions can rob diverse perspectives of their essence, leaving behind a useless or even dangerous superficiality in its place, what is left after known things are forgotten.

To investigate the source of our beliefs is counter-hegemonic. Our current K-16 curricula socialize us to the more superficial tenants of Eurocentric philosophy. Most students and teachers are unaware of the extent to which they accept them unquestioningly. Imagine how much we might have learned from Greek, Roman or more contemporary European philosophers if worldview had been incorporated in studying them. We might have better understood inconsistencies and hegemonic influences that are inherent in the philosophies. In the Introduction of his text, *100 Essential Thinkers* (2002), Philip Stokes writes "If there is one thing that characterizes both the method and the results of philosophical inquiry, it must be the general lack of consensus that precedes the whole process, and often remains even after the work is complete" (p. 5). He continues, "The reason these philosophers have trouble agreeing is because philosophy deals in questions that people generally don't agree on and partly because philosophers go about their business by challenging assumptions and concepts in order to generate new perspectives on recalcitrant problems" (p.6).

We are not advocating, however, challenging assumptions as an academic exercise or to generate new theories. As Wilshire writes, the discussion of world views "is no mere matter for the philosophy classroom" (p. 261). We are suggesting the use of our ancient baseline to assess the appropriateness of proffered advice or beliefs. A good life is a wise life that lives within

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one's means (sustainably). The dominant worldview does not direct us to live good or wise lives in this sense.

“If you see the world in a certain way,” says Māori scholar Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, “this will determine what you value in the world (and what you don't) and how you value it through one's behavior. This statement gives rise to the well-known triumvirate – worldview, values, behavior. In Māori, we use the terms, *aronga, kaupapa and tikanga*” (2002, p.5).

It is not enough to prepare New York City's buildings for withstanding floods or planting trees in parks to provide shade for the elderly, which was part of the city's response to the White House's long delayed warnings about climate change. Our technologies alone will not save us unless we come to re-member a morality fostered by our ancestors' baseline worldview. Walter Lippmann refers to this “morality” in his classic text, *A Preface to Morals*, when he refers to the “dissolution of the ancestral order” and the psychological and philosophical consequences associated with “the modern worldview” (1929:1982, p 26). The importance of regaining a morality that actually existed in ways to create happy, equal, healthy, system -sustaining societies requires the “real world” realizations that “whitewashed” history lessons and media have hidden from view. From the perspective of most cultures of the world throughout history, we would be considered wicked, immoral and even stupid in spite of our remarkable technological accomplishments. Modern civilizations seem to have have lost humanity's original moral compass.

What is the solution to the dilemma we face—a culture of denial and despair that undermines human development and our heritage of cooperation and expansive cooperation? We suggest educators and parents engage children in reflection about the two worldviews in every context-- from pre-school to graduate school, in every home and community. One of the most

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important value and behavior differences between the two worldviews we are discussing relates to anthropocentrism. Thomas Berry articulates this particular difference:

Our secular, rational, industrial society, with its amazing scientific insights and technological skills, has established the first radically anthropocentric society and has thereby broken the primary law of the universe, the law of the integrity of the universe, the law that every component member of the universe should be integral with every other member of the universe and that the primary norm of reality and of value is the universe community itself in its various forms of expression, especially as realized on the Earth. (2006, p. 130)

Our indigenous⁴ selfhood, shared DNA and quantum physics all point to how human personhood extends beyond the human world to other entities. A common understanding shared by the great variety of Indigenous cultures around the world, past and present, is the idea that rock people, thunder beings, or lizard grandfathers are persons with agency. In fact, each agent has special teachings for helping humans develop virtues for survival and happiness, from patience and humility to courage and generosity. Of course there are group differences. Not every group considers all rocks, thunder or lizards to be persons; assignment of personhood varies from tribe to tribe. For example, according to Hallowell (1960), the allocation of sentience or personhood to aspects of the Ojibwa worldview is part of a ‘culturally constituted cognitive “set”’ (1960:25). Such perspectives contrast with the “inanimate” or “less than persons” perspective that is hammered into children by the dominant worldview. In fact, referring to a rock as a person was once a criterion for diagnosing mental illness. It is common for many scholars to believe that only humans have intrinsic value while everything else on the planet is to be utilized for the benefit of humans alone. For example, Four Arrows’s co-author of *Differing*

⁴ When referring to groups of people, we use a capital “I” for Indigenous. Here, we refer to living indigenously (small “i”) as relating to having lived in one place for long enough to learn the complex physical and spiritual realities of place.

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Worldviews: Two Disagreeing Scholars Argue Cooperatively) argued:

Yes, of course, “everything on Earth should exist solely for human exploitation...” What other reason do the fauna and flora or our planet exist, other than for “human exploitation?” That is, in my view, the earth and its accoutrements exist solely for our sakes, and for no other reason. They do not at all have intrinsic value, only instrumental value, as a means toward *our* ends...if we adopt laissez faire capitalism and free enterprise, where private enterprise and the profit and loss system mitigate against extinctions, via barnyards” (Four Arrows & Block, 2011, p.62).

With all due respect to Walter, and he is a fine man and a highly respected scholar, it seems to us that such superiority over the other-than-human beings is the beginning of all racism, classism and other hierarchical structures of inequality. Clearly such a perspective is in part responsible for the devastation of the planet.

Two Worldviews

We are not alone in singling out these two worldviews, in spite of the scholars who continued to believe that each religion and philosophy can be considered a worldview onto itself. For example, Edgar Mitchell, founder of the Institute of Noetic Sciences, sponsor of the IONS Worldview Exploration Project, also focuses on these two in his speeches. He believes the Indigenous worldview holds keys to solving problems caused by our dominant one. Now in his 80s, Mitchell was the sixth person out of 12 to have walked on the moon, and the sixth person to be inducted into the prestigious Leonardo Da Vinci Society for the “Study of Thinking.” Not long ago he wrote on the backcover of *Shapeshifting: Techniques for Global and Personal Transformation* (1997), “Only a handful of visionaries have recognized that Indigenous wisdom can aid the transition to a sustainable world.” Similarly, Noam Chomsky wrote a blurb for Four Arrows’s book on indigenizing mainstream education: “The grim prognosis for life on this planet

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is the consequence of a few centuries of forgetting what traditional societies knew and the surviving ones will recognize” (Four Arrows, 2013). It is not Indigenous wisdom and knowledge per se, but the worldviews to which both comments refer. Richard Tarnas is more specific to this point:

Worldviews create worlds... what sets the modern (worldview) apart is its fundamental tendency to assert and experience a radical separation between subject and object, a distinct division between the human self and the encompassing world. This perspective can be contrasted with what has come to be called the primal worldview, characteristic of traditional indigenous cultures (2007, p. 16).

In light of so many academics thinking that there are countless ways of seeing the world, how do we explain that in serious scholarship relating to human survival on Earth, most refer only to the dominant and the Indigenous worldview? Robert Redfield, mentioned earlier, led a team of distinguished anthropologists in the 1950s who agreed with his premise that there are essentially only these two worldviews. He valorized, but did not romanticize the Indigenous perspectives, and believed that civilization’s radical departure from it was a cultural invention that resulted in “the loss of a unified, sacred and moral cosmos and its replacement by a thoroughly fragmented, disenchanting and amoral one” (Naugle, 2002, p. 248). He saw Indigenous worldview as a constructive basis for a critique of dominant culture, explaining that the latter is always trying to destroy the former. In other words, he saw the Indigenous worldview as a more appropriate baseline.

In the next subsection we offer some thoughts about why we agree with Redfield, and how by making a distinction between these two worldviews and the many cultural manifestations that spring from them as representing different kinds of belief structures, we can engage complementary dualism, as the Indigenous worldview encourages, while at the same time

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offering the contrasts between the two worldviews, including how the dominant one tends to avoid complementarity. Ultimately we aim for a partnership between dominant and Indigenous paradigms, ideologies, values, cultures and philosophies that stem from these two worldviews.

Dualism and Complementarity

As we have mentioned previously, symbiosis and complementary relationships are an essential reality in Nature and thus a major assumption of the Indigenous worldview. We believe the Indigenous Worldview's emphasis on nonduality, with its emphasis on the relational interconnectedness between and among all things, including life and death, is an essentially missing philosophy that has led us to the brink of disaster. Although Thinking in terms of opposites seems to be a worldwide practice for all people in all cultures and may be a useful starting place for understandings, relational problems arise when the tension between the opposite remains rigid and polarized where there is no sense of mutual benefit from the two things. Jung writes that Western cultures tend to ignore, repress or keep separate psychological or relational opposites and thought this practice was dysfunctional for both individuals and societies. (Eastern traditions are better to unify or keep in mind a union of opposites.) "Unfortunately, our Western mind, lacking all culture in this respect, has never yet devised a concept, nor even name, for the union of opposites through the middle path, that most fundamental item of inward experience ..." (1966, Volume 7, paragraph 327.) Instead, the tension of opposites is avoided or even destroyed, not a healthy way to live in a world full of natural dualities that ultimately work together for the greater good.

Galtung (1990) also sees the Western worldview as differing from the Indigenous owing to its inability to unify difference, with an "analytic rather than a holistic conception of epistemology; a human over human conception of human relations and a human over nature

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conception of relations to nature” (1990, p. 313). In a research paper entitled, “The Distinction Between Humans and Nature,” Vining, Merric and Price (2008) interpreted contradictory participant views about their relationship with nature reflected a “cognitive dissonance that complicates decision-making and performing environmentally responsible behavior” and that “resolving this conflict in perceptions might lead to greater levels of environmentally responsible behavior” (2008, p.1). It seems that we are losing cognitive dissonance in modern society, becoming more calloused and cynical about our contradictions. One of the precepts in Indigenous conflict resolution strategies designed to bring people back into community is to respect cognitive dissonance with humor as if to remind the embarrassed party that it is a good thing to have such a feeling.

One of the most important indicators of the worldview difference is found in the twin-hero myths that abound throughout the world that represent the apparent binaries of the sun and the moon. One twin is aggressive, physically strong, and direct like the sun’s rays. The other is passive, mentally strong and reflective or indirect like the dynamics of the moon. In Indigenous stories, twin heroes like the Navajo’s “Child Born of the Water” and “Monster Slayer,” work together in harmony on the journey to rid the world of its monsters. The emergence of monotheism and patriarchy in Middle Eastern religions muted this type of duality, obscuring the more “feminine” principle.

In fact, this is essentially the position of Shepard (1992) who writes about the great departure from the Nature-based Indigenous worldview: “Its true genesis lies in the work of Hebrew and Greek demythologizers. They created a reality focused outside the self, one that could be manipulated the way god-the-potter fingered the world” (p. 47). This happened, for example, when the solar twin, Romulus, actually murders his lunar brother, Remus. Hercules,

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the quintessential patriarchal solar hero, was born with a lunar twin named Iphicles that few of us remember in the biblical story of Jacob and Esau, Jacobs steals Esau's birthright and tries to enslave him. Esau, the trickster brother who is close to all animals, especially the water animals, is obviously the lunar twin.

The Hopi Indians have an ancient legend that tells about a red and white brother with solar and lunar traits. "The white brother goes far away to make discoveries that can help both, but his ego becomes so large that he does not return to share his knowledge. As a result, the world loses its harmony (Jacobs, 1998, p. 194). The Kogis of South America also see that light and dark skinned people must work together to keep the Earth in balance. They believe the white race, whom they refer to as Younger Brother, is causing the world to end. Their wise elders, called Mamas, say Younger Brother must stop desecrating the planet and start *working together* with Older Brother to put the world back in harmony.

Having spent more than thirty years studying solar-lunar mythology and psychology, Howard Teich (2012), believes that Western culture's twin distortions, including the gender labeling of the Sun as masculine and the moon as feminine, represent the loss of an important archetype for a holistic sense of harmony that comes from an equality between solar and lunar forces. This has resulted in repression and oppression that relates to social systems based on a dualistic set of values. When Howard, a good friend and long-time collaborator with Four Arrows, read an early draft of this paper, he expressed concern that readers might see our critical contrast between Indigenous and dominant worldviews as being in itself an overly dualistic proposition. What follows is an effort to rectify this seeming contradiction.

In her 2008 publication, "Thoughts about the Philosophical Underpinnings of Aboriginal Worldviews," Aboriginal scholar and Kombu-merri person, Mary Graham writes that there are

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two major axioms in Aboriginal worldview. One is that the land is the law and the other is that you are not alone in the world. She believes these axioms offers a universal truth and quotes a Kakadu man named Bill Neidjie as saying that Aboriginal Law never changes and is valid for all people.

Aboriginal Law is grounded in the perception of a psychic level of natural behaviour, the behaviour of natural entities. Aboriginal people maintain that humans are not alone. They are connected and made by way of relationships with a wide range of beings, and it is thus of prime importance to maintain and strengthen these relationships... The land, and how we treat it, is what determines our human-ness. Because land is sacred and must be looked after, the relation between people and land becomes the template for society and social relations (2008, p. 107).

In other words, she, as we, advocates for the universal application of Indigenous worldview, not as she continues to say, for “one true way of living in accord with it.”

Graham strongly emphasizes that this is not about promoting an ideal system of expression and lifestyle, inferring that cultural manifestations beyond this basic “truth” about living on this planet are and will always be multiple and subject to an eventual balancing or opposites. She writes,

Aboriginal Law thus cannot be idealogised: it is a locus of identity for human beings, not a focus of identity” (p. 109). If one true way is posited, sooner or later individuals or groups are inclined to ideologise it; rigid thinking then follows (or vice versa), and the formation of groups of 'true believers', chosen people, sects, religions, parties, etc., cannot be far behind... Aboriginal law is valid for all people only in the sense that all people are placed on land wherever they happen to be... (Nature is the only constant for human beings.) Ideas are myriad and ever changing. This is why the custodial ethic, based on and expressed through Aboriginal Law, is so essential not only to Aboriginal society but to any society

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that intends to continue for millennia and wants to regard itself as mature (pp. 110-111).

Once we accept the foundational prerequisite for healthy life on earth that requires living according to the laws of Nature and respect for all living things and their interdependencies, then we can venture without limitation into varying expressions of life, making us artists and creators of individual and collective purpose. From this basic essential respect and holistic understanding of dualities, our structural inequalities are no longer needed and our many mental illnesses can disappear. The unifying source physicists and philosophers keep seeking is Nature and our practice of empathy and complementarity with apparent opposites is the unifying behavior that stems from it.

Hegel recognized the need for a unifying factor to resolve the conflicts of dualism, but he uses a Christian God as the factor instead of Nature and the wisdom of those who have studied it for hundreds of thousands of years (Lauer, 1982). Using a fully intelligible God that man can logically understand, he sees duality as an illusion because of God's intervention and wisdom. God is the synthesizing agent. For example, he saw "Becoming" (via God) as the complementarity joining the duality of "nothingness" and "being." Borrowing from Goethe, the idea that every problem that arises in life causes contradictions or disputes, though when the problem is measured in light of a unifying concept, the duality disappears. "God" thus resolves the tension between thesis and antithesis. Maybe Hegel deep down in his own mind saw this differently than most of his interpreters seem to think, but as understood by most, the logical, rational knowledge of "God," the monotheistic power of the universe, seems to be the key for his synthesis. If so, then this becomes one of the ultimate problematic dualities, in light of Christian histories and realities. Four Arrows wrote about such realities in a paper entitled "False Doctrine: The Influence of Christianity on the Failure of Indigenous Political Will" (2014) that speaks of

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ways that a partnership or pairing between Indigenous spirituality and Christianity is still possible if instead of seeing opposites as a war to sustain one position over the other, Christianity is seen as potential partner to an Indigenous worldview perspective.

The Quechua speaking peoples of the Andean mountains in Peru, another Indigenous culture, offers a clear understanding of the importance of complementary opposites while sustaining the Aboriginal mandate for following the laws of Nature. In a research project described in her publication, “The Splendid and the Savage: The Dance of the Opposites in Indigenous Andean Thought,” Hillary S. Webb offers a comprehensive analysis of the meaning of three of their words, *yanantin*, *masintin* and *chuya* (2012, pp. 69—93). “Yanantin” describes the idea of universal oneness that includes an understanding of a sort of pairing of opposites. “Masintin” is “the active process by which the yanantin pair becomes “paired” and thus moves from a state of antagonism and separateness to one of complementarity and interdependence...” (p.74). The word “chuya” refers to an entity that may be missing its potential complementary other or is still viewed as being unequal somehow.

According to Webb’s research participants, this movement towards complementarity and interdependence is a four-stage process of boundary exploration. The four stages are as follows:

- Tupay (The Meeting)
- Tinkuy (Testing of Boundaries)
- Taque (The Union)
- Trujiy (The Separation)

Interestingly, the last stage of this pairing process is separation from the attained union in a way that allows it to be a stepping - stone to a more all-encompassing union with the universe.

...yanantin departs or when you depart from your yanantin. ...That separation is only the start of another, much higher level of union...Trujiy represents the

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capacity to be yourself again once you have experienced that yanantin union. After that, you become one single person again. But in that singleness you are no longer just yourself. You are One—with the yanantin, with God, with the essence. No matter what happens, you are One with all of that. (Webb, 2012, p. 152).

Thus, taking these views together, we have but one earth and the systems upon it we call “Nature”. We can live according to the belief we are part of it intrinsically, physically and spiritually. We can acknowledge the proven assumptions gleaned after over a million years of surviving and thriving on earth. Or, we can live according to a belief that we are somehow separate from the earth and its life systems, while continuing to ignore, dismiss or ridicule our Indigenous wisdom. In our view, the evidence is clear for choosing which of these foundational beliefs will best serve future generations. And at the same time, from indigenous knowledge of natural systems we know that diversity and its complementary nature is a crucial dynamic in these systems. Granted that a number of diverse beliefs, values and actions exist as a result of the dominant worldview and all of them must be studied for their complementarity, but the study can only be successful if we remember that we and the earth are of one mind. The Western worldview has brought new perspectives but at a cost no one can afford to pay. Even with regards to the oneness of yanantin, we learn that the Natives say that not all apparent opposites are suitable for pairing. Harrison, another researcher of this concept, writes, “Quechua speakers persistently distinguish objects which are not well matched or ‘equal’” (1989, p. 49).

So what is it that keeps us from living according to the most obvious truths—the laws of nature? How can we be seen as truly intelligent creatures while practicing constant war, oppression of others and a priority of convenience, materialism and power that causes us to forsake a sacred relation to the water we drink and the air we breathe? We conclude this paper

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with a largely unconsidered answer that has been realized by our Indigenous cultures since time immemorial that relates to the use of what we today might refer to as “trance based learning.”

Trance and Transformative Learning

Although some psychologists and consciousness researchers realize that most learning is formed automatically from immersed experience, most people do not use this knowledge responsibly or towards building good, sustainable lives (instead, the power is used by purveyors to influence the purchase of their products). Unintentional learning has shaped many belief systems from religion to consumerism. Intentional trance learning is another powerful form that has been neglected by modern humans who typically have forgotten the power of trance-state learning. In so doing they have allowed perceived authority figures to take control of it so that many of our beliefs, actions and inactions are the result of a trance-logic they may not even be aware of that is responsible for their contradictory behaviors. Indigenous Peoples well understood the power of learning while in intentional or spontaneous alternative states of consciousness and had the discipline, focus and techniques for staying on “the red road.”⁵ This use of trance phenomenon for learning and acting according to what is real and true may be the missing link for bringing us into integrity with our evolved nature.

In an article about hunter-gatherer studies published in the *American Anthropologist*, Lee (1992) writes,

We live in an era in which the line between real and non-real has become dangerously blurred. What is real has become a scarce commodity and the pursuit

⁵ *Chanku Luta*, a Lakota/Dakota word for “red road,” relates to walking in balance. Ross contends that American Indians show more right-brain synapsis than non-Indian people and therefore are able to use hypnosis and art with more facility as both of these functions require significant right brain function. (1989).

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of the "real" sometimes becomes a desperate search...We don't have to search far for evidence of this proposition. The Disney corporation produces and distributes in a single fiscal year, perhaps in a single week, more fantasy material to more people than entire archaic civilizations could produce in a century. States of the Left, Right, and Center and their bureaucracies also produce prodigious volumes of fantasy (1992, p.32).

We would guess that the hegemonic manipulations of culture are even more influential and powerful today than when Lee wrote this. Hegemony, what happens when we believe that the “truths” put forward by those in power must indeed be true even if they benefit only its authors, is so successful in the world because of hypnotic trance logic. Hypnotic learning during alternative states of consciousness and alternate brainwave experience is a part of Nature’s survival repertoire for a number of animals. Under the dominant worldview, it is placed on the fringes of society, however, as something to be used only by licensed physicians or stage performers. As a result, we lost our own *intentional* hypnotic skills and gave control of the phenomenon to our preachers, peddlers and politicians- or any other person we allowed to have some authority over us. Such intentional self-hypnotic skills include the ability to “believe in images” via self-induction into appropriate altered states of awareness, as well as giving explicit permission to others such as healers or specialized wisdom keepers to induce trance and implant words. Words were understood as sacred vibrational frequencies. Even Freud, who against the wishes of his friend Jung refused to use hypnosis said that "Words were originally magic and to this day words have retained much of their ancient magical power" (1917, p. 17). In his text, *A Time Before Deception*, Thomas Cooper offers a scholarly study of how words were seen as sacred to American Indians. They understood words as being about describing reality and

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thought that people who lied had a mental illness in which they could not judge truth from falsity (1998). One might consider this a valid explanation for the behavior we see today.

Indigenous Peoples recognized the importance of trance work long ago for acquiring wisdom and living according to it, but unlike us they never let it slip out of their control. Webb reveals in her study that the Natives told her the best way to learn yanantin was to go into deep trance with mescaline from the juice of a cactus. “It was suggested to me at the beginning of my research that the best way for me to understand and integrate this concept of yanantin was for me to “download” it—that is, to go into ceremony with the San Pedro cactus” (Webb, p. 78). Plant medicine, however, is but one approach used by Indigenous Peoples throughout time and around the world. A variety of cultural ceremonies, group or individual prayer ceremonies such as the (vapor purification lodge), Vision quests and other forms of isolated meditation, intentional trance-inducing dance rituals (Thomason, 2013;), drumming and other forms of music (Amoss, 1978; physical exertion followed by trance induction, fasting and sensory deprivation (Villoldo & Krippner, 1987) were all widely practiced as ways to embed important knowledge into the psyche and for healing (Walsh, 1996, Thomason, 2013). Often a pre-planned indoctrination into the cultural expectations via stories or a repeating of important cultural rules followed. Sometimes an individual merely put him or herself into the appropriate state of receptivity for a particular set of word instructions. Mike Williams of the University of Reading, writes in his text, *Prehistoric Belief* (2010) that early humans were likely much more adept at entering trances and used trance-state to solve a number of life-threatening problems.

Unfortunately, such studies are seldom given serious or widespread attention in any study of Indigenous cultures. In fact, Western sciences in general are not supportive of such research. Consider placebo phenomenon for example. For hundreds of years, physicians have witnessed

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the power of belief to cure, but in the past fifty years when double-blind placebo controls for just about every drug or surgical intervention were required, the outcomes proving the power of hypnosis phenomenon have been all but ignored. Two Harvard scholars, Benson and Kaptchuk, have stood firmly against years of ridicule and dismissal of the facts that show that from 30 to 90 percent of successful results from the actual drugs or surgery occur with placebo comparisons, even when the patient knows he or she is in the placebo group. Benson's history of this unfortunate process up until 1995 can be found in his text, *Timeless Healing: The Power and Biology of Belief* (1996), and his co-authored article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* back in 1975 entitled, "The Placebo Effect- a Neglected Asset." Kaptchuk's journal article of 1998, "Intentional Ignorance" is another good history of this controversy; the other side which is reflected in a 1994 article in the new *England Journal of Medicine* that says placebo controls themselves are unethical and have little to no efficacy in medical practice (Rothman & Michels, pp. 394-398). For a thorough and up-to-date study of the placebo phenomenon evidence go to Harvard Medical School's website that follows to connect to 85 peer-reviewed publications dated from 1998 to 2014 at <http://programinplacebostudies.org/publications/>

Four Arrows has had notable experience in this controversy as well. Prentice-Hall's emergency medicine division, Brady, published his text, *Patient Communication for First Responders: The First Hour of Trauma*, in 1988. Field tested for 12 years, it showed that first responders at the scene of an emergency, especially fire fighters, police and paramedics, were using hypnosis whether they knew it or not, for good or for bad, because patients were in hypnotic states. "All creatures, during times of stress, become hypersuggestible to the communication of perceived authority figures" (Jacobs 1998, p.44). Thus, a paramedic or anyone else speaking with authority unintentionally could cause untold harm with an off-beat comment

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in front of an apparently unconscious person, like “Wow, that knee is messed up. I doubt he’ll walk again.” Or, with conscious effort based on simple training protocols, could direct a patient to stop bleeding as in a situation where the victim is trapped in a car and direct pressure cannot be applied. After six months on the market and many letters from people around the world giving testimony to the life-saving techniques taught in the book, the book was remaindered because a lawyer or two determined the book should only be used by “licensed medical physicians trained in medical hypnosis.” We share this story because one must realize how some things we don’t know stay hidden because of the hegemony and because of a dismissal of Indigenous belief systems. But, as Tolstoy reminds us, “Wrong does not cease to be wrong because the majority share in it” (2009, p. 56).

Conclusion

We humans possess essentially the same brain we have had for well over a million years. We are part of Nature, whether we have forgotten or disagree. We all have our special skills and reasons for being in the universe. To act with integrity to our place in the mysterious scheme of things, we need to wake up from hegemonic or trauma-based hypnosis and take charge of our own trance states so that we can live as we are meant to live amidst the wonder of our natural world. Reclaiming our Indigenous Worldview as a baseline for making changes in the world as needed, the process of investigating the two main worldviews considered in this essay can help put our creative decisions, technologies and learnings into a holistic alignment with the Nature into which we are woven. A true reunion with our place in the natural world and a more authentic baseline for remembering how our beliefs are formed will empower us to reclaim our more authentic cultures so that amidst our diversity we can maintain those things we share in common for the greater good.

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We close with only a cursory list of more specific ways to accomplish this “waking up” process. These suggestions offer immediate opportunities for personal and organization transformation that stem from relearning and honoring the wisdom that guided us for most of human history and allow for careful reflection on what from the two worldviews still works and what doesn’t.

1. Start by selecting any important topic requiring you to make a decision.
2. Consider the topic with a sacred awareness that all of Nature, including all sentient beings, are relatives and have great significance, including fellow humans and align possibilities accordingly. Give special attention and respect to local place. Keep “the greater good” in mind.
3. Use trance learning with simple and safe self-hypnosis techniques to embed carefully considered (and well-researched) conclusions and to foster right action.
4. Use dialogue with others in the process of understanding various positions and align all goals with a baseline that is likely representative of a more original state.
5. When in conflict with others, do not take things personally nor deviate from truth. Use humor intentionally and remember the goal of conflict resolution is to bring all back into community.
6. Remember the laws of complementarity.
7. Trust the universe with courage and fearlessness.

A useful tool for implementing these guidelines is the CAT-FAWN Connection, detailed in *Primal Awareness* (Jacobs 1998). CAT= Concentration Activated Transformation and refers to the hypnotic state of awareness. F-A-W-N refers to Fear, Authority, Words and Nature. Using the Indigenous worldview: Fear is to be seen as a catalyst for practicing virtues (courage,

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generosity, humility, honesty, fortitude, patience) and moving through it leads to trusting the universe with fearlessness. Authority only comes from honest reflection on lived experience with the awareness that the laws of nature and our interconnectedness are irrefutable. Words are sacred vibrations, whether we speak them to ourselves or to others. Dishonesty and deception are equal to insanity. Finally, Nature is all. It is our home, our teacher, our mind. All technologies and financial or creative enterprises must allow for an appropriate balance amongst natural and vital systems upon which we all depend.

Hypnosis studies reveal that when new objectives or beliefs are deeply imagined while we shift into alternative brain wave activity, we actually change the synapses in our brains to act according to the new image. Although brain hemisphere studies are oversimplified in popular media and are much more complementary than independent in function, the research shows that hypnosis is largely situated in the right hemisphere, the site of holistic, receptive intelligence. Human brain activity may be out of balance with an over-emphasis on left brain functions and an undermining of right hemisphere development early in life and throughout childhood (Narvaez, 2014). Creative activities and free play with others are ways to rebuild the right hemisphere. Dancing, singing, and joking are activities that hunter-gatherers enjoy most of the time. They engage in various communal trance-producing activities and adventures. These are things that we can use to begin to heal ourselves, each following our honest perceptions of right action. For those of you who are in education, we also recommend creating worldview curriculum.⁶

The world-wide crises threatening life systems on Earth calls for restoring our positive potential to once again be one with the universe in thought and action. If there is anything we can glean from our Indigenous worldview, it is to focus our energies as best we can on re-knowing

⁶ An excellent model is Mark Hathaway's "Ecological Worldviews" course at the University of Toronto. His syllabus and bibliography can be found online at <http://www.environment.utoronto.ca/Upload/undergradsyllabus/ENV333H.pdf>

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our local places in which we dwell and doing our best to find and preserve those who have lived in these places long enough to know the original baseline. We don't have to "go back" per se, but we can go forward with a proven two million year-old worldview to help guide us.

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