

EARTH-SELF INTERCONNECTIONS:
AN EXPLORATION INTO THE SIGNIFICANCE
FOR CONTINUED GLOBAL AND INDIVIDUAL GROWTH

by

Esther Schwartz Perantoni

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APPROVED:

M. Boucouvalas, Chair

N. E. Chalofsky

R. G. Depczenski

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(ABSTRACT)

The significance of the Earth-Self interconnections for personal and planetary growth was explored in this inquiry. Because Native Americans are a people who traditionally have been tangibly and consciously aware of Earth-Self interconnectedness, their philosophy that all life is connected was used as an example in examining the Earth-Self interrelationship. This foundation was followed by an elucidation of possible methods of integrating, through experiential and academic means, these interconnections with individual lifestyles and attitudes; and the potential results investigated.

Education is perceived as both a formal and informal process. Learning is a process of opening--to other ideas, philosophies, awarenesses--formally in the classroom and informally through multitudes of experiences. Conceptually, Native people believe opening is a process of balancing; what is reflected out, is mirrored back. A balanced individual is the reflection of a balanced earth.

It is argued that pollutions and meteorological changes are indicative of the Earth's present imbalance. We mirror that

imbalance. As a challenge posed in this thesis, by opening and becoming aware of the Earth-Self interrelationship, can we not rebalance wholistically? This inquiry explores the potential of rebalancing.

Acknowledgements

In the creation of this paper, far more surrounds it than just my energies. Just as this inquiry explores the wholistic interactions and interrelationships of all life, so have I experienced the process during its creation. With much gratitude and love I acknowledge all those people who consciously, and unconsciously, sent me much positive energy during the writing of this paper. In particular I am very grateful to _____ without whose infinite patience, stability, and knowledge of the Word Processor and its required game strategies, this paper would never have made it to print. I thank my advisor, Marcie Boucouvalas, for her faith and trust in both my intentions and my non-traditional leanings. Her suggestions and guidance in this paper have opened me to further explorations in the field. I also thank _____ for his positive, protective energies.

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to three very special kindred spirits: to whose positive, encouraging energies and insightful suggestions provided me with daily strength and inspiration--she is a mentor from whom I learn many lessons; to

 who introduced--re-introduced--me to a most powerful and gentle Earth Mother, and whose earth-centeredness has grounded and stabilized many erratic energies; to my dear sister who, many years ago, shared with me her knowledge of the fairies dancing in the moonlight--her spirit light has brightened and opened many paths for me since that magical night.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

I grew up in the country. I grew up feeling, if not always understanding on a cognitive level, a strong connection with the Earth Mother--her forests, fields, her mountains and streams and all the creatures and plant life filling these spaces. The peace and the power of the energies from this vast flow of life surrounding me became an integral part of my philosophies, beliefs and attitudes (although I was not aware of the significance until years later). My own Earth-Self connection was so strong I assumed all people felt this powerful union. As years passed, I learned differently.

I grew older, I moved away from the country into a metropolitan area, further from the Earth Mother connection. I experienced much, ranging from formal higher education to experientially touching many different cultures and people, philosophies and attitudes. My most significant "discovery" or lesson was what the natural world, versus. the man-made concrete world, gave to me. That lesson was the wholistic understanding of my Self and the integration of the Self with the Earth. Returning, full circle to the country, I realized, experientially--intuitively and wholistically--how much inner peace and strength, as well as physical wellness, I gained from the Earth Mother.

I also realized, after my experiences, how many people do not feel this same connection, nor are they aware of the vast energies available for self growth. Most likely not alone in my observations, I see people living on the earth rather than with the earth. As a result, I see little respect for life and much waste and destruction to both creatures and the planet. I see the Earth Mother's lands and waters and air being polluted and damaged, in some cases, beyond repair. Technologies, such as nuclear power, mechanized transportation, chemicals, etc., invented to enhance man's life, in the long-range are causing major damage to the earth and her "children"--man being among the offspring.¹ Rather than welcoming and accepting natural climatic, meteorological and seasonal changes, I see people cursing and fighting against the natural flow of the earth. I see people deciding which creatures and plants are allowed to live on this planet, arbitrarily killing those insects, mammals, birds, reptiles, plants they deem to be an annoyance without considering the impact of these actions on other lives.² Man is working diligently to control and frame his environment to fit his needs, rather than considering the needs of all spirits to maintain a balance on this planet.

This estrangement from the Earth Mother, this disconnection from nature and our fellow creatures both saddens and concerns me. Because I feel the combined peace and power from the earth connections, because I feel a personal wholism and wellness with

these inter-connections, because I have discovered how to utilize powerful and creative energies from the earth,^{3,4} I want to, and feel obligated as one of Earth's caretakers, to share these feelings and potential growths with others. I am concerned because, through readings and personal experiences, I am seeing and feeling the possible threat of man's continued survival as a result of our separations from the earth. On an environmental scale, pollutions, nuclear and chemical poisoning, poor land and water management are all threats to self and global survival.(see Footnote 1) To survive, to grow, it is important we reconnect with and become aware of the Earth Mother and the energies within.(see Footnotes 3 and 4) As is both a Native American philosophy, as well as a quantum physics view, what is reflected out is mirrored or reflected back upon us. If we are whole and well, the earth will be well.

Thus, this thesis is conceived--for love of earth and spirit.

Education and Wholism

Education for the adult encompasses several factors--from the learning process for an adult to the definition of education. These factors then reflect on the adult educator and the resulting procedures to most effectively present an environment and process for learning.

An adult, within the realm of this paper, is defined as an individual 18 years of age or older. Indicated by the many theories on the adult as a learner, the educational process for adults is unique as it encompasses various stages of the lifecycle, as well as the all-inclusive lifestyle and multi-roles the individual has incorporated. Adult education is founded on the premise that adult life evolves. Some, not all, theorists believe individuals pass through life phases. At various stages or cycles in an individual's chronological age progression, there are stages of development taking place. These stages vary depending on which theorist is being reviewed. Daniel Levinson, Carl Jung, Roger Gould, Eric Erickson, and Jane Loevinger are but a few individuals who have theorized about various stages of adult development and the influences these stages have on personality development, growth process and potential, and learning abilities. For further information, the ambitious reader is encouraged to explore the U.S. Department of Education's book Adult Development and Approaches to Learning, Huey Long's book Adult Learning, Alan Knox's book Adult Development and Learning and Malcolm Knowles book The Modern Practice of Adult Education.

At the least, the process of learning and growth for the adult encompasses and is influenced by a variety of life experiences, physical and mental development, past history and lifestyles and values. These factors are significant enough to

be taken into account when establishing programs for adults. In addition, adults learn or enter an educational experience for a multitude of reasons--self development, career development, technical necessities, and more. The reasons and needs for education by the adult learner also have significant impact on material presented and material assimilated.

...the concepts of adult education and adulthood can be approached philosophically. One's assumptions about these concepts affect both practice and theory. Viewing adulthood as a process rather than a state...leads to seeing education as a vehicle for individual development. Likewise, conceiving of adult education as a process of consciousness raising entails a special view of the student-teacher relationship (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 41).

Just as the definition of adult and learning are multifaceted, the term "adult education" can be viewed from several perspectives. It can be viewed in a very focused sense to encompass only the traditional educational setting within an institution for higher learning, or it can be viewed in a very broad, open-ended perspective--to encompass all learning processes in formal and informal settings for reasons of personal, professional, as well as technical enhancement and knowledge acquisition. Education can encompass all experiences by which individuals acquire new knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, interests or values. Within this definition, education becomes wholistic in nature for it includes not only cognitive development and acquisition of material, but physical, emotional and spiritual development and growth. For purposes of

this thesis, education is viewed in the broadest spectrum of unlimited possibilities in a wholistic sense.

As a result of the uniqueness of an adult, the adult educator is faced with a unique task. The educator must be able to take into account the adult stages and past experiences the learner has been exposed to and is presently experiencing, as well as the reasons for which the adult seeks a particular educational experience. In addition, unlike children child, adults quite often have many different roles they are participating in besides that of a student. The adult educator must acknowledge these various roles as having some impact on the student. In a sense, the adult is more wholistically oriented as a student, and the adult educator is faced with the task of working within the wholistic realm for opening up the most possibilities for learning and incorporating knowledge, for whatever reason. Flexibility and openness appear to be key elements in responding to adult needs.

Education, both the process of learning as well as what is learned, is an on-going process in a life. Education is not only the formal process of learning in the classroom, but is the informal process of learning through multitudes of experiences. Through education, both academic and experiential, we as a people can re-acquaint ourselves, reconnect ourselves with the Earth Mother and her energies. This reconnection may, on a grand scale, ensure our continued survival on the planet; and on

a personal level may enhance our lives. I base this belief on my own academic searchings and inquiries as well as personal experiences and resulting personal growths and openings. Life enhancement can not be measured other than by an individual's own standards of what makes his or her life "good" or valuable. Opening people to the earth and her energies will enhance their lives on a wholistic level--physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Concern over the state of the environment and the Earth is certainly not a new concept. Many disciplines address the physical state of the planet in a variety of segments, from the study of botany, zoology, meteorology, geology, geography, environmental health, oceanography, and more. Individuals in the various sciences have been concerned with pollutions in the atmosphere, pollutions in the water, pollutions on and in the earth. The ambitious reader can find articles in science journals, magazines and books concerning the effects of acid rain on the environment, pollution in the upper ozone layer of the earth, chemical and nuclear poisoning in the atmosphere, deforestation and the resulting effects on the climate, oceans and lands, etc. Unfortunately, these sciences do not integrate with other sciences to look at the whole and the effects each segmented part has on the whole.

One science has incorporated the whole--quantum physics. With the initial theory of Albert Einstein that all matter is

energy ($E=mc^2$), and the expanded assertion of David Bohm and J.S. Bell, quantum mechanics integrates all parts into a whole. In 1964, J.S. Bell, a physicist at the European Organization of Nuclear Research in Switzerland, published mathematical evidence linking all matter together. Refined within the next ten years, this proof became known as Bell's theorem. This mathematical construct implies "that at a deep and fundamental level, the 'separate parts' of the universe are connected in an intimate and immediate way" (Zukav, 1979, p. 282).

Similarly, David Bohm, Professor of Physics at Birkbeck College, University of London, developed a compatible theory asserting "that the most fundamental level (of the universe) is an unbroken wholeness which is 'that-which-is.' All things, including space, time and matter are forms of that-which-is. There is an order which is enfolded into the very process of the universe, but that enfolded order may not be readily apparent" (Zukav, 1979, p. 309).

Connected with this core of quantum physics is the assertion that on the sub-atomic particle level, all that "is" is on a level of probability rather than absolute. Thus, superseding Newtonian physics where events are predictable and absolute quantum theory events are probable, always open to change because everything being connected has an influence, or possible influence on the outcome--including the observer.⁵

In attempting to share the importance of Earth-Self

interconnections and the values of these awarenesses, I have, both academically and experientially, explored a people who are already very earth centered--the American Indian. Evident through their philosophies, attitudes and lifestyles, Native Americans are an earth-centered, earth-connected people who have learned to utilize their inter-connectedness to enrich their lives as well as the Earth Mother. These evidences will be explored in this thesis. Included will be ways all peoples can intergrate earth awareness and energies into their own lives and lifestyles for the enrichment of the self and the planet.

Although they are most likely unaware of their "hard science" connection, Native American peoples were, and are for those still traditionally oriented, philosophically and attitudinally following and living their lives within the knowledge and realm of the quantum theory.

Native Americans, although semantically unaware, are living the practical application of the philosophy of the quantum theory that all energy is interconnected, and that all events are influenced by all other events. Thus the Native American philosophy that what is reflected out will be mirrored back could be called a "pre-quantum insight." Every act, feeling thought, etc. reflected out will be interconnected with all else and mirrored back. According to quantum physics, this is highly probable. In relation to Earth-Self concepts, this is significant in that we have direct influence on our environment;

at the same time, our environment has direct influence on us.

The Search For Wholistic Connections

Upon conducting a literature search, I have found no better practical life philosophy that deals directly with the experiential application of Earth-Self interconnections through awareness of this "quantum realm of possibility" other than the Native American.

In conducting an ERIC search very little was found that connected the Earth and Self wholistically and circularly. Much has been written segmenting different aspects of the Earth and the Self, but little connects each segment into an integrated whole. A search was conducted through inquiries of the environment, the individual, wholistic approaches to the environment and the self, environment and education, and Native American philosophies and wholistic approaches and the environment. In reviewing the literature, very little was connected as a whole--rather individual pieces were treated as specific parts--all encompassing within themselves rather than incorporated into the collective continuum.

As example, in relating education, environment and the individual, information focuses on the physical or psychological segments of an individual or specific group (e.g. elementary students, high school students, female college students, etc.) with relationship to a specific environment and the study of

that individual/group and the resulting relationship to that specific environment. However, the interconnection of these three segments are not wholly presented--the interdependency is not intergrated (Borden, 1985; Park, 1984; Miles, 1982; Gitterman & Germain, 1981).

Environmental education is presented primarily for the student to learn about the planet rather than as an exploration into an integral part of the whole with which to connect (Gitterman & Germain, 1981; Myers, 1983). ERIC searchings resulted in much on energy conservation (Koballa, 1984; Busch-Rossnagel & Weigel, 1984) but nothing connected with earth energy conservation as significant to the Earth-Self interrelationship and interdependency.

Searching for holistic (wholistic) education and environmental connections revealed a focus on the health of the individual with relationship to the immediate environment--generally implying the work setting or the home setting. Health or illness was not connected directly with the planetary environment but rather with the individual's focused environment (Stefan & Brucklacher, 1984; Gross, 1980).

In the searchings when an individual was exposed to the environment for the purpose of learning a particular discipline, it was with the purpose of intergrating and realizing that discipline's connection/intergration with the whole. Rather, the environment was presented as a stage in which to present the

performance (the discipline), whether it be through the arts (Levy, 1980) or through human resource training (Lemons, 1985). There was not the interconnection with the planet and the disciplines--each was viewed and treated separately...independently.

There appears to be an acknowledgement of the Earth, from a distance. The Earth is the auditorium from where we watch our "play" of life. Unfortunately for many, the Earth remains as just the environment that houses the great acts as opposed to part of the "play" itself. We as the audience fail to realize the play can be brought down into the audience to become an integral part of that environment. As in quantum physics, the very fact that we sit in this planetary auditorium has an effect on the "play" in progress.

Christine Foster Myers in her 1983 doctoral dissertation A Personal Inquiry, Through Currere, into the Person/Earth Relationship, Using the Hermeneutic Spiral as Model, speaks of the person/earth relationship and the potential effects of the environment on the individual. However, Myers focuses on the individual on the planet, in the environment rather than with the environment. Within her paper she quotes various environmental transcendentalists such as Emerson (1971), Thoreau (1974), and Dillard (1974). These authors also write of Nature as something for man to enjoy rather than an equal part of an intergrated whole. These writers, great authors in their own

circles, did not complete the continuum of life connecting with All Life, wholistically.

They tend to stand above the environment and enjoy it from a distance rather than connect wholistically as an intergrated segment of the whole. Nature is viewed as a growth tool for man rather than a peer.

On one level, there exists, at the least an opening to the environment through energy conservation, outdoor recreation, ecological education, etc. This can be viewed as an initial awareness/opening to the environment. However, the level of connection to the Earth as an equal has not been attained. Without this opening on this "equal" level, there is no interconnection or interdependency. Without this interconnection, there is no true understanding of the continuum of life.

Michael J. Cohen is one of the few authors found through the searches who connects the Earth and Self as an integrated whole, for the betterment of both. One of his books, Prejudice Against Nature, speaks of an imbalancing at present with both man and the planet. Cohen concentrates on what man "needs" to do to become both aware of our state of imbalance and open to changes for planetary continence. Although Cohen does connect planet and individual, his primary focus is on planetary conservation for survival of man and Earth. He fails to incorporate the many untapped energies available for use within

the planet and beyond.

These searchings led me back to the Native American and their Earth connection. Unfortunately, what ERIC presents for the most part is Native American language, Native American historical culture, Native American education (in terms of how to educate the Native American peoples), and Native literature. There is a small section, however, connecting Native American culture and the environment. These pieces focus on the Native American connection with the Earth and the growth/life process for the Native peoples with relationship to the planet (Marashio, 1982; Castillo, 1982). These articles present a clear Native/Earth connection, but there are no implications for similiar connections for non-Natives.

Native Americans and Wholistic Education

Through the understanding of Native philosophies concerning Earth-Self interrelationships, the possibility of expanded awareness and resulting abilities for non-Native's seems highly possible. It is not so much the day to day practiced tradition, but rather the generic philosophical awareness of the Mother Earth and the Self and all other spirits that is important for growth.

I chose to study and integrate philosophies of the Native American because they are a people who have been traditionally connected to the earth. They also are a people who have slowly

incorporated modern changes in their lives along with traditionally maintaining a strong interconnection with the Earth Mother.

As with any large group of people, there are exceptions to the "rule." Some Native peoples have chosen to abandon their traditional philosophies. The "why" can be assumed to be a myriad of reasons as to why anyone decides to change philosophies or lifestyles. For those individuals, that way of life did not suit their needs at that time. For whatever reason a different lifestyle was preferred. This is not the issue in this paper. The issue is the exploration of the Earth-Self relationship and the resulting possibilities of wholism. For those Natives who have incorporated traditional values with modern values, they have been able to socially flow into a world that is continually moving and changing. It is important that the "now" of this world not be ignored, but rather incorporated from past knowledges to bring the best of two worlds together.

These people are living within the modern world with modern conveniences. However, they are also living traditionally with the understanding of their continued caretakers job with the planet. They are living with the understanding and awareness of their impact on every spirit. They are living with the knowledge from their grandfathers on how to be whole, integrated beings with the planet.

This writer is also aware that not all Native Americans

living a traditional life by modern standards, would be considered wholistically well.⁶ Again, this is not the issue. I am aware of Indian reservations where poverty and illness and poor education abound. However, without a sociological study, an economic study, an anthropological study, one can only theorize about the reasons for this apparent unwellness, compared to the "wellness" that comes from the philosophy of Earth-Self interconnections that other Native Americans feel. Economically, socially, politically, and geographically these people have been grouped on specified parcels of land, in essence isolated on a land island; and for whatever reasons, are unable to remain self-sufficient. These characteristics are not indicative of just the Native American but can be seen in many other groups of people who have been isolated because of poverty, poor education, economics, socio-political parameters, etc.--as example the people in the Appalachian Mountains, and the people in the slums of the major cities. The influence of their life philosophies, religious and social beliefs, on their economic, political, and educational status can only be determined by in-depth socio-economic studies--which again are not the issues of this paper.

Just as one might question those Native Americans who are moving away from their traditional concepts, one might also note the vast numbers of Native Americans who are returning to their traditional belief systems and incorporating them into their

daily modern lives. This is evident by the number of tribes, interracial tribes, appearing throughout the United States. On both a formal and informal level, groups of people are forming and incorporating traditional and modern philosophies together for the betterment of the earth and the individual. Also, many of the basic philosophies of wholistic interconnection are individually incorporated into philosophies, such as healing and meditation, farming, etc. The ambitious reader/researcher can find listings of groups through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Public Affairs, 18th and C Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20245.

The reader is not asked to "buy into" the Native American philosophy on life, but rather open to the possibility of the interconnectedness of the separate parts as a whole. As with quantum physics, open to the realm of probability, rather than predicted absolutes. The Native American is used as an example because they are a people who, for centuries have been following this insight of interconnectedness and have learned to live well with the earth, while the earth has thrived with their care. It is a process of respecting all energy/matter/life. The "how" each one of us chooses to do this within our own philosophical frame is not as important as the intital process of just opening to the concept.

It should be noted that other Earth-centered people exist in Africa, Asia, the Orient, India--basically in every continent

on this planet. Specifically these people have not been studied because of lack of material centering specifically on historical philosophical attitudes and lifestyles. Also, as the majority of Native Americans are changing, at varying paces, with the changes in the modern world, they appear to be a people who are still very aware of their Earth responsibilities while still incorporating and integrating modern technologies into their lives. Many other Earth-centered peoples have been pulled too rapidly from a traditionally known and understood lifestyle into the modern world and an unknown environment because of political changes. The result, and what we primarily see of earth people in Africa and Asia are a nation of starving, uneducated (by modern standards) peoples--not a very convincing tribute to their earth-connectedness. However, they have been pulled from one lifestyle they are familiar with and thrown into a "foreign" environment without the knowledge or awareness of how to deal with it. Although not all Native Americans have made the transition of traditional to modern while maintaining their traditional philosophical viewpoint, on an overall scale they are a people who have made changes while integrating both worlds.

The Significance of Earth-Self Connections

The reasons why this is important enough to share in an academic paper are based on a personal sense of wholism and

responsibility. If every person can open, to whatever level is right for them at the time, to the Earth-Self inter-connection, we all (the earth and all her creatures) have a greater chance of survival in an enhanced wholistic sense. Do we not all strive for the optimum in our lives? This earth connection and balance, I believe, is part of the path to wholism.

The reader is asked to approach this paper wholistically-- to include a cognitive approach with the intuitive. In discovering, rediscovering Earth-Self interconnections, there can be no other way. For, although there is factual data presented about earth energies and their utilization, many of the "reasons" for these facts are "unknown" in the cognitive world.

Life is an integrated whole, made up of a physical self, emotional self, cognitive self, and spiritual self. In looking at the Earth-Self relationship, the process is wholistic as opposed to segmented pieces.

The adult learner in an educational setting is actively opening to the learning/growing process. If that learner is presented materials, on many different levels and experiences, that connect the interrelatedness of the Earth and the Self, will not that learner assimilate and integrate a portion of that material to fit their needs and understandings at that time? Once the spirit has cracked that door to the world of Earth-Self interconnections, it is the beginning to the first step through

the door and many more awarenesses of both the Self and the Earth Mother. The more we as a people become aware of ourselves, individually and then collectively, the more we will then be aware of our interdependence on our environment and the effects we have on it. The more we become aware of our impact on our environment, the more we become aware of the impact on one another and our selves. It is a circular, on-going, never-ending process of opening to an awareness that brings us to an understanding, that brings us to another growth level, and then another opening and understanding and growing, etc..... We become self-aware, earth-aware, universally-aware. Are not the implications for growth on many different levels infinite--for both the self and the planet? And what better place to start then with the adult learner who is actively seeking growth. Earth-Self awareness can be gained on many different levels and in many different ways. Some of the possible ways will be explored in this paper, with implications for the adult facilitator to incorporate creative "connections" into almost any field. Rather than just bringing the world into the classroom, bring the classroom into the world so students discover what exists beyond the plaster parameters. We do not have just a responsibility to mankind, we have a responsibility to this planet and all life on and in her. Within this modern day setting is it not time we "returned to basics," to the caretakers job we so responsibly and respectfully took so many

years ago? Would we not prosper from this care?

If we think of the totality as constituted of independent fragments then that is how (our minds) will tend to operate, but if (we) can include everything coherently and harmoniously in one overall whole that is undivided, unbroken . . . then (our minds) will tend to move in a similar way, and from this flow an orderly action within the whole (Bohm, 1980, p. xiii).

Chapter 2

Native American Philosophies with Earth-Self Relationships

Archaeologists and anthropologists have provided us with strong evidence that man has, in past history, been very Earth connected--relying upon the interdependency with the planet for existence. However, anthropologically, there is little evidence indicating man, as a people, acknowledged, on a conscious level, the Earth as a giver of life--as an equal. Rather, for the majority of ancient peoples, the Earth was an environment in which to live and survive off from, but there was little conscious acknowledgement and understanding of the great sharing and giving and interdependency that was occurring during this process of Earth-Self connection. The Earth connections were made for survival but not for conscious growth and learning.

The exception to this conscious understanding of Earth-Self interconnections historically can be found in the Native American peoples. They not only lived, and some still live traditionally, with the conscious knowledge of the great interconnectedness of life, but they openly gave tribute to that conscious knowledge on a daily basis. On a conscious level, Native peoples philosophically lived and live the Earth-Self interconnection, consciously attempting to always be aware of the interconnection and interdependency of all life and incorporating this knowledge into every aspect of their daily

life.

Because of this conscious level of understanding the Earth-Self significance in relation to the interdependency and interconnectedness of all life, the Native American is used as an example of a people whose philosophy has served them to remain open to many different levels of awarenesses and growths concerning the Earth and the Self.

The following information is provided to open the reader to the various means of Earth connections the Native American has opened to on a philosophical, as well as tangible level. The presentation is not for the purpose of swaying the reader toward a particular philosophy. Rather, the purpose in presenting the Native American philosophy of Earth-Self interconnections is for the understanding of the potentials available as a result of conscious acknowledgement and practical application of this interconnection and interdependency of life. Each reader must find his or her own level of conscious acknowledgement that is acceptable to one's own philosophical base. The presentation of the Native American philosophy is offered for the purpose of examining a conscious awareness of a people that worked within a realm that was and is wholistically rooted in the Earth-Self interconnection.

The Great Circle of Life

Whether Hopi, Cheyenne, Sioux, Dakotah, Seneca or Crow, the

Native American Indian has always been a very earth-centered people. They view all life, all parts of this planet as being inter-related and inter-dependent.

Rules for living were passed on by the elders of Native American tribal groups through out the Americas. They affirmed that all the manifestations and forces of creation are interdependent with one another in an integrated whole. There was a recognition of life as power, as a mysterious, ubiquitous, concentrated form of non-material energy, of something loose about the world and contained in a more or less condensed degree by every object. Native American beliefs emphasized pragmatic knowledge with which to live in harmony and balance with this 'non-material energy' and with the great mystery underlying it all. Vital to this process was the relationship to the land they lived on. For Native people there was no concept of ownership or possession of land. They believed their role was caretaker: they were to live on Turtle Island (name given, by Native people, to the United States) with love, respect, and appreciation for her generous gifts without which they could not survive. This perception of their role as caretakers produced behavioral patterns congruent with this belief. They were to care for their 'Mother', who in turn was the bearer of life itself. There was no word for religion; there was simply living out their beliefs in their daily lives. A primary dynamic of their caring role was reciprocal interaction with the land and all her creatures. Reciprocity was sacred because it maintained the balance between giving and taking, the 'good medicine' responsible for health and well-being. Failure to act within the dictates of reciprocity could lead to illness, misfortune, and even death (Pinkson, 1985, p. 54-55).

These "Rules for Living" were integrated into every aspect of their daily life--from hunting and gathering foods, ceremonial procedures, planting crops, cutting poles for the lodge, to crafting items or making tools. The Native felt a part of the great circle of life energy. All actions, feelings, thoughts reflected out, were mirrored back. The individual

directly affected their environment and all that was in it, as did that environment then reflect back everything which affected them.

The interrelationship of this "great circle of life" was, and is often symbolized tangibly as a reminder of the interconnection of one life energy force with another. The concept of a circle is symbolic of on-going, never-ending life and energy. Respect for this continuum, this on-going process was/is tangibly represented. When homes were built they were most often in a circular shape (called lodges or tipis). When Natives wholistically purify their bodies and minds, they do so in the circle of the sweat bath, a cleansing lodge which represents the womb of the human mother from whom they came, and the womb of the Earth Mother, who sustained them throughout their lives. When Indians come together in council, they sit in a circle, so that everyone is included, as an equal with an equal voice. Music is made on a round drum. Dancing is done in a circle. The beat of the drum represents the beat of their hearts and the beat of the Earth Mother. Arms are raised toward the heavens and then placed upon the earth, creating a circle that extends from the earth to the sky and back to the earth, with their bodies as transmitters. Native Americans view the spark of life as a circle, from birth to death to "rebirth" after death.

They knew how to acknowledge and celebrate the circles of their own lives so that they were able to flow and change with the changing energies that came with different ages. They knew that they, like the seasons, passed through several phases as the circle of life and time passed around them. They knew that to fall out of this circle was to fall out of rhythm with life and to cease to grow (Bear and Wabun, 1980, p. 5).

The circle of life is the medicine wheel.⁷ Each tribe within the Indian Nation had, and has today for those traditionalists, a medicine wheel for the tribe as well as for each individual in that tribe. The belief is that, as life is circular, as we enter life we come in at a particular point or place on that circle. Each individual circle of life or medicine wheel is interconnected to each other spirit's wheel. Individual and group medicine wheels are connected to the Earth's medicine wheels, which include the seasonal circles, the directional circles and the elemental circles (fire, water, earth and air). Thus, as we enter a wheel, we are connected to the earth as well as other spirits. Where we enter the circle then purportedly determines some of our characteristics because we are interconnected with the Earth's medicine wheels, we also come into this world with characteristics from those wheels at the point we enter. As an example, seasons are circular--winter flows into spring, which flows into summer, which flows into fall, which flows into winter and the circle begins again. Directions are circular--north flows into east, which flows into south, which flows into west, which flows into north and the

circle begins again. Fire, water, earth and air all lead into one another and begin the circle again. When an individual is born, they are born into a seasonal time of year, a direction, and an element that all mold and incorporate into the individual's characteristics and personality traits. For the individual to reach a balanced and whole state in their own circle of life--childhood, youth, adulthood and old age--no matter where they entered that circle of life they must travel its circumference to understand and incorporate all of the different circles' "good medicine" traits.

To further the concept of wholistic interconnections, Native peoples believe each animal and plant and mineral on the Earth have places on the circle or medicine wheel. Each is influenced by all other Earth wheels. When a person enters a particular point they purportedly also take on the characteristics of a particular animal, plant and mineral. Again, to be balanced and harmonize with the life circle, the individual must travel the wheel and understand all the animals, plants and minerals and their respective interrelatedness. The Medicine Wheel is a concept of whole life touching all life. The individual reflects parts of the wheel as the wheel reflects parts of them. Through awarenesses of these reflections, they see the good and the bad and are able to grow and move forward on the Great Wheel.

It was essential for people in the old days to live their

lives in such a way that they would continuously be journeying around the wheel. This is equally essential now. To stay with only one moon, one totem (animal connection), one element, one direction, is to be static. To become static is to cease to grow, to cease to know that one has a connection with all of the wheel. It is tantamount to stopping the flow of the life force through your being. As you pass around the wheel, you have the responsibility of learning about the different connections through which you pass. By this learning you keep your own life in constant change, you keep the life force beating within your heart (Bear and Wabun, 1980, p. 6).

The Medicine Wheel is round like a mirror, reflecting out all that was and is reflected in. Because all circles are connected, interconnected, the wheels reflect on forever, as does one mirror facing another mirror.

The Universe is the Mirror of the People, the old teachers tell us. And each person is a Mirror to every other person. Any idea, person or object can be a Medicine Wheel, a Mirror, for man. The tiniest flower can be such a Mirror, as can a wolf, a story, a touch, a religion or a mountain top. For example, one person alone on a mountain top at night might feel fear. Another might feel calm and peaceful. Still another might feel lonely, and a fourth person might feel nothing at all. In each case the mountain top would be the same, but it would be perceived differently as it reflected the feelings of the different people who experienced it.

The Teachers usually constructed it (the Medicine Wheel) from small stones and pebbles, which they would place before them on the ground. Each one of the tiny stones within the Medicine Wheel represents one of the many things of the Universe. One of them represents you, and another represents me. Others hold within them our mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, and our friends. Still others symbolize hawks, buffalo, elks, wolves. There are also stones which represent religions, governments, philosophies, and even entire nations. All things are contained within the Medicine Wheel, and all things are equal within it. The Medicine Wheel is the Total Universe (Storm, 1972, p. 5).

The great leaders and teachers (medicine men⁸) of Native

people feel that all things within this Universal Medicine Wheel know of their harmony with every other thing. They believe all things of the universe have spirit and life, including the rivers, rocks, earth, sky, plants and animals. However, of all the spirits, man is the only one who needs to learn of the inter-connected harmony. All other spirits know of and live this harmony.

Learning on a Continuum

Man must go through a learning process, which, for the Native American begins at birth and continues throughout the life on this earth plane. When one loses sight of that harmony, one becomes unbalanced. When the individual becomes unbalanced, it is reflected in the great mirror wheel, reflecting out this imbalance to all other life forces. Thus, it is very important that the individual begin the learning and understanding process of all life interconnection at the earliest age.

Native children learned and still learn of spirit and life forces in all of the universe wheel through stories. Stories are used among the Native people, young and old, far more than for entertainment. They are a way of understanding among people in a tribe as well as between different peoples. Because there is no written language, stories are memorized and passed down from generation to generation to pass on the wisdoms of the ages and the aged.

Stories are about both animals and people. Every story can be symbolically unfolded for each individual for they are almost entirely allegorical in form with almost everything in them being symbolic (Storm, 1973, p. 10). As all things are connected and reflected, the symbology within the stories is unfolded by each individual by where they are on the Great Universal Medicine Wheel. People learn by way of their own Medicine Wheels, reflections and seekings at that time of the telling of that story. The understandings and meanings could change for an individual as they travel their own Medicine Wheel and gain new understandings and perceptions of life and its interconnections with all life. Through their own perceptions as well as through the eyes of their "brothers and sisters," new insights can be gained.

As are stories, ceremonies were and are another means of Earth-Self connection introduced to the Native American child at an early age. Children observe and actively participate in ceremonies that welcome the different seasons; that speak to the different earth elements (especially the sun and the rain⁹); that call to the different animals in times of hunts; that speak to the different spirits in times of planting and harvesting; that protect and sustain life; and more. Ceremonies are a means for the Native to give celebration as well as thanks for the gifts from the earth, as well as a means to ask for gifts from the earth to fulfill basic life needs. Ceremonies are a time of

rejoicing and of showing respect for all the brothers and sisters and their interrelationships to man and the Earth Mother.

There are also individual "ceremonies" performed which serve as appreciations and blessings for the daily "gifts" the Native American receives. Before and after a hunt Native people give many prayers of thanks for the "Great Give-Away" of the animal's flesh for their survival. When herbs and plants are collected for food and medicines, prayers are offered in thanks for the give-away of that plant life for the survival and wellness of human life. "Good medicine" is the spirit of the giver and receiver in this circular continuum of life give-aways. The Native child learns from example, from active participation and from respect of the elders.

Children learn to respect adults, not out of fear, but out of love. They learn that adults, especially the elders of a tribe, hold great strengths in their knowledge and experience from the years and their passage through the seasons of life. Because Native peoples feel they are all connected, all older adults are the grandmothers and grandfathers of those younger. There is a wealth of love and energy and knowledge for all the people of the tribe to tap into for learning.

The Lakota was a true Naturist--a lover of nature. He loved the earth and all things of the earth, the attachment growing with age. The old people came literally to love the soil and they sat or reclined on the ground with a feeling of being close to a mothering power. It was good

for the skin to touch the earth and the old people liked to remove their moccasins and walk with bare feet on the sacred earth. The birds that flew in the air came to rest upon the earth and it was the final abiding place of all things that lived and grew. The soil was soothing, strengthening, cleansing and healing.

That is why the old Indian still sits upon the earth instead of propping himself up and away from its life-giving forces. For him, to sit or lie upon the ground is to be able to think more deeply and to feel more keenly; he can see more clearly into the mysteries of life and come closer in kinship to other lives about him

Kinship with all creatures of the earth, sky and water was a real and active principle. For the animal and bird world there existed a brotherly feeling that kept the Lakota safe among them and so close did some of the Lakotas come to their feathered and furred friends that in true brotherhood they spoke a common tongue.

The old Lakota was wise. He knew that man's heart away from nature becomes hard; he knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to lack of respect for humans too. So he kept his youth close to its softening influence (Chief Luther Standing Bear from McLuhan, 1971, p. 6).

As children reach their teens, both boys and girls participate in a Vision Quest or perceiving quest. A vision quest consists of a solo quest, with much spiritual support from older guides in the tribe, of an individual into a remote and private place in nature. The questor, after undergoing many preparations and cleansing ceremonies for the body and spirit, opens to other universal energies for strength and "vision" or perception of the life path to be traveled within the Universal Medicine Wheel. The "crying for a vision" takes three to five days in isolation in a sacred place. Through prayers of understanding of the oneness of self and earth, the questor is able to open to other energies for directions for that self

while on the earth. The process is completed with no material "comforts." The individual seeks his or her vision on the equal level with the Earth Mother and her other creatures.

Upon the completion of the quest, the individual relates the experiences felt during the quest with the guides. The guides, often leaders or medicine people (see Footnote 8) of the tribe, help the questor to interpret these experiences with relationship to the life path and the Earth connection. Because the Native peoples' philosophy is that what is reflected out is reflected back, the questor's perceptions, feelings and thoughts of and during the quest are symbolic of the path and growth process to come.

Vision quests are not limited to youth passing on to another growth level. Often quests are taken at different times in an individual's life to find the new path to be traveled during the journey around the Medicine Wheel of Life.

Beyond just the crying for a vision in the quest, the American Indian believes strongly in individual visions and dreams as sources of guides for daily and future living. These visions are the sources of every person's medicine power.

'I really believe the power of American Indian medicine comes from an attitude of acceptance,' Don Wilkerson, Director of the Arizona Indian Centers in Phoenix told me.

'The traditional Indian people understand that there is both good and evil and that these things can be influenced by our actions. If you develop an attitude of acceptance toward the unknown, you can make things happen. The Indian is not hung up with controlling nature, but he knows that he can guide it. And if he learns to understand

it, he knows that he can live with nature and have it nurture him' (Steiger, 1984, p. 23).

Medicine Power

Every person, every plant and animal, every object has its own medicine power. The "power" is the energy within and around that object that fuses and connects with all other energies upon this earth.¹⁰

Rarihokwats, Mohawk, editor of Akwasasne Notes: '. . . the Power is the power of creation. Whatever that power is, it causes the grass to grow, the earth to rotate, and all the things that happen in all of creation. This is a tremendous power. It is the power to create life. And the more that Indian people or other people become acquainted with that power, the more they are able to internalize and utilize and flow with that power. It is the recognition that we are part of nature and everything is part of one whole. And the whole is contained in each part. It has to have both of those aspects' (Steiger, 1984, p. 19).

To remain in contact with personal power, Native people spent and do spend much time in "prayer" or contemplation/meditation. Direct "council" from higher energies is often sought and the solutions found in allegorical visions and dreams. The dreamer, or seeker of vision, finds understanding in those visions and follows the path indicated within the insights.

At the same time, through prayer or mental/intuitive connections with higher energies Natives ask for assistance in daily tasks and life processes, from growing corn, to requesting rain, to finding the right medicine for the cure of illness. As an example, best noted is the rain dance that Natives

participate in--calling to the Thunder Beings for their help in nourishing the Earth Mother and helping to sustain the peoples' lives. To this day, documented evidence (or phenomenally high coincidence?) can be found in the practice of and resulting rain produced from this ceremony^(see Footnote 9) (Bear, Wabun & Weinstock, 1983, p. 223-226; Steiger, 1984, p. 20-24).

As noted by Sun Bear,¹¹ Chippewa medicine man, 'Some people would think of these things as magic. We think of them as simply using forces that have been here for all time for our benefit or our needs. Magic is not 'magic' if you understand it. It is something that works. It is when you will something into existence because you have a need of it' (Steiger, 1984, p. 19).

Another means of strengthening and opening the interconnections between the Earth Mother and self is through song and music. Native Americans believe all life forces have a particular frequency or rhythm¹²--it is the pulse of that energy force. It is the combination of the heart beat, in those spirits containing physical hearts, and the ebb and flow of molecular movement which causes the rhythm. Each frequency connects with every other frequency to harmonize in the orchestra of life. Some rhythms harmonize more readily with other frequencies, just as some movements are in discord with others. However, even the discorded rhythms blend with the whole to produce the sounds of the Great Medicine Wheel. As a form of communication with the other energy planes, the Native American Indian uses his or her own voice, body movements and the beat of the drum to attune to and with the "cosmic

vibrations." This is a form of personal medicine power, one's personal rhythm. If one did not sing or dance or attune to the frequencies around the self, then one could not hear the Earth Mother calling.

Hartley Burr Alexander states the following in regard to the importance of the song in Native American medicine power (The World's Rim):

'One cannot too strongly emphasize the fact that for the red man the discourse of song is in itself a magical, or indeed a spiritual thing. His music is his most certain means of impressing his sense of need upon the Powers, and of bringing them into communion with himself. His singing is not at all primarily for his companions in the world of men, but for the spirit beings that envelop the human realm. Ceremonies are of greater efficacy if the songs are repeated at greater length. . . ' (Steiger, 1984, p. 25-26).

American Indians come together in dance and song to rejoice and revere the life and give-aways about them.¹³ The rhythmic beat of the drum and flowing sounds of chants move them to a state not unlike an alpha consciousness. In this level of perception visions and understandings come more easily and the interconnections with the environment are felt more strongly.

Personal songs are also a large part of personal prayers. These songs directly connect the individual's rhythms with those of another energy plane. The voice and dance steps become one instrument tuning to the rest of life's symphony to harmonize and blend into, and add to, a whole sound and movement.

From Berkeley Holistic Health Center (1978, p. 64):

All of my life is a dance.
When I was young and feeling the earth
My steps were quick and easy
The beat of the earth was so loud

That my drum was silent beside it.
 All of my life rolled out from my feet
 Like my land which had no end as far as I could
 see.

The rhythm of my life was pure and free.
 As I grew older my feet kept dancing so hard
 That I wore a spot in the earth
 At the same time I made a hole in the sky.
 I danced to the sun and the rain
 And the moon lifted me up
 So that I could dance to the stars.
 My head touched the clouds sometimes
 And my feet danced deep in the earth
 So that I became the music I danced to
 everywhere.

It was the music of life.
 Now my steps are slow and hard
 And my body fails my spirit.
 Yet my dance is still within me and
 My song is the air I breathe.
 My song insists that I keep dancing forever.
 My song insists that I keep rhythm
 With all of the earth and the sky.
 My song insists that I will never die.

(From Nancy Wood, Many Winters (Doubleday, 1974, p.
 29)

Prayer, visions, ceremonies, song and dance--all are ways
 the Native American communicates with the Great Circle of Life,
 the Great Universal Medicine Wheel, the Great Spirit. With much
 reverence for the universal energies, the Native American
 understands the circular existence of all life and the
 interdependence all spirits have with one another. They show
 appreciation for all the life around them, and they ask for
 assistance, when needed, in sustaining their own lives. All of
 this is a part of the whole--a part of the continuum.

Giving and sharing is an integral part of the Medicine
 Wheel. Clans and tribes of Indians work communally with one

another. All men are brothers to other men and women, all women are sisters to all other women and men. The elders of a tribe are the grandparents of all the tribes' people. Children are protected and loved by all members of the tribe. When hunting, meat is shared by all not just by the man or woman who made the kill. Crops are shared by all, as are they sowed, cultivated and harvested by all. The lifestyle and beliefs are indicative of the philosophy of interconnections with all.

Any act of giving is done with spirit first and the material object second. In giving one finds a greater connection with Wakan Takan, or the Greater Spirit. To make an effort and present a part of the self or an object valued by the self is called a give-away. The greatest give-away is a life. When an animal gives its life for the sustenance of another spirit it is called the Great Give-Away. Hunters respect this Great Give-Away and offer many prayers both before the hunt and following the give-away. It is part of the circle of life.

When a couple marries, it is not they who receive gifts but rather they who are the givers. They give gifts to all members of the family in celebration and sharing of their deep love and respect for one another in hopes this love will be shared by other people. Their joy is being shared on a material plane with all those who rejoiced with them spiritually. Give-aways are unconditional sharing of love and reverence.

On the physical plane there is a great understanding of

wellness in a wholistic sense. (see Footnote 6) People understand their entire being is influenced by all that comes in contact with it. Therefore, there is an understanding of the mind, body, spirit and emotion being intrinsically interconnected. When a person is ill, that illness is treated on a wholistic level. Wounds are treated with medicines and herbs, as well as with prayers, laying on of hands, and directions from visions. (see Footnote 10) There is also a great care and energy directed toward preventative medicine and keeping the person well. This too, is done through ingesting herbs and medicines, prayers, ceremonies and dance to find balance as well as using the sacred pipe.

The Sacred Pipe is symbolic of the interconnections between Mother Earth and Father Sky, man and woman, spirit and flesh. The smoke from the pipe is the communication line between the tangible and ethereal.

The rock or stone from which the pipe bowl is made is very special. . . . It is a rock blessed by the Great Spirit with special beauty and special ease of carving, yet it is durable enough to last for many centuries. The circle of the bowl of the pipe becomes to the user the Circle of the Universe, the Circle of Earth and its Life, and the Circle of Mankind.

The stem of the pipe is usually made of cottonwood, not only because this wood is easy to bore, but, more importantly, because it is a wood that echoes the voice of the waters which are always near where this tree grows and where the Voice of the Great Spirit is heard when the wind whispers and murmurs in its leaves. The clear channel of the hole in the stem symbolizes the open hearts and minds we must have to let the spirit truly reach us.

Usually attached to the pipe in some way are the skin or teeth or bone of an animal and the feathers of a bird.

. . . (Brown, 1974, p. 106-107).

Often the animal skin came from the Buffalo and the feathers from the eagle.¹⁴ The buffalo represented to many Natives the symbol of the gift of food from the Great Spirit. It also represented all animal life. The buffalo comes from the direction of the north and represents wisdom that comes with the ages.

The eagle was most sacred because it flew and soared into the sky until it disappeared, "teaching human beings to fly in the same way with their spirits up and up into the everlasting sky of the Grandfather . . ." (Brown, 1974, 1976, p.107). The eagle comes from the direction of the east, a time of new beginnings and earth renewal. The eagle symbolizes the ability to see far and from a distance.

In filling the pipe, we have placed ourselves into the alter, the bowl, and as we light the pipe, we believe, we send out our prayers with the smoke into the universe. The smoke from the pipe is the breath of our prayers, as it drifts up from the bowl . . . and we believe that when we draw in through the stem, the smoke we take into our bodies is the breath of the Great Spirit. With the smoke--an ethereal substance which can penetrate between the realms of the physical and the spiritual--we send our prayers to the Creator. Those prayers, most of the time, are for unity, healing and for understanding (Bear, Wabun & Weinstock, 1983, p. 232-233).

Different herbs and grasses are used for the smoke because each plant purportedly has a different medicine power to help for different purposes of the pipe. Sage and sweet grass are often mixed with other herbs because they have medicine power to

cleanse an area and open it to good energies. Sacred Pipe ceremonies are practiced daily or more often by individuals and within groups as a means of connecting with higher energies.

Smoke and herbs are also used in a tradition called smudging, or the smoking of an area for purification and cleansing. Smudges are used before ceremonies to open communications with good energies; for cleansing lodges; for opening energies in the sweat ceremonies; for purifying individuals who feel their personal medicine wheels or auras need to be cleaned; or for any other reason where a need for purification is felt.

The Native American philosophy of life is a wholistic, circular, inter-connected, inter-dependent way of living with the Earth Mother and all of her children. It is the sharing of energies for benefit of the self and the whole. It is a process of understanding and spiritually believing in the unity of all life and then living that belief--every moment.

This has been the philosophy of Native Americans since their beginning in the Americas. This is still the philosophy of those traditional Native peoples who live the way of their ancestors. Their lives may be more tuned to the functioning of the modern world, but their spirits and beliefs are intricately connected with their beliefs in their medicine power and the interrelationship of all life and energy force. Their wholism is dependent upon their path around the medicine wheel to

receive their medicine power.

To be a recipient of medicine power, the practitioner must live his commitment every moment of every day. The practitioner must believe in the unity and co-operation of all forms of life, and he must cherish and value all of his little brothers and sisters (Steiger, 1974, p. 62).

Native Americans, both historically and those following traditional philosophies in modern society, understand and live the concept that all life is interconnected; that every action and thought reflected out is mirrored back. Life and all the processes within and around it, from conception to ending, are looked upon and lived with this knowledge in mind.

In direct line with this philosophy is the understanding of the interconnectedness and interdependency of man with the Earth. Native peoples live with the conceptual knowledge that they are directly connected with and interdependent on the Earth; in turn the planet is connected and interdependent upon them. By acknowledging this premise, both the individuals and the planet are balanced because there is a respect for the circular continuity of life. To respect the planet is to respect the self and visa versa.

As did Native Americans, anthropological studies indicate man generically, through his early development, lived interdependently with the planet--utilizing the energies and bounties available.¹⁵ For survival, it was to early man's advantage to care for the very garden that so bountifully cared for him. As man began to advance technologically, many changes

in living environments as well as attitudes occurred--some for the better and some for the detriment of the Earth, the Self or both.

Chapter 3

Earth-Self Interconnections--Then and Now

Historically--anthropologically--if we look at where we were and where we are now with relation to the planet Earth and our interconnectedness, we will find significant differences. Whether these differences are for the positive enhancement of the planet and the life on it can only be decided upon by each individual. Change is necessary because it is an indication of growth. All life changes constantly just by the fact it is living. However, as change takes place, there appears to be some benefit in examining the past as well as the present in modeling a better future.

The following is an exploration of the past and the present with indications of what the future may hold as a result of the changes in Earth-Self interconnections. Rapid change can cause imbalances, which if left unchecked can cause a domino effect of other imbalances. Not all changes are tangible, nor are they controllable. However, awareness of these changes in the present may help to establish a balance, which then establishes a foundation for a balance in the future. No one knows what the future may hold, but within the quantum theory of possibility, the very act of being connected, interconnected with all life, has an influence. This potential influence may possibly be channeled to provide the best results and the best balance.

Information is presented in a wholistic sense of where man was on an Earth-Self level of interconnectedness, and where we are presently on a wholistic continuum. The significance of this wholistic interconnection to the adult and adult education lies in the opening awareness for purposes of rebalancing, or maintaining a balance, while learning and growing and opening to many levels of potentials. By re-learning from our past interconnections, we can possibly rebalance with our present and open to the realm of potentials of personal and planetary growth on many different levels, both now and in the future.

The state of the physical level of the Earth is significant in the wholistic sense because it influences the other aspects of the balance of life. Because we are all interconnected to all life, the physical, mental, emotional or spiritual state of other life is significant to man. Equally, as is indicated by quantum physics, man's wholistic self--physical, emotional, mental and spiritual--influences the level of wellness of the planet. What is reflected out is reflected back.

Understanding levels of awareness and interconnections from man's early existence, as well as levels of awareness and interconnections now, provides a framework for the reasoning of reconnecting with the Earth on a wholistic level.

Some readers may find the in-depth material on the present physical state of the Earth already part of their existing level of knowledge. The purpose in presenting this material is for

the uninformed reader to understand the level of balance presently existing before elaborating on possible means of interconnecting or reconnecting with the Earth Mother.

Past Earth-Self Connections

Long before there was a United States there was Turtle Island. It was perceived as feminine by the diverse groups of indigenous people occupying her territory. These first inhabitants of Turtle Island treated her with respect, attuning their lives to the rhythms of her being. Daily interactions with the natural world were made sacred in appreciation of Turtle Island's gifts of food, shelter, clothing, medicine, and beauty (Pinkson, 1985, p. 54).

Hundreds of years ago in a "primitive" society (by today's standards) we were intricately and intrinsically connected to the earth and the environment around us. Our existence depended on our co-existence with the rest of life on a wholistic level, a level of harmony and balance of the physical, mental, psychic/spiritual. We, along with the rest of Mother Earth's children--animals, birds, plants, fish, insects, rocks, streams, mountains--were interdependent on one another. Our physical comforts came from the bodies of our co-existers. Food came from the animals and plants in a given territory. Clothing and some shelter materials and tools came from the hides, bones, wood and plant fiber of these fauna and flora. Other shelters were built from Mother Earth's natural resources--her forests and grasses, as well as her crevices and caves. We cured and doctored our physical and mental ills with natural remedies found from our

sibling spirits in the plant and animal kingdoms. We kept warm from the fires fueled by the natural animal and plant resources around us. We used "the Mother's bones"--stones--to start fires, to heat water, as tools, as weapons, as materials for our housing, as healing and communication mediums^(see Footnote 3) (Bear and Wabun, 1980, p. 13; Deaver, 1986, p. 6; Pfeiffer, Oct. 1986, p. 75-86; Steiger, 1984, p. 57-61).

Mentally and spiritually we co-existed by learning to read and understand, both on a logical and intuitive level, nature and earth signs. We understood the communication signs and sounds of animals so we might have food and clothing and safety. We were familiar with the seasonal changes and the effects these changes had on the planet, and all of the "children" inhabiting the lands and waters. We were familiar with weather changes and the resulting effects on our environment and adapted accordingly.^(see Footnote 15)

We attuned ourselves with the circular movement of life on every level. Because we understood the interrelationships with our environment, we learned to listen to all our brothers and sisters so we might live a good and balanced life. We listened to Brother wind when he told us of coming storms; we listened to the Thunder Beings when they promised rain for the parched earth; we listened to Sister mountain to know of rumblings deep in the earth. As a people, we learned to listen with our ears and with our intuitive self to the many sounds and energies around us. Our

senses were attuned to other energy levels so we might survive earthquakes, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions, storms, tidal waves, and other natural earth phenomena. We were not unlike the other creatures of the environment for we survived on the balanced union and sensitivity of the Earth-Self interdependence (see Footnote 15) (Pfeiffer, 1986, pp. 75-85).

We were the Earth Mother's caretakers, a responsibility we undertook humbly, seriously and with great reverence. We were instruments in the Medicine Wheel orchestra, harmonizing with the many voices of the Earth Mother (Waters, 1963).

He (man) was a member of an earthly family and tribal clan, and he was a citizen of the great universe, to which he owed a growing allegiance as his understanding developed.

The First People, then, understood the mystery of their parenthood. In their pristine wisdom they also understood their own structure and functions--the nature of man himself (Waters, 1963, p. 9).

Earth people were attuned to the intricate balance of their inter-dependent relationship with the planet. They did not waste and they did not pollute. All actions were done with respect and the knowledge that everything affected everything else, that what was reflected out was mirrored back. (see Footnote 5) We took only after we gave, on both a physical and spiritual level. Before another member of the Earth's family was sacrificed for our own survival, much prayer and thanks was given for the Great Give-Away.

Hunters never killed for "sport." Hunters thanked greater energies for the spirit and physical level of the animals they

hunted so that man might survive. Man respected this Great Give-Away by the animal--its death for man's continued life. In turn, man wasted nothing from this give-away. Meat was eaten, bones were used for tools and weapons, hides were used for clothing and shelters, entrails were used for sacks and threads.(see Footnote 15)

When plants were gathered for food, healing remedies or dyes, they were chosen with great respect and with great care to insure the continued growth of the species. Gathering was done with the knowledge that plants as living beings had spirit energies(see Footnote 12) as well. Thus, plants also contributed to the Great Give-Away and were respected for their sacrifice. When trees were cut for lodge poles or other housing shelters, they were chosen and cut ecologically and with reverence for their value and gift of life (Hill, 1979).

Our intuitive abilities were heightened to ensure both our survival and our growth spiritually. We looked with our inner eyes and listened with our inner ears and touched with our inner sense of feeling and knowing. Because people were aware of, and strongly believed in, the many energies available within and around the earth, they were able to "tap" into a source of strength and knowledge.(see Footnotes 3 and 4) This knowledge was always used for the good of all, both man and the environment. When the earth was drying up from lack of rain and the creatures were dying because of this drought, earth people purportedly knew

how to contact the Thunder Beings to bring much needed moisture (see Footnote 9) (Bear, Wabun & Weinstock, 1983, p. 223-226; Steiger, 1984, p. 20-24).

When an individual was out of balance from illness, the entire being was treated by a medicine person (see Footnote 8) to wholistically eliminate the disease. Herbs were used medicinally, prayers were used to spiritually tune to better energies, crystals were used to "see" the source of the illness (see Footnote 3) (Steiger, 1984, p. 58-59).

When natural earth changes were occurring, such as volcanic eruptions or earthquakes, we "felt" and "heard" it coming before it actually appeared because the earth told of the coming action to those who were listening. (see Footnote 10) The "knowing" would often come as a vision. Visions and dreams were major forms of communication lines between the etheric and the tangible.

We knew of impending danger by becoming sensitive to all energies, and the nature of those energies around us. (see Footnotes 3, 4, 10 and 12) We "felt" when a predator or enemy was near because we felt their presense in a very real physical level. We might even have perceived the danger in a vision (Bear, Wabun & Weinstock, 1963, p. 225-267). We found "power sources" (see Footnote 4) within the earth where we could utilize unseen, but intuitively felt, energies to help us heal, or communicate, or see futures¹⁶ (Bryant, 1983; Bord & Bord, 1976). These power centers were used to telepathically link distant peoples together for the

purpose of safety and survival.(see Footnote 4) We learned to communciate with animals so we might benefit from their knowledges of the earth and its ever changing environment (Storm, 1972).

Earth people were wholly interconnected and interdependent with the Earth Mother and her children. We were one with, as well as part of, the environment. We were caretakers and we co-existed in a balanced, and ever changing environment.

Harmonious cooperation with Nature requires the use of human feelings and intuitions, which includes learning the ability to sense the totality of the entire system, to think globally (Cohen, 1983, p. 31).

Earth peoples understood and accepted, as scientists are only beginning to understand now,¹⁷ that the earth was a living entity. As with all living entities, she went through constant changes and growths. The changes, in man's time reference, took hundreds to thousands of years. Many of the changes began with localized events, such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions or climatic changes. These were but announcements of more major changes such as continental splits and pole changes¹⁸ (Waters, 1963; Cohen, 1983; National Geographic Special (film), 1986). We learned to read and understand and intuitively feel these changes. As a result, we also learned to change and, more importantly, learned to live with this living planet. Climatic changes, long-term weather changes, terrestrial changes, plant and animal kingdom changes--all occurred to maintain a balance within a given environment during the natural earth changes.(see Footnote 18) We

along with the rest of earth's children were adaptable. Our adaptability and willingness to listen to these changes and to accept and understand our inter-dependent relationships with our fellow spirits meant, and perhaps ensured, our continued survival (Waters, 1963).

Changing Interconnections

As time passed and man and the earth grew and developed, people began to use their intuitive and adaptive knowledges of the planet to their advantage in easing physical stresses, leaving more time for the creative/intuitive energies to grow. Man found more efficient ways while still working with the balance of the environment, to feed, clothe and shelter himself.

We learned animal husbandry and agriculture from our vast understanding of these two kingdoms, providing a readied food and shelter supply close at hand. Through our understanding of animal and plant needs, as well as seasonal changes, we began to adapt our environment to suit our needs and desires rather than adapt ourselves to our environment. This created free "time" for further technical and artistic endeavors; as well as gave us more control over our lives and our existence (Pike, 1974; Waters, 1963).

Because the raising of animals and plants required a more permanent, as opposed to nomadic, existence within a given environment, we developed more permanent, climatically and

architecturally sturdy structures in which to live. Using the earth's resources of wood and stone and mud we built dwellings that could withstand extreme weather conditions while providing shelter from our enemies.

Crude tools and weapons developed into elaborate, job specific artifacts. Rock and skin bowls were replaced with pottery. Art and expressive decorations were more widely appearing as man created more free time for himself through the utilization of nature's knowledges. Man became a social creature. (see Footnote 15) Unfortunately, man also dimmed the sounds of the interconnected symphony with the earth (Waters, 1963; Pike, 1974).

A particularly strong example of this movement away from the Earth Mother by a very earth-centered people can be seen with the Anasazi Indians. These people were a nomadic tribe of American Indians existing before 100 A.D. They lived on and with the Earth Mother in an interdependent, benevolent level. Yet, in a few short centuries, they changed and "grew" so rapidly they literally vanished from the face of the planet without a trace of their departure, only their elaborate stone dwellings were left as monuments to what they had become.

The Anasazi went from a nomadic existence to a stationary existence in a mere 500 years. Within 200 years more, by the year 700 A.D. they were building elaborate masonry cliff dwellings in the southwestern part of Turtle Island. Agriculture and animal

husbandry were a way of life. New tools and weapons were developed. The Anasazi went from a people known as the Basket Makers to a people centered around pottery crafts. By 900 A.D. through 1100 A.D. these people moved into intricate levels of social living, including cliff dwellings that included sites with over 200 rooms and 23 kivas (religious sites) (Pike, 1974, p. 142). Cities became the normal form of existence with elaborate fields of corn and elaborate drainage ditches to sustain the growing plants.

Somewhere between 1100-1300 A.D. as the Anasazi settled into an affluent way of life, changes began to occur. Evidence of poorer craftsmanship in their dwellings and their kivas and strained relationships have been unearthed by archeologists (Pike, 1974, p.142-148). Rather than a sharing people, as they had been centuries earlier, they could no longer afford to share because of their strong reliance on their domestic means of food support. Because they were so permanently entrenched in their cliffs, they were unable to move easily to work with their environment. By 1300 A.D. the Anasazi, a people numbering over 7000, vanished.

What happened to this fast growing people of the earth? There are several speculations but no definite answers. What appears to have caused an extinction of a people was a combination of their lack of interconnection with the earth as well as strained relationships in a once harmonious community. Between

1276 and 1299, archeologists have strong evidence of a major drought that hit the Mesa Verde area where the Anasazi lived. Because these people were so reliant upon the earth in one small area to sustain a large number of people, it is assumed they were unable to "weather" the weather. Because they were in permanent dwellings, they were unable to easily move to a renewed earth area.

Also, during that time, bands of other peoples were raiding corn fields, already dramatically diminished in size from weather conditions. Because the Anasazi lived in cliffs with their crops at the top of the cliffs, they had no way to defend their fields while defending themselves.

Finally, it has been suggested that the arrival of "hard times" and the ensuing competition for diminished resources bred quarreling and strife among the cliff dwellers. All of this added to strained relations, strained existence, until they vanished (Pike, 1974, p. 16-148).

Present Earth Connections

Centuries have passed since the rise and disappearance of the Anasazi. As a people, we have gone from roaming the earth on foot to flying over her in supersonic jets. We no longer live in dwellings made from the skin of animals and plant fibers. Mud masonry has been replaced with steel. The majority of us do not rely on our own agricultural or animal husbandry knowledges to

feed and clothe ourselves; we have large commercial businesses to feed and attire us.

Modern science and technologies have provided us with "things"--time saving conveniences, from microwave ovens, microcomputers, electronics to electricity and nuclear power. We no longer have to make our own bowls and eating/cooking utensils; we no longer have to build our own homes; we no longer have to collect our heat and fire sources; we no longer have to find and store our own medical needs. Modern man has created a world where the possibilities seem endless because of technology and creativity linked together. There is much good in the discoveries made and the inventions created. Yet, there is also the sound of a discord in our Earth-Self interconnections.

We are in a time of unbalance, globally and individually because of our disassociation with the Earth Mother. (see Footnote 1) We hold so many wonderful evolutionary possibilities for balance, but we are destroying ourselves because we have stopped listening to the earth. We knowingly poison ourselves then use advanced technology to find the cure. Knowingly we ingest foods that are filled with chemicals and poison, and yet we pass laws allowing these dangerous herbicides and pesticides to be used on our crops. We have the potential to eliminate world starvation through genetic engineering, mass food production, chemically controlled environments, etc; but ironically we create a food filled with possibly long-range dangerous pollutants and a

political system that lets the food rot in warehouses because of economical "games." We have marvelous medical cures, or potential cures, for diseases that we created ourselves as a result of our lifestyles--from over-stressed living, to poor diet and exercise, to smoking, to drinking, to drug reliance.

Modern man is not attuned to the natural forces dwelling within their own bodies, nor with those beneath them in the larger body they live upon. Increasing mechanization and stress characterize 20th-century society. Prevailing attitudes emphasizing the supremacy of material reality and of human life over animal life and non-material realities perpetuate alienation from the world of nature within and around us. Increasing incidence of stress-related illness and environmental pollution are manifestation of disharmony between our bodies, minds, feelings, spirit and physical world. We suffer from a perspective lacking effective methodologies, with which to bring these seemingly disparate realities into a balanced whole. We focus well on separate bits and pieces of life, but too often miss the synergistic workings of the 'whole show' (Pinkson, 1985, p. 54).

Man has moved from an age of inter-dependency with his environment to an age of independency from the Earth Mother and all her children. We have segmented the planet and all her spirits. We no longer see each object as being related to all other objects and beings. We have stopped our responsibility as the caretakers of the Earth Mother.

But we are an integral part of the wholeness of the planet, and each time that we have cut out and related to an isolated bit of Nature, we have proportionally lost some of our identity as whole natural beings. We have replaced our own wholeness with the very attributes we have assigned to the planet and to Nature.

* As the planet has come to be seen as natural resources, we have become resourceful exploiters of Nature, instead of cooperative members of a supportive Earth community.

* As Nature has become vulnerable to the objectivity of

science, we have lost the value of our feelings.

* As we have interrupted the community of Nature, we have lost our sense of community; as we have become alienated from Nature, we have become alienated from each other.

* As we have competed for Nature's raw materials, we have learned to relate competitively . . .

* As we have identified ourselves as masters of the planet, we have lost our sense of place (and balance) (Cohen, 1983, p. 56-57).

Wholistically we have moved huge distances from the Earth Mother. On the physical level we have exploited her natural resources and created our own, causing tremendous destruction and pollution. (see Footnote 1) We have replaced our dwindling natural resources with nuclear energies, which pose potential global destruction and chaos. Our waters are being filled with pollutants; oceans and river temperatures are being changed from various industrial contaminants. As clean waters disappear we attempt to cover up the problem by dumping chemicals into the water to sterilize it. In the process we forget about ecology and the interdependency of all other creatures on the water systems and the resulting effect sterilizing chemicals have on other life forms. Earth "faces" are being changed in the name of technological advancement as forests are cleared for homes and big business, earth surfaces are reshaped, while convenience replaces environmentally sound growth. (see Footnote 1) We do not think of the impact of this man-made growth on the earth and the rest of her children--the plants, animals, air, water.

Elaborate means of communicating globally and spatially have been developed, but as a result we no longer need to use our once

purportedly highly developed sense of telepathic communication. (see Footnotes 3 and 4) We have closed off the "sixth sense" because we no longer "need" it because we have electrical alarm systems to warn us of danger; (see Footnote 10) x-rays and medical technology serve as our means of diagnosing illness; drugs quickly and easily bring balance to bodily imbalances; phones, telegraphs, electronic mail communicate long distances with others. We tend not to listen to our visions and dreams.

We spend our whole lives in our own skins, yet our familiarity with ourselves and how we operate is negligible in comparison to what we know about the successful operation of a motor vehicle or house. We are missing accurate symbols and images that conceptualize our interest and need for self preservation, as living organisms on a living planet. To discover how to relate to a wetland, to another culture, to our mother-in-law, or to ourselves, we have to haul in a team of experts: ecologists, anthropologists, religious leaders, psychiatrists, philosophers, doctors, biologists, economists, and the like. We have learned to rely on their trained ability to symbolize to augment our own (Cohen, 1983, p. 76).

We no longer understand the languages of other energy forms. We have placed ourselves as the supreme being and no longer listen to the voices of our brothers and sisters. Animals listen to one another and the earth when changes are occurring, but man ignores the warnings. Man is not listening to Brother Wind as it changes in directions and brings droughts and torrential rains in places not accustomed to them. Man is not listening to the rumblings in the earth that give warnings to the many recent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions which have caused much needless death and

destruction. Man is not paying attention to the rising sea temperatures and changes in salinity caused from water and air pollutions(see Footnote 1) (Bear, Wabun & Weinstock, 1983, p. 225-265; Waters, 1963, p. 333-334).

We have gone from an inter-dependent spirit with the Earth Mother to an independent spirit on the Earth Mother. We have declared ourselves "King of the Planet" to other energies and spirits, who have closed deaf ears to us. It is only man who struggles with himself now. We try not to acknowledge this by fantasizing our long battles with insects, animals, bird, etc. We have even made movies we watch that scare us into thinking Nature is against us. Alfred Hitchcock's movie The Birds serves as a classic example of our imaginations. Yet, the real battles, the wars men create to fight one another over a land they don't own to begin with, or over the ownership of a race of people that are as equal as all other creatures, are historically presented as "necessary" to rectify wrongs. Power has become material rather than spiritual. In modern terms, the winner becomes the people with the greatest material fighting strength. In essence, man has already lost his real power, his medicine power, as he fights those he could be learning from along the Medicine Wheel.

The rest of the Earth's children are struggling to exist in cooperation and harmony as we play discords with the attunement. Even for them, the rebalancing becomes more and more difficult

as man increasingly unbalances areas. (see Footnote 2)

There is no reason not to use the conveniences of the civilized world. We need to be able to use all things that help us live with more ease. But as we eat with the thought of the great give-away, we must use any device with understanding, so that it gives away to the fullness of our lives and does not take away our dignity (Andrews, 1984, p. 78).

So many of us have separated ourselves from the earth through the wonders of our technologies. On some levels, though our lives may to be enriched by our ever increasing knowledges of technologies and discoveries, we are also losing knowledges and potentials of our own energies, as well as the very planet with which we owe our existence.

To coin a phrase "it is time to get back to basics . . . before it's too late." It is time to reconnect with the earth and discover the wonders and possibilities open to us and then reconnect with our technologies. The further away from our environment and our planet and our fellow spirits we grow through disassociation, the further away from our own inner growth we travel. We have separated ourselves so far from our environment that we are now beginning to separate ourselves from our own energies by forgetting they exist.

Earth Changes

At the least, on a practical basis, survival of the planet and all that exist on it depends on our reconnecting and understanding of the interrelationships and interdependencies of

this whole life. There are on-going, very natural and very real changes occurring on the earth. Some are man-induced, some are earth-induced. (see Footnotes 1 and 18) These changes, predicted hundreds of years ago by Native Americans, mystics, other earth people, (see Footnote 16) include some of the major volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and weather changes we are now experiencing as well as some of the major climatic occurrences (Bryant, 1983; Bear, Wabun & Weinstock, 1983; Waters, 1963). The earth as a living growing spirit is continuing to grow whether we listen or not. The significance of this growth may have tremendous impact on us if we do not re-realize our interrelationship with our planet.

The earth, contrary to what it may appear, is an ever-changing dynamic body. It has not always been in the physical state it now appears in, nor will it always remain in this state. Through James Hutton's principle of Uniformity, geologists, oceanographers, physicists, and meteorologists have been able to trace the earth's past history as a result of studying present rock formations, streams, volcanoes, etc. Evidence has accumulated to indicate the continents of today are not the continents of the past but rather are "amalgams of other land repeatedly broken up, juggled, rotated, scattered far and wide, then crunched together into new configurations" (Sullivan, 1985, Jan., p. 66). This re-forming is the result, or is believed to be the results, of plate tectonics. (see Footnote 18)

Geologists believe there are several large "plates" that both land masses and oceans sit upon. These plates "float" on top of the mantle, or earth's core. As they float they cause land masses to pull away from one another, collide together with one another, or slide past one another. We are not aware of these movements because they take hundreds of thousands of our years (van Andel, 1977, p. 20 -25).

Not only has the physical structure of the planet changed several times, the pole magnetism has also changed nine times in four million years according to geological discoveries (National Geographic Film, 1986). By studying molten lava, scientists have been able to trace pole magnetic changes over millions of years. Molten lava contains iron oxides, which when cool form mineral particles which orient themselves parallel to the earth's magnetic field. They become, in a sense, fossil magnets. By studying these fossil magnets, scientists have discovered that the poles, for both the northern and southern hemispheres have changed, running along the present day equator line. This falls in line with Alfred Wegener's theory as noted in his book The Origin of Continents and Oceans, that all the land masses, 200 to 250 million years ago, were all one large piece of land called Pangea. Through continental drift from plate movements, the large land mass broke apart. How this related to the pole shifts and visa versa, scientists are still exploring (van Andel, 1977, p. 16 - 17).

Also significant with this ever changing earth is the role of earthquakes. Geologists have found that earthquakes throughout history have not been randomly or evenly distributed around the planet. Rather, they center primarily in bands which have strong indication of where the plate edges exist and movements likely. By studying past earthquakes and present occurrences along with plate tectonics, scientists have a good indication of where new land changes and formations will take place.

Some of these changes are taking place at a rapid rate now. Just as an example, a group of French and Chinese scientists have found evidence that some movements such as India moving northward is "crushing the landscape at a rate of two inches per year, producing the worlds' highest mountains, whose peaks thrust ever higher into the sky" (Sullivan, 1985, Jan., p. 68).

In addition to land masses changing, oceans are changing. Salinity is changing, as is evident by changes in mineral content. Temperatures are changing which are causing changes in the polar regions as well as ecosystems changing. Water heights are changing as a result of changes in water temperature and salinity. These changes in turn, affect the land masses, the flora and fauna within and around these masses, and the climate of given areas because of the changes in water temperatures. Because all waters are connected to the Antarctic, the changes in temperatures there are effecting all water systems. Life, in

the food chain, begins with cold water. The currents from Antarctica literally feed the worlds' oceans. As temperatures change, the warmer the water, the less plankton available. Plankton serves both as a food substance for other forms of life, as well as photosynthesizers of oxygen for other life forms. Without this process other life dies. The food chain works from the microscopic level up to man.

Also, currents, both in the air and in the water have been found to change. Scientists have now found water and weather currents to be directly linked together (National Geographic film, 1986; van Andel, 1977).

Weather changes around the world have been linked to changes in ocean currents--which are connected with plate movements. As an example, in one year dramatic weather changes around the world have been linked to current changes off the coast of Panama. In the winter of 1982: hurricanes hit Tahiti six times in five months causing major damage; a huge drought in southeast Australia caused large dust storms the result being the biggest brush fires in history; Africa had no winter rains and the resulting parched earth caused massive starvation among animals and people; Utah had a string of floods as a result of record winter snow falls. As can be seen one small change in an oceanic current change caused major changes in the atmosphere, which then effects the land (National Geographic Film, 1986).

The earth also changes orbit every 100,000 years. It

changes from circular to elliptical. This change affects the atmosphere and the climate. Because the planet orbits further from the sun, temperatures drop which cause changes in glacier formations. The results of glaciers affects everything from land mass, to ocean temperatures, to flora and fauna changes. Life must learn to adapt to colder temperatures and new and different weather patterns.

However, connected with the glaciers and cooling system of the earth, man is adding his own change to the environment and heating it up. Carbon dioxide is naturally found in the atmosphere. It is controlled by the changes from photosynthesis. However, man has been adding considerable amounts of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere through deforestation, coal burning, factory pollution, vehicular pollutions, etc. The results are an imbalance in the recycling process. Carbon dioxide serves as a blanket around the earth causing heat to not be released. The result is an increase in temperature. Since 1958 until 1986 the carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere have risen 9%. This has caused a 3-10 degree F rise in temperature. The results of the warming will initially be seen in Antartica. It is estimated glaciers will begin to melt, causing rises in water levels, causing changes in overall water temperatures which then effects plankton and other life levels.

Atmospheric changes also cause desert expansions, river and

water system changes, changes in the ecosystems from flora changes etc. (National Geographic Film, 1986).

Earth-Self Reconnections

It is time to reconnect wholistically--physically, spiritually, emotionally, cognitively--with the Earth Mother and her vast supply of energies for our individual growth. If we combine our technologies with our spiritual capabilities the potential of eliminating disease, of global communication with Earth's children, of living in harmony with our brothers and sisters is very real. To rebalance is to be whole. What we reflect out will be reflected back in. If we are whole, our Earth Mother will be whole.

We begin this ardent task through education. Through both the experiential and the formal process of learning, we become students of the earth again on a wholistic level. Our teachers are our brothers and sisters, our Mother Earth and ourselves. We rediscover ourselves and rediscover the Earth Mother wholistically--both flow hand in hand, for what we reflect out will be mirrored back.

Chapter 4

Students of the Earth

If asked, most people would agree that individual growth and awareness are positive goals in which to aspire. If asked, most people would agree that a high state of physical wellness is a positive way to feel. If asked, most people would agree that to feel at peace with one another and to share knowledges so that all might benefit selflessly are, idealistically, the highest levels of consciousness for which to strive. If asked how evolved they are in all these questioned areas, would most people have much to say?

If asked, most people would agree pollution is very bad for the planet. If asked, most people would agree tyranny and the threat of violence, on a global or individual level, is very unhealthy for growth. If asked, most people would agree we "should" be environmentally aware so we do not harm our planet or our fellow man. If asked, most people would probably say they are aware of the grave destruction and pollution occurring on this planet and that they do all they can to control it. Yet, if asked, how many people truthfully could say they have never littered, never driven a car, never washed clothes in anything but biodegradable detergent, never been to a beach in the summer, never used an aerosol can, never bought food from a

fast food restaurant, never sprayed bug spray, never . . .?

Most people have good intentions toward the planet and themselves. We just have become so caught up in our technologies and fast paced lives we have forgotten to attune to the harmonious sounds of nature within and without. We have forgotten how to listen and see and touch with all our brothers and sisters. We have forgotten our Mother and how she sustains our lives. We have forgotten the many strengths and energies we have within that could benefit all life (see Footnotes 3 and 4).

Yet, we are an intelligent spirit or energy form; we have great strength and capacity to enrich our lives and all life around us. With all the earth changes occurring now, both man-made and natural, (see Footnotes 1 and 18) and with all the technologies to ease our physical existence, it seems the time is ripe for new growth.

. . . we live in a time of vision, a time when people of the earth are once again ready to hear many secrets that have long been hidden. This is a time of cleansing and breaking away. We can destroy our earth mother or learn to live in harmony with her . . . (Andrews, 1984, p. 3).

How do we reconnect with the Earth Mother? How do we hear the voice of Nature once again? How do we remember the interrelationship we once knew so well? How do we tap into the many energies around us?

We become students of the Earth again. We become students looking at the whole rather than the segmented parts and we incorporate that into both our classroom as well as our daily

experiences.

We become students in the manner and language we individually understand. We become student wholistically--on a physical, mental, emotional and spiritual level. We can open cautiously to the earth, or we can open the door all the way and step in boldly. Initially the importance lies not in how each of us individually reconnects, or to what degree, but that we open ourselves enough to try. Nature is very gentle once we understand ourselves. Those who are facilitators and trainers in their everyday lives have an added responsibility as students of the earth. They have the responsibility of then becoming the Earth's apprentices. What is reflected out will be reflected back. If we open awarenesses to one other person, that will be reflected back to all other persons with whom that individual is connected. (see Footnote 5)

Because we are so accustomed to segmenting everything educationally, we have forgotten how to incorporate "real life" into the classroom. To incorporate the "real earth" into the classroom, it is time to open that classroom door so students can see the whole part the "study" fits into. This awareness will begin to connect, has the potential to connect wholistically, the circle of life. Each student, every person, at their own level of need and their own pace will begin to understand the connections. As each individual then becomes ready, the on-going "domino effect" will cause the crash of

another wall in the circle of life to open up to new awarenesses. Eventually there will be no more segments to the circle, just an on-going dimension.

Because adults serve as models and teachers for children, it is most important that adults reopen to the awarenesses. Although it may seem optimistic, the domino effect has no ending until every person, every spirit that is around the Great Medicine Wheel, will be open to every connection and interconnections in the Universe. (see Footnote 7)

To practically incorporate this process, it need not be limited to a formal educational setting. Rather, this interrelationship can be incorporated into the business world, in human development training programs, in the arts, in self-awareness groups, in rehabilitation programs for both physically, mentally or emotionally handicapped--virtually for any growth/awareness purpose, whether on a technical or human development level.

Ideally this incorporation of the interrelationship of Earth on Self is on a wholistic level. Although not segmented in programming, educational programming can include all aspects of the Earth-Self relationship. The actual physical interconnections can be made; the spiritual interconnections with the Earth energies, the emotional interconnections; and the cognitive learning interconnections. These wholistic relationships may be on a conscious level or unconscious level

and may occur at varying levels of awareness and intensity for each individual in each activity. The levels of awareness, needs, openness, and readiness determine the integration of the facets of wholistic interconnections.

Presently, there is an organization incorporating this "whole earth" concept into education via both formal and informal instruction. The National Audubon Society Expedition Institute is an undergraduate study program offering experiential courses for high school and college students, home based in Sharon, Connecticut. Some courses through this program have been assigned credit by the Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction of the University of the State of New York. The programs offered incorporate academic and experiential research through expeditions to various parts of the country to study specific cultures, philosophies, environments, etc. This institution is providing an example of whole earth study by combining the segments of study for a view of the total picture. Unfortunately, drawbacks for such a program include the fact that not all "credits" earned through the various institute courses offered are transferable to other universities across the country. Also, with relation to the adult learner who often has time restrictions because of jobs and family commitments, possibility of attendance in a several-weeks-long program at great distances from home becomes impossible. Too often the adult learner is unable to arrange

career and family responsibilities to be away for great periods of time. Yet, the concept of the program is a valid form of introducing the student, first hand, to the interrelationship of the self and the earth.

To open the adult learner to an awareness level of Earth-Self interrelationships, it is important to present information within a realm that is realistic with lifestyles that often already are relatively time committed. Thus, Earth-Self awarenesses need to be offered in a manner structured to meet the demands of individual time constraints, economic constraints, travel constraints, etc. Generally an adult learner will pursue learning because there is a need--be it personal, or career-oriented. If Earth-Self awarenesses can be offered in a broad-spectrum, flexible manner to meet the individual needs of the learner at that time, a greater potential for incorporating the interrelationships of the Earth Mother and the Self will be obtained.

Everyone is oriented differently with different likes and dislikes, different ways of interpreting material, different ways of viewing the same object. How we relate to any given object or situation also interacts with not only our perception of it but may influence directly that object or situation.^(see Footnote 5) Thus, Earth-Self awarenesses might be more apparent if presented in a manner that would be understood by many people at whatever level of need each individual has at that time.

Translated, this means that for an individual to open, on any level, to the Earth-Self interrelationship, it must be done in the manner understood by that individual at that given time and for that given need of that individual.

How can one program please everyone at one time? It does not necessarily. Nor should that be the expectation of any Earth-Self awareness program. By presenting a program that offers many different levels of awarenesses that can be opened to at whatever point an individual is ready and needy, then the realm of possibility of further openings increases. By placing too many expectations on "to be realized" Earth-Self awarenesses, one closes the open door of possibilities.

The following sections offer possible methods for introducing Earth-Self awarenesses to the individual on a wholistic level. Most are based on experiential discoveries by this writer. The purpose in sharing the experiences, insights and observations during these programs, is to open the reader's mind to potential means of presenting Earth-Self experiences for the purpose of expanding consciousness to the interrelationships of man and Nature on a wholistic level.

The reader is not expected or assumed, or even asked to consider these specific programs as the only means of Earth-Self awareness. Nor is it expected, assumed or requested that the reader assume the experiences shared will be the same

experiences all others will feel. The point in sharing these experiences is not for a value or moral agreement or disagreement with the results; but rather for the purpose of exposing the reader to possible realms of openness to the Earth, the Self and others. The resulting growth process experienced by the writer is not assumed or expected to be the same others may experience. Again, sharing growth processes is done expressly for the purpose of opening the reader to the realm of possibilities with Earth-connected programs.

It is hoped that by presenting several examples of Earth-Self growth possibilities, the reader will open to the concept that virtually any process has the potential for growth and for opening awarenesses to our responsibilities to and connections with the earth on a wholistic level. These awarenesses, which will vary with each individual, may open up the potential for self awareness and the intuitive connections with the earth energies. At the least they open up awarenesses of the earth and her children.

Obviously these intuitive connections can only be understood and confirmed by the individual. However, it is the contention of this writer that the more one opens intuitively, cognitively, emotionally and physically to the Earth and her many "medicines," the more one will realize one's own medicine potential and the potential of that medicine helping the Earth Mother and all her children.

Some of the experiences presented may be considered unusual by some readers. The reader is asked not to judge--morally--these experiences, but rather to keep an open mind to the process of experiential awareness occurring. The very act of remaining open to potentials as opposed to judging them right or wrong, improper or proper, is, in itself, a beginning awareness of life interconnections. What may be in the realm of "unusual" to one reader, may be within the realm of "normal" to another. Thus, if a particular program does not interest a reader, that's alright. The issue is not the program, but the realm of possibility that connecting with the Earth has for the self to open to other potentials.

The four programs presented offer a variety of methods to Earth-Self interactions. Included are examples for individual interactions and awarenesses; group interactions with the Earth Mother, her children and the Self; independent and dependent interactions with the Earth; varying time connections with the Earth and the Self; short term and long term learning/growth experiences with the Earth and the Self; and more. The Vision Quest is primarily an individual, independent, longer-termed process for potential openings. Team Building Through Climbing (or any other outdoor recreation) is a dependent, group interaction program that can be processed/experienced in a shorter period of time. The Medicine Wheel is a process of opening to potentials on a very individual, independent level as

an on-going awareness. The process of opening through Nature and the Arts can be either a group or individual, independent or dependent project that can be short term, long-term or an on-going experience.

Within the realm of each of these programs lies the potential for the student to connect with the Earth on several different wholistic levels--physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. The level and depth of interconnection and awareness will depend on the individual--the needs, understanding and readiness at that time for that individual.

On a physical level, individuals potentially can interconnect with their environment through the actual touching of the Earth. In the vision quest the individual is actually immersed in the natural world for three to five days. Although one can tune into or out of the surroundings, the fact one is integrally immersed in the environment is difficult to ignore. The potential physical levels of awareness include the elemental levels--temperatures, feel of the earth, smells, sounds, etc.00 as well as the awareness of other physical life surrounding and encompassing that environment--including plants, animals, insects, birds, and the Earth itself. To what ever depth the individual consciously or unconsciously connects with the environment depends on the needs and acceptances of that individual at that time.

Just as the vision quest provides ample opportunity for

physical connection with the environment, so does the team climbing as well as nature and the arts. Often when one physically comes in contact with nature, one opens, or has a tendency to open, to other wholistic levels of interconnections. Physically touching someone or something allows an intimacy and trust, which leads to a further conscious opening on other levels. No matter what level of opening occurs, the significance of the potential process of opening allows for further connection with the Earth Mother.

Just as a on a physical level of touching, the more one touches on a cognitive level of understanding with the Earth Mother the greater the potential for trusting and acknowledging the interdependency of life. When one connects with the environment, one becomes cognitively aware of other life processes and styles. As one opens to a conscious level of rational, cognitive understanding, one tends to accept that process. Cognitive understanding, whether it be of another life form such as an insect, or the knowledge of weather patterns, brings awareness and eliminates misunderstandings and fears based on lack of information. Information leads to security. The more we consciously and cognitively understand our environment, the less we fear. The less we fear, the more we trust and the more we are open to the emotional and spiritual levels of Nature. Often, because the emotional and intuitive self is more personal and vulnerable than the cognitive self, we

tend to maintain walls of defense around major spiritual openings. Once we feel comfortable on a mental and physical level to open, our defenses have a greater tendency to be lowered and we tune into a higher level of consciousness. We begin to feel with our hearts rather than just our heads.

In developing programs for adult learners to reconnect with the environment, adult educators may benefit by keeping in mind a wholistic approach to curriculum design. By designing programs with conscious connections on a physical and cognitive level with the Earth, students are potentially more likely to open awarenesses on an emotional and intuitive level as well. At whatever level a student feels comfortable and ready to open, the more conscious potentials available to the individual, the greater the possibility of a wholistic encounter with the Earth.

These are only a few examples of potential programs that could connect the Earth and the Self by opening awarenesses. Each reader, because of their individual experiences and lifestyles could potentially add many more possible programs or experiences that others could benefit from. Indeed, part of the reasoning in sharing the experiences is to open the reader to their own background potentials that could be shared with others for Earth and Self growth. The sharing of ideas and experiences is, in itself, an opening to the interconnectedness of us all.

We are each part of the Great Medicine Wheel and touch

others whether we are conscious of the process or not. It is understood that what is presented is not a documented, indepth proven method for Earth-Self awareness. However, materials shared do present possible experiential methods for any student to open to the Earth on whatever level they are ready and willing to experience.

The realm of possibility for further research on these programs and many others appears to be infinite and is suggested as consideration by an ambitious Reader/researcher for further development. Offered below are programs such as: (a) vision quest (b) team building through climbing (c) Nature and the arts (d) use of the metaphysical medicine wheel.

The Vision Quest

As noted on the section on Native American Philosophies, the vision quest is the seeking of a vision or direction and understanding of one's life. It is the time for reacquaintance with the oneness of all life energies, the earth and self. In "modern " terms this quest can serve multiple functions, from forcing one to be aware of one's environment, to accepting the earth as it is while releasing pre-established prejudices over that environment, to coming in contact with oneself--on a wholistic level. Because the quest is a "solo" experience, one has little choice but to directly confront the issues of the self and the relationship of the self with the Earth Mother.

The "value" of this endeavor can only be measured by the individual. However, based on personal experiences as well as discussions with others who have participated in a quest, many "lessons" are learned on many different levels. All is dependent upon what one is willing to open to at that time of experiencing the quest.

The vision quest is a possible means of opening to the Earth Mother and energies. The shared experiences and resulting insights from my quest are offered only as an example of some of the many possibilities this form of "education" has to offer. The experiential possibilities for learning, growing and opening to the oneness of the earth and self are only limited by the individual. Many of the awarenesses concerning my relationship with my everyday world I experienced during the quest were not dissimilar from other questors I have spoken with.

The parameters of my quest were not dictated in the strict traditional sense that early Native people adhered to. The parameters of my quest were established to link the traditional with the modern world. As an example, during the vision quest traditional questors wear no clothing and take only a robe with them to keep warm at night. I was given the option to take/wear what clothing I wished, as well as take whatever camping gear I felt necessary for my personal level of comfort. During the quest, a fast was suggested but not mandatory and I was allowed to bring food if I felt too uncomfortable for that length of

time without it. Traditional questors take no water or food for the duration of the quest, three to five days. I was also encouraged to bring a notebook with me to keep a journal during my quest.

The reader is asked to approach the experiences noted with the Vision Quest with an open mind. It is understood each reader approaches experiences with different viewpoints. However, the following materials shared are not done so for any purpose other than as a presentation of the realm of possibilities open to the individual experiencing a quest. If some of the process in the program appears unusual to the reader, all that is asked is that one keep an open mind to the resulting growths. The reader is not asked to agree or disagree with the experience, but rather to be open to the potentials within the program for some individual personal growth and awarenesses.

The philosophy of my quest was the same as the traditional quest--to find a vision, a direction and understanding, my path--to reconnect with the Earth Mother and discover the oneness of all energies. The fact that the quest was physically oriented to combine the traditional and modern worlds was positive. The concept of the quest is not to make the process so uncomfortable that all focus is on the physical self; rather it is to expose one to the earth and environment in as close a link as possible to enhance intuitive openings and cognitive understandings.

Because modern man generally is not as attuned to or as physically comfortable with the natural world as the Native American, too much emphasis on the physical level of earth connections could jeopardize the primary purpose of Earth-Self interconnections. One's energies and focus should not be totally consumed by one's physical level of comfort or discomfort. Rather, focus should be toward the opening and awareness of the self in interrelationship with the environment.

I am comfortable in a natural setting and sought my quest during the summer when the environmental temperatures were comfortable for me. As a result, I chose to take very little with me by way of clothing or equipment. I took a sleeping bag which I ended up sleeping on rather than in. The few clothes I did bring I ended up not wearing, as it was warm enough, as well as private enough for me, to spend my quest nude. I also chose to fast from food during the quest, taking only water for three and a half days. However, for my own level of psychological comfort I chose to take an orange with me in case I felt a real need for food. I appreciated having this option, even though I did not use the orange. It provided me with a sense of security, so again I did not focus on the physical level of myself, but rather on the cleansing purposes of the fast. I and three other individuals were questing at this time. Each of us had a site totally isolated from one another as well all other humans. Preparations for the quest included a sweat lodge

ceremony for purification of the body and spirit, as well as counseling from a guide concerning the purpose and the process of the quest.

My learning process began with the sweat lodge ceremony. Although I have participated in this ceremony of purification before, each time the process is a re-opening of awarenesses. The concept of the sweat lodge is that it represents the womb of both the biological mother and the Earth Mother. One is in the lodge as one is in the womb. Coming out of the sweat is the process of being born, being innocent and pure in spirit and body. The sweat is a combination of ceremonial prayer, songs and hot steam bath, lasting from two to three hours. Generally there is a guide or leader in the sweat, while participants are encouraged to join in the spiritual cleansing through prayers. The physical process of sweating and physically purifying the body, combined with the strong emotional process of the ceremony is a cleansing process. Upon emerging from the sweat, traditionally participants plunge into a lake or pond. This serves to cool the over-heated body and re-establish a physical balance. Psychologically it rebalances the senses and emotions by the contrast in temperatures.

Upon talking with other sweat ceremony participants, both at the quest as well as at other times, we seem to share similar experiences and perceptions. Awarenesses of self begin with the disrobing in front of "strangers" for traditionally the

sweat is experienced in the nude. We, in essence, began our "opening" by removing our external walls (our clothes) and trusting while being so vulnerable. It is amazing the sense of freedom and openness one feels once initial inhibitions pass. In general, the process of the sweat ceremony potentially opened us all to a purity level concerning nudity. Just as children see one another, upon exiting the sweat lodge we all felt interconnected and natural.

Another awareness came in the feel of the earth as I sat naked upon her. (The floor of the sweat lodge is the Earth Mother's surface.) I have not sat that close or that connected to the earth for many years. I also became aware of the feeling of my body perspiring as temperatures rose in the lodge until the water coming from my body matched the same level of saturation as the water, or steam in the air. I remember crying during a portion of the sweat and being aware of how all the waters about me flowed together as one--my tears, my sweat, the steam in the air. I could not separate these feelings on a tactile level because they were all one. My body temperature rose enough to match the air about me so I began to lose a sense of where the "physical me" began and the air left off and visa versa. Is this the sensation an unborn child feels in the womb, a oneness with temperature and moisture so child is mother and mother is child? If so, the lodge became a mirror of the womb and we all felt the security within.

Upon emerging from our "womb" lodge, there was no sense of sexuality, but rather an androgynous sense of oneness--with one another and with our surroundings. In the water I felt continued levels of self merging with my immediate environment. I was keenly aware of the different temperatures around me, the different temperatures of the water, depending on the depth, as well as the temperature of my body. Because we were immersed in complete darkness inside the lodge, the contrast in the outer world was severe. Colors were bright, contrasts of shades were more striking. All senses were more highly tuned, especially tactile and visual. I felt a higher opened state of physical, psychological and emotional awareness. I tactually opened to levels I had not experienced feeling all at one time; to include my body, the water I floated in and the air that circled my face. When I closed my eyes the sensation was one of complete oneness with all of these "bodies."

At my vision quest site, which was on top of a ridge in the middle of a forest filled with large Fir and deciduous trees, I experienced many "openings" on many different levels, from physical to spiritual. In some respects, I was "forced" into acknowledging my environment whether that acknowledgement be positive or negative. I had a choice of spending several days in a place I was at constant stress with, or I could accept and flow with the life around me, becoming part of that life. My decision was to make every attempt to open to all the life

energies around me and accept my environment as it was. I felt that I was a stranger "coming home" and though I was not familiar with this particular environment, I knew this world on an intuitive level.

During the quest, I became aware of how dependent I, man, had become on time. I had no watch or clock with me, so I based the passage of "time" on the sun's movement and the animals' activities around me. I realized how much time I spent waiting for time to pass; how much life is lived in the future rather than the now. As a result, I realized how much time I waste because I am waiting for the time to do something.

Focusing on the environment I turned my attention to the many different levels of life and activity around me. I became aware of an entire insect world, which I found to be extremely benevolent. This awareness was a great "opening" for me as I realized most of my life I had viewed insects as less than valuable spirits. I realized most insects have their own lifestyle and "business" for the day and that if left alone, they were very willing to leave me alone to co-exist peacefully. I also discovered the on-going process of life within this small world and how the actions of insects are interdependent on other life forms and how they give back to the earth by helping to pollinate, aerate and fertilize. The smallest insect helps maintain the earth's balance, as does the earth help maintain the insect's life.

I became aware of insects in relationship with the day passage, the sun, the heat and surroundings. During the hottest time of the day most insect activity ceased. As the evening approached there was a renewal of activity until dark. At that time some insects hid to sleep, while others, like spiders and fireflies woke to begin their day... and the cycle repeated itself.

I was beginning to understand the strong inter-relations between creatures and environment, sun and temperatures. I could "feel" the intricate balance around me. This balance also existed on large creature scales. The birds and animals around me were as attuned to their environment and one another as the insects were. With the first rays of light in the morning, birds began their singing and movement which awakened the rest of the forest world. When there was danger, crows acknowledged it by warning others, and the squirrels carried the warnings to their peers. During the heat of the day, the birds and creatures slowed their pace and slept until the cooler afternoon appeared. Each day followed the same pattern of activity, quiet and then renewed activity until dark. At that time other creatures appeared who lived by the dark. As I was not perceived as a threat to these creatures, I was not threatened by them. In essence they continued their "routine" around me, accepting me as part of a benevolent environment.

Although I was never really hungry during the duration of

my quest, I came to realize the significance of food in my life. I became keenly aware how much of what I eat is not for satisfying a physical hunger, but rather is fulfilling a social purpose. Eating was something I often did to be social or to provide an excuse for socializing. I also realized eating was a way to "use up time." If I had a task I was not interested in completing, I often would take a "food break." Usually during this break I would also find someone with whom to socialize.

Since I maintained proper hydration during the quest, I physically felt well. I was aware I was weaker by the third day than the first day, but I was psychologically and spiritually more attuned to myself and my environment. This sense of wellness also helped me to realize how much of what I eat is often a contributor to a physical imbalance.

At the end of the quest, I discovered that during the time I was in the forest the daily temperatures were in the low 100° F range. I had been aware the air was hot, but because I was not moving about a great deal, I never felt particularly uncomfortable. I, like the animals and plant life around me, slowed way down during the hottest part of the day. I had learned to flow with the environment around me and understood the reasoning behind its actions. Learning of the temperatures that had been reached during the days I was questing, I realized how much I, man, tend to respond to the environment and its conditions based on what others make for comments, rather than

what is directly felt/perceived. Weathermen have a great deal of power over people. How a weatherman perceives earth climates, in relation to these climates being positive or negative, is directly related to how the public responds to these climates. Had I been home and "known" the temperatures would reach the hundreds, I probably would have minded the heat more because I would have been psychologically attuned to the negative side of heat. However, actually experiencing the temperature without knowing the scientific degree, was not uncomfortable. I have seen this same process concerning snow and how snow is perceived. Having come from the north, getting four to eight inches of snow one night is not unusual. In the mid-Atlantic States, getting that much snow, or even the possibility of that much snow creates a panic. People respond to a hyped media presentation of the natural environment which has been painted in a negative manner. As a result, snow or extreme temperatures are a lot more difficult to live with because people are fighting against a natural process rather than flowing with it.

Because I believe what we project out is mirrored back to us, I never felt threatened by my environment for I never perceived it to be a threat. For some individuals who have gone through a quest, they have experienced and had to overcome the feelings of fear and anxiety and frustrations to be comfortable. They also came to understand that once they accepted their

environment, they felt it accepted them. One woman who experienced a quest had real problems dealing with the insect world, from ticks to flying insects. She fought against them for two days until she "gave up." Giving up actually served to open her up and "suddenly" she was no longer bothered by the insects. In fact she noted they all but disappeared.

The more physically I opened to my environment, the more intuitively I became connected with it. As noted, I was given advance notice of danger, just as others in the forest were, I just needed to heed the warnings. The "warning" was of a pack of dogs; only I received warning not only through the vocalizations of the crows and squirrels, but on an intuitive level as well. This was a big lesson for me, for I was aware of the warnings and chose to ignore them.

I first "knew" of the pack the night before the morning I actually, visually saw them. That night I heard sounds of large animals, which I assumed to be deer, moving around me in the woods. However, when I heard these animals move, crows also began sounding their alarms. On a cognitive level I knew crows don't usually sound alarms for benevolent creatures like deer. On an intuitive level, I asked the energies around me if I could "see" (in my mind's eye) what was in the forest moving around me. As it was the middle of the night, I could not see visually. From the sound of the movements of the animals, I knew there were eight to 12 in number, they were large animals

(as opposed to small animals like squirrels), and they were only a few yards from where I was sleeping, circling my entire area. What came to me as a "picture" was a "wolf-like" creature standing by a tree. On a cognitive level I told myself that my picture was impossible because I could not conceive of wolves being in the forest in southern Virginia. I asked to see again, and again got the same picture. I dismissed the idea as imagination and was determined to not let my imagination frighten me. I decided to just "feel positive" toward whatever was around me, for I had not felt threatened, and to ignore "them" as they were apparently ignoring me. Under the circumstances I had little other choice considering I was miles from another human and in complete darkness.

The next morning, very early as the first light of dawn brought magic to the world, I again heard meanderings of creatures in the woods around me. As the sounds were the same as what I had heard the night before, I became excited that I would have the opportunity to see the, what I assumed to be, herd of deer. As I waited quietly for the animals to appear through a heavy thicket of young pine trees about 10 yards from my circle, I again received a "picture" of a wolf-like creature. I dismissed the idea again and assumed I had just been in the forest too long. Within moments, along with the warning cries of the crows, the animals came through the thicket. Rather than a deer herd as I had expected, a pack of dogs--maybe 12 in

number--appeared. The leader of the pack looked to be part huskey and part shepherd in breed--almost exactly the "wolf-like" creature I had pictured.

I saw them before they saw me. I am aware of some of the characteristics of canines "packing." As I did not know how they would respond to me, I decided to work within my instincts and knowledges. I immediately got up and walked toward them. They saw me, stopped, growled. We were at a "stand off," but only for seconds for I moved toward them again, speaking to them and telling them to leave. They hesitated, looked to their leader for direction, and finally, slowly began to move back. A few lingered, as did the leader, but because I continued to advance, they also left. I did not see, or hear them again.

My feelings after this incident were mixed. Potentially I knew what real physical danger I had been in. However, I had been warned several times by both the physical and etheric environment. I had chosen to ignore the warnings. I had also chosen to open to my environment. My benevolence toward my surrounding had been mirrored back. The gathered protective energies of my environment had protected me as I confronted the pack. Rather than being frightened by the potential of what could have happened, I chose to confront and direct energies to my advantage. The ultimate lesson learned was for me to listen to warnings and signs for they were given, I believe, for my protection. (Although, even if I had believed what I had

envisioned, I don't know what else I could have done for protection. I believe my response of not being frightened was my safest option open to me.)

During the quest several other incidents occurred that connected my physical world with the intangible world. At one time an individual was wandering near my circle. I could hear him "crashing" through the woods, although I could not visually see him. I had the sense he was lost. He was walking in a semi-circle around my site and was calling out to any ears that might hear him for direction. I chose not to answer because I felt he would learn a bigger lesson by working with the environment, rather than having human contact for help. I felt he would find the dirt road that was several hundred yards below me. I asked to "see" him in my mind's eye and immediately gained a picture of this man going through the woods. He was a man questing at a site about a mile from mine and he had wandered from his site. For the next several hours I could occasionally "see" him (I could no longer hear him) going through the woods. I "saw" him find the road, walk the wrong direction on the road, realize he had gone the wrong direction, and finally turn back and relocate the Retreat Center from where we had all originally gathered. At the end of the entire quest when I rejoined others, this individual was among them. I asked if he had been wandering in the woods. He replied he had been and had gotten lost, found a road, walked the wrong direction

for a ways and eventually turned around and found the Retreat Center. I believe I was "shown" this person in the woods for the purpose of his safety. Because I always "knew" where he was, he was not really lost or in immediate danger. I feel had he been in a dangerous situation, I would have known and been able to direct help to him. Obviously none of this can be proven, but I believe it to be so.

Another insight given me was less immediately connected to my environment, although the oneness I felt around me I believe helped me to focus on this insight. My father had been in complete kidney failure for the past three years. His life support had been dialysis for that time; and, as is the case with all kidney patients, his condition was a continual degenerative process. During the quest, specifically the middle of the second day, I "received" a very strong "picture" of my father. He was more debilitated than he was in actual life, and I felt he distinctly was bringing me a message. In the picture he was using a cane as he hobbled over a hill. It was snowing all around, colors were bleak. He stopped and looked at me and then slowly turned and walked over the hill. I felt I was being told of an ending--his ending. Yet I was not frightened by this vision. Shortly after that vision, I received another. Again it was of my father coming over a hill. However, in this picture he was young and healthy. He looked as he did when I was a small child. As he came over the hill I realized in the

vision I was riding on one of his shoulders and my sister was holding his hand on the other side. Both my sister and I were small children. My father was smiling and had the energy and body of youth and wellness. He stopped, as he had in the other vision, looked at me, then turned and walked over the hill with my sister and me.

I knew these visions had purpose. I also knew I should not try to put cognitive reason to them; that reason would come when it was suppose to. It was difficult not to let my imagination work on these visions.

I understood the reasons for the visions following the quest. The second day of my quest, in the middle of the day (around the time I had first seen my father in winter), my father had received a phone call which sent him to the hospital to begin the process of a kidney transplant. At the end of that day he had undergone kidney transplant surgery successfully; with results of very little tissue rejection and rapid recovery. He had always been a very positive and happy person. The long struggle with his failing body had been extremely frustrating for him and his attitude had somewhat bittered. Since the transplant he has regained much of his positive attitude and physically looks and feels better than he has for years. Hence, my second vision of my father as he was a youth, I feel certain, was telling me of his "new beginnings." The first vision, which occurred around the time the entire kidney transplant process

began, was telling me of an ending.

Although the quest was not the first time I have had visions, it served to bring understanding and purpose to these visions as helpful growing lessons for me. Because of my strong connection with the environment I was in, my oneness with the energies around me, I was able to tap into the energy lines of communication far more easily than I have before.

I believe I, and others, receive many visions daily which could help serve individual growth. Unfortunately many of the visions are lost because they are ignored or not even recognized. By tuning in to the awareness of oneness with the Earth Mother, I was easily able to tune into pictures I was given and to recognize them as having purpose. I believe we all have this potential.

There were other significant events and visions on the quest, ones that are at this time not to be shared but are for my personal understanding and growth. The purpose in my sharing of the above events is to provide an experiential example, on a wholistic scale, of the potential awarenesses from a quest. By opening to the Earth Mother and the self, besides feeling and understanding the oneness and interrelationships of all life, one also has the potential to open to other levels of communication and understanding far beyond the tangible level we are familiar with. These openings and awarenesses will be different for each individual. Growth will depend on what and

when the individual is willing and able to assimilate. Awarenesses will come in different ways for different people, depending on past experiences and perceptions. We all receive insights in a symbolic language we can understand.

For some passing through a quest, the level of meaning may come only in accepting nature on a physical level. For some, meaning may come in accepting the self, physically and psychologically. For some questors, meaning will go beyond self and nature and reach other energy levels. Whatever one perceives is good, for it is a beginning. Because of the direct relationship of self and environment, when one is opened to one aspect, it is only time before one begins to open to many other aspects.

For the adult learner, the vision quest, or a derivative of the quest, could be used as an educational tool in self and/or earth discovery. The quest could be used with a counseling perspective, an environmental perspective, an educational perspective for learning processes, a philosophical perspective, a traditional historical perspective or more. For whatever purpose within a curriculum, by the nature of the process, individuals will most likely gain many different levels of perspectives dealing with the Earth-Self relationships. The quest only serves as a door to open. The catalyst from the quest occurs afterwards with the individual's growth at whatever level he or she is willing and ready to explore. One can not

shut down awarenesses once they occur. One can cognitively diminish the significance of the awarenesses, but one can never turn back to the darkness experienced before these awarenesses.

The vision quest is now used at various retreat centers across the country. The purpose and the audiences it is aimed toward at these centers range from drug rehabilitation and terminal illness counseling, to spiritual expansion, self awarenesses and environmental issues (Pinkson, 1978, p. 76). Why not open it up as a potential awareness option for the student and facilitator? On what ever level, potentially a learning process will take place.

Team Building Through Climbing

Rockclimbing is a sport combining elements of individual and team skills, attitudes, strength and awareness. It is a highly individualized sport requiring the assistance of team members in a belayed situation. (A belay is a safety rope that runs from the climber to an anchored or firmly secure individual. If the climber should slip or fall during the climb, the belayer--the person with the rope--is able to break the fall of the individual by braking the rope.)

Because the climber is literally entrusting his or her life to the belayer, it is essential a bond of trust and understanding be built between the two. This not only applies to the process of climbing, but to the set-up and anchoring

process (the process of safely securing the ropes to rocks or trees), and the break-down and equipment storage. The security of knowing the equipment is in good shape, the belayer is responsible and qualified, and the anchoring system is safe and reliable in a mishap is necessary to insure a high level of concentration on the climb.

The attitudes and personality of the climber and belayer need to be compatible to provide an atmosphere of trust and responsibility. The process of climbing requires focused concentration, on the rock and the self. If the climber feels at odds with the belayer, or pushed toward a competitive edge with the belayer, the focused energy becomes diffuse and the climb becomes more difficult. Generally, climbing partners or teams who have been climbing for sometime are people who trust, understand and are open to one another. Attitudes and philosophies on climbing and often life in general, tend to be similar, as are the physical level of climbing abilities.

As is with most sports, to climb well the climber must be wholistically attuned to the self and the process. Physically, the climber must feel well, have good strength, balance, and flexibility. One's overall diet, physical fitness and stamina levels all have an impact on every climb. Emotionally, the climber, to climb well, must be relaxed and focused on the task at hand. If external or internal stresses are prevalent, they will effect the climb subtly or even dramatically. On a

cognitive level, the climber needs to know his or her limitations for each climb and willingly work within the bounds for those limitations. This is not to say one shouldn't take risks, but technically the climber should be fully cognizant of the ramifications of that risk.

On a spiritual level, the climber will climb well if he or she is attuned to the self and the rock and the overall environment. This attunement is the result of concentration, knowing and accepting one's body, trusting the belayer, climbing with the rock as opposed to trying to conquer it, and having a positive outlook on the process. The acceptance of oneself as one is, and acceptance of the rock for what it is ensures a "good" climb, regardless of whether one makes it "to the top" or never gets off the ground.

As a student of the rock and an instructor in rockclimbing, I have become increasingly aware of the need of the climber and team members to wholistically approach the process. Class after class I have seen a process of awareness occurring that builds the team into a cohesive unit while individually opening each member to new insights about themselves and the earth. The actual technical skill level in climbing is secondary to the growth process occurring in the beginning student.

Originating in the classroom and ending days after the climb, awarenesses on many different levels and in varying degrees are opened up to the individuals and the team as a

whole.

The course is set up in two parts. An evening lecture covers climbing attitudes and philosophies, history, equipment use and storage, climbing and belaying techniques, safety, proper nutrition and exercise to physiologically prepare the body, and environmental awareness for low impact climbing. The course is presented wholistically. What each student chooses to incorporate from this presentation is his or her choice. For safety reasons, all students must become proficient technically concerning knots, anchoring, calls, equipment use and storage, etc. before they join the second level climbing course. The remaining portions of the lecture are presented as "doors to open" as the student reaches each level of awareness with the self, the team and the environment and is ready to step toward other growth levels.

The second part of the course is the climbing day where students learn the technical aspects of climbing on the rock, to include setting up safe, double-anchor systems, belaying and climbing techniques and then clearing an area.

From observation, individual and team patterns begin the first meeting in the evening lecture. Although noncompetitive climbing is stressed throughout the course along with the concept that a "good climb" is a climb executed in "good style" and one that feels comfortable for that climber at that time, competitive comparing does take place. Not all, but some

students size up the competition for possible/probable strength, agility, experience and comprehension. Possibly because of this society's socializing patterns, men tend to be more guilty of this attitude than the women who join the class. As a female instructor, I have become even more aware of this initial patterning as the male students often begin to set their standards based on my skill abilities rather than their own.

It appears that those individuals who have an inner need for perfection and proficiency have a hard time relaxing in the class. The tangible evidence of their first abilities in climbing--tying knots--are visibly apparent to others. This often causes reactions from anxiety at the possibility of "doing it wrong" to an excitement of learning a new skill. This becomes the first potential awareness of the self. The people who have the most problems accepting their technical skill level tend to have the most problems accepting their climbing abilities on the rock. As an instructor, observing this "need to be right" is often an awareness of how these individuals will respond in a team situation. Generally there is such a self focus to be right, it is at the exclusion of the group.

Other awarenesses from the evening lecture come with levels of balance and flexibility as we do warm-up and stretch-out exercises. Again, there are many subtle comparisons going on. Until the individual begins to focus on where their levels are and accepting those levels, rather than trying to fit their body

and abilities into those of another, they will not be able to perform well because the concentration and focus is on someone else rather than the self.

The morning of the climbing day we meet at the site and begin with a warm-up scramble across a boulder field. This serves the purpose of eliminating some of the excess adrenalin surging through most of the students' bodies because of the anticipation of climbing; plus, it gives students their first chance to feel the rock and how they fit with it. This time also provides teaching time for different techniques in hand holds, foot holds, balancing, and teamwork.

Many patterns occur during this scramble time. Some students are so individually focused they tend to stay back from the group and only concentrate on their own abilities. Some students begin to socialize and work as team members, helping each other. Other students work very hard to have their abilities match or exceed everyone else's in class. Since this part of the climb day is off belay, there are certain elements of real danger as the individual competes beyond a realistic level.

Available during this warm up scramble is the potential to open to conscious awarenesses. These awarenesses include everything from what the feel of different rocks are, to individual internal levels of stamina and strength. Some individuals only become aware of other's levels of climbing

abilities and strive toward that.

On a subtle level, they are also beginning to touch the earth--literally and figuratively. Physically they are placing their hands and feet and sometimes whole body on the rock. They are seeing that all rock is not the same, feeling that all rock is not the same, and hearing the sounds around them as they concentrate on what their body is doing. They are becoming aware of themselves working with and on the Earth Mother.

Students are also becoming wholistically aware of how they feel internally and externally. They are aware of their body functioning at peak levels of physical activity. They are becoming aware of which muscles are being used for different holds and moves; and as a result, which muscles are underdeveloped or well developed for the sport. Internally they are also becoming aware of how they emotionally feel about the process of climbing and the rock itself. They are feeling anxieties, excitements, securities and insecurities, self and team competitiveness, self and team cohesiveness, and much more. Externally these emotions as well as the physical state are being seen and felt and heard through involuntary shaking, labored breathing, perspiration, overly focused vision, fatigue levels, possibly first scrapes and bruises, tender finger tips, sensations of hot and cold on different rock surfaces and more.

By the end of the warm-up scramble, the concentrated physical level of exertion combined with the initial "danger"

levels have begun to bring the group into a team. For some members who are not ready, they will linger from the group, observing, taking in the awareness that what they, as individuals felt, was the same as all the others were experiencing. For the individual who physically and emotionally is already at a higher skill level of climbing, an internal choice of "joining" the group and consciously helping others, or remaining aloof and "above" the rest is going on.

At the first belayed climb site, there is a feeling of anticipation mixed with anxiety. Students learn and help to set up the climb, although often their attention is not fully directed to that process. Attention is on the anticipation of the first climb and who will be the first climber. Everyone is aware on some level, only known to them, of their physical state of readiness, and their emotional states of anxiety, excitement, and anticipation.

Because the emphasis in the class, besides safety, is to climb only when one feels ready, no one is ever forced to climb or made to feel uncomfortable for not climbing. Climbing is a "door" provided for the student to choose when they feel it is time to go through. How many times in our lives do we do something, not because we actively and fully make the choice to do it, but rather because we feel "forced" into it, either through guilt, fear, embarrassment, self-punishment? Students are given the subtle awareness of choosing to participate

because they want to and feel ready to.

Often it is the person most anxious to perform well, comparatively to the rest of the group, who chooses to climb first. At the same time, a volunteer ropes up to learn the belay procedures. At this point three processes occur. The belayer, besides concentrating on learning the initially complicated process of belaying, also begins to be aware of the scope of the responsibility involved with the belay process. He or she realizes, usually for the first time, they literally hold the life of the climber in their hands. They also become aware of the body tension of the climber, learning to listen to that tension and movement long before they actually hear the climbing calls. They experience a very concentrated dual process of cognitive and intuitive awarenesses. They can not ignore either one of these processes, for if they do the climber is jeopardized.

The climber is more internally focused. Often the first climb the individual attempts, they have very little concern for the belayer. Perhaps it is because at that time they are trusting no one but themselves. Although they wear safety equipment, they are on a survival level of assuming it is themselves who will save them, no one or thing else. Generally emotional and physical levels are peaked, while initially the cognitive and intuitive are dimmed. Those who are climbing on emotional concentration tend to have a very difficult beginning.

Those who learn to control some of the overwhelming emotions and try to relax and flow with the rock tend to do better. As the climber gains confidence during the first climb, the physical and emotional levels relax and the cognitive and intuitive awarenesses begin to open.

The third process is taking place with the remaining team members. They are apart but collectively climbing with the climber. Attitudes are generally very positively focused on the climber. And, although there is no vocalizing (due to suggestions in lecture that sound tends to break concentration for the climber), there is a strong "feel" from the group as it sends positive energies with the climber. With some, there is also comparing of abilities taking place as well as anticipations and anxieties.

Should the climber slip, he or she learns the safety of the equipment and belayer, as do the belayer and the remaining team members. If there is a slip, that usually is the first time the climber becomes keenly aware of the belayer and the trust level begins. The team members also become aware of that particular belayer, noting levels of responsibility and trustworthiness. The belayer becomes more confident in the equipment and his or her own abilities.

At the second site, students are required to set up three different anchor systems with a teammate. The systems are checked by the instructor, and the climbing/belaying activity

begins again. There are a few new techniques and formats experienced, but for the most part, students have learned, cognitively, all the "skills" necessary for the level of climbing they will confront that day.

During this portion of the day, students are actively involved with group interaction and positioning. Status within the group often is based on climbing abilities, responsibilities to the group, trustworthiness in threatening situations, willingness to openly share in and with the group, attitudes toward the group and the sport, and personality. No matter what the climbing abilities of the individual, as long as they are open and sharing with the group, the team members accept them. However, if an individual removes themselves from the members because of feelings of superiority, the group becomes socially hostile toward that person. There is no "silent cheering" when this person climbs.

Individually, at the end of the day students have become, on many different levels, aware of many different things. Generally they have become extremely aware of their physical self: their strength, their balance, their flexibility, their stamina. Emotionally, they are very aware of feelings from high anxiety to ecstatic joy when they climb something they really wanted to. They also have become aware of their limitations physically and how they feel about these limitations emotionally. They may not accept these limitations, but they

are aware of them.

They have become aware of the differences attitudes can make in climbing. For those students who climbed to conquer the rock and reach the top, they often did not "make it" or had extreme difficulty in the process. By the time they either came back down or forced, in poor style, their way to the top, they were angry at themselves and the rock. For those who climbed with the rock, feeling and sensing the rock, although they may not have "made the top" they generally felt really good about what they did. They also developed a much greater respect for themselves and the rock. They learned to appreciate different rock surfaces. They began to see and feel things they had never been aware of in a rock surface. They began to understand, sometimes consciously, how they and the rock could flow together, work together, to accomplish the desired task.

Individually, students become aware, sometimes subtly sometimes blatantly, of how others relate to them, the rock and the team members. They begin to understand how important team members can be and the necessity for cooperation and interdependency.

The lessons and awarenesses do not end at the conclusion of the day. On a physical level, students become aware of their bodies and their level of fitness sometimes days later. If muscles are in poor shape, they will let the body know rapidly. Also, because of adrenalin levels in the system, the physical

cleaning process tends to depress, physically, the body. Students typically experience extreme fatigue which lasts for one to two days. Emotionally they experience combinations of exuberations and depressions. They often do not see their daily routine in the same light as they did prior to the climb. They are different because of their intense experience with the earth. They have worked with her on a very open, very real level for survival. They have felt what that level of attunement did for their focus and their capabilities.

For some, these awarenesses are frightening, on the conscious and unconscious level. These individuals are not at a time and place to accept the process. They experienced opening, maybe just looking through the door, but they were not ready to walk through. That is alright, for they, too, will never be "the same." Regardless of what level, they also touched with the Earth Mother and experienced themselves in a survival level with the environment. Even if they are unable, at that time, to return to the rocks, they will be more aware of the planet, themselves, and how they related with the earth. It is a beginning.

For those individuals who opened the door, climbed through and felt good about the experience, another climbing class is available. More importantly, they will most often begin to touch with the earth on other levels. They will introduce friends to the earth. They will have become aware of themselves

and how they feel about the Earth Mother on a much more conscious level. A growth process on many different levels, on many varying intensities will have begun. Because what is reflected out is reflected back, these individuals often help to open the door for others to experience and become aware.

Beyond what has been described, many, many more subtle levels of awarenesses occur for the individual and the group. Each time the individual climbs, he or she sees, feels, senses and becomes more aware of self, the rock and the interconnectedness. Each time the individual becomes more aware with a specific part of nature, they become aware of the larger whole of nature.

As an instructor, I too am a student. I learn about myself, about the rock, about my interconnectedness. I also learn from observing what the other students learn. I have seen so many times how much the earth wants and will help those who work with her. At the same time, for those who do not acknowledge her, she ignores them. Without her energies, I have seen, many times, an individual who has little power to accomplish the smallest task at hand. I also see the mirroring process clearly. If the individual honestly opens, then the rest of the team and the earth opens to them; if they close, so does the rest of their environment.

As an expansion on this theme to introduce people in

the business world to the many energies and potential Earth-Self growths, rockclimbing can be used specifically as a team building tool. Besides the obvious technical data, more conscious emphasis is placed on the self-team process. Rockclimbing as a medium for team process can work far more effectively than group interaction and role playing in a classroom. The very realness with the environment and potential survival levels breaks people through the social barrier of "game playing" quickly. One is not as likely to accept untrustworthiness or unreliability when one's life is directly involved. Also, within the real environment with real-life tensions, students are able to see how their attitudes and perceptions influence others as well as the effect others have on them. The potential of understanding oneself on a much more acute, focused level opens up many paths in understanding how others relate to that interaction as well as the impact on our entire environment.

By specifically focusing on the climbing process as a team building procedure, participants become more cognizantly aware of interactions and interrelations, compared to some of the subtle understandings that become apparent at different levels of perception in a class not specifically oriented toward team building.

This process also gives the facilitator opportunity to explore participants feelings about their environment and how

these feelings influence behavior and attitudes. Any awareness of perception is an initial opening for a better understanding of the self and the Earth-Self relationship; the result being a greater understanding of how we all influence our environment and how we can do much to work with it for increased benefits for all.

Yet another medium for awareness using the theme of climbing incorporates the sense of touch as the primary focus. Climbing "blind" so one moves from the visual world to the tactile world has opened many awarenesses for many different people. One is "forced" to "feel" on levels we usually are not completely familiar with. We learn to see through our hands as a result of what we feel. That sense of touch often opens a deeper level of understanding concerning the rock and the environment in which we climb. Internally we become more aware of our own balance and how it relates to the Earth Mother, both on a literal level as well as an allegorical level. Although not as beneficial for the beginner, for the experienced climber blind climbing serves as a dynamic means to open/reopen to the Earth-Self relationship.

Rockclimbing does not have to be the only medium in which these Earth-Self relational awarenesses come forth. Any activity that takes the student out of the closed room into the openness of the environment will have some impact on Earth-Self connections. The more intense, on a real-life survival level,

the experience, the more the individual will tend to open to the self and the environment and the process of working together. Additional experiences potentially bringing the self, the team, and the environment into a connected pattern include canoeing, orienteering, backcountry camping, skiing, swimming, etc. Although all these sports are individual growth processes, they also are open to group interaction and group growth. The "realness" of the danger involved with each activity opens the participant rapidly. The more real the individual becomes, the more real the situation, the greater the potential for growth to be realized.

There are several Outward Bound organizations which use the environment in conjunction with team building. Unfortunately, these organizations tend to pit man against the environment for survival rather than man working with the environment for the benefit of all. emphasis is placed on "overcoming" the "environment odds" rather than learning to flow with the life energy in Nature and learning from the experiences. With emphasis re-placed on combining Earth and Self energies to flow together, both the individual and the planet potentially will benefit from the interaction. Through conscious physical and cognitive awarenesses with the students toward the environment, conscious awareness potentially increases beyond these aspects of wholism into the intuitive/spiritual level of awareness as well. At the least, because students are consciously opened to

physical and cognitive levels, the potential of trusting and opening to other energy levels is real.

Somewhere within these realities, the individual has the potential to understand how important the environment is in self growth. When one understands the significance of the Earth Mother, one tends to work toward her benefit. To work for the benefit of the Mother, is to work for the benefit of the Self and all Earth's creatures.

These experiential processes may be pertinent to learning in general and in each individual field.

Nature and the Arts

In the creative arts how often do individuals step back from the focus on a canvas or music page to see and hear the beauty and song in the Natural world? How often does the artist contemplate the origin of art and music? By taking the artist outside, taking the musician outside, new awarenesses open up bringing light and sound from the Earth Mother to her children.

Original pigments for painting came from different soils, barks and berries. Original canvases came from the hides of animals, the bark from trees and the surfaces of rocks. Life energies were combined with life energies to create masterpieces. The medium of expression, the medium of execution, the subject, and the artist were all intricately connected with Nature and the Earth Mother. Remove one of these

mediums and there would be no creation. The artist intricately understood the interdependency and continuity of the Circle of Life as a result of this entire process. Even the process of collecting barks, berries, leaves, stones, etc. was a time of reflection on each part of the collective, creative whole. There was an understanding of the life energies that were in each part of the art and the connection of these life energies to create new energies. (see Footnote 15) Clays and muds gathered from local rivers served as the foundation for pottery pieces. Gourds, grown with the hands of man and the life forces of the Mother, were carved into bowls and cups. Grasses and vines were gathered to be woven into baskets and mats. Stones and wood were carved into sculptures. All these dimensional arts were created with great reverence for the Earth Mother and the life energies held within the components for creations. Not only was the process of collecting a consciously reflective time, but during the creating, the artist flowed with the life energies from the give-away to become one with nature. Thus, the self became part of the new creation, and the creation, and components of that creation became part of the self (see Footnote 15) (Pike, 1974).

Music was understood as a life vibration--communication--just as the arts were understood to be Earth reflections. People did not need a radios, stereo or tape deck or electrical amplifying system to bring music into their lives. They stopped

and listened to the sounds of life and energy around them. They heard the harmonizing and melding together of the many melodies of life energy on many different levels. There was the song of the wind, sometimes howling loudly, sometimes whispering through the needles of the pines. The rain sang tunes with melodic beats and with discorded crescendoes. Birds filled the air with every language and melody imaginable, bringing the sounds of confusion into a well orchestrated symphony. Insects added their staccato voices, ebbing and flowing from fortissimo to pianoissimo levels. Animals joined with the voices, trees creaked and swayed rhythmically and the Thunder Beings brought bass resonance throughout.

Life forces were felt from the vibrations of the sounds within and without the Earth Mother. These vibrations tuned with the frequency of the individuals to connect them in spirit and movement with the voices and rhythm around them.^(see Footnote 12) When voices were raised by humans, they were raised to resonate with the life around them. Drums were beat with the rhythm of the Mother's heart. This continuity of life through the sounds of the medicine wheel^(see Footnote 7) were understood and appreciated as lessons to learn from the voices of the Earth. As was the music of nature a healing force for the soul, the soul's music and rhythm were healing forces for the Earth Mother (Waters, 1963; Hill, 1979).

If, on an educational level, the artist was exposed, re-

exposed, to the creative energies of the Earth, would not that creative force open up new mediums for the artist as well as open up awareness and appreciation for the creations in nature? Specifically, if an artist were instructed in how and which plants, berries, barks, etc. to gather for the purpose of making color pigments, and then instructed in how to make different "canvases", that artist would not only be more aware of the origins of the components of art, but would have a greater appreciation for the creative supplies in Nature's cupboards. Because creative endeavors begin outside in the collecting process, more of the artist is directly involved, literally, with the energy forces of the Earth, helping to bring the art into a cohesive whole.

The same would be true for the dimensional arts. To actually gather clays and grasses, grow gourds, collect woods for carving, brings the artist's eye into focus on the beauty and potential created beauty that is throughout nature. An artist must be able to see with the inner eye and with the potential eye. To look at a blank canvas and put something on it is to create only from within. To know and feel the energies and origins of a color, of a surface, is to create from within as well as utilize the creative energies from nature. This process connects the artist with the medium, the creation, and the Earth Mother on a wholistic level.

The same is true for the musician. If the individual first

learns to listen, to all the parts and then the whole, and to be aware of how the different sounds and vibrations within Nature affect all her children, then the musician will hear and feel the music of life. (see Footnote 12) The musical group Paul Winter Consort learned to listen to the voices of nature and worked with that sound to create music from within and flowing through Nature.

Musicians potentially could learn much from nature if they worked with sound and vibrations from the Earth Mother. If these sounds are opened to and combined with the music created from within the individual, the circular process of sound continuity will be understood and another dimension of the Great Medicine Wheel will be understood and felt. The interconnectedness of the self, the Earth Mother and all our brothers and sisters will be felt and heard.

Because what is felt within is reflected out, and what is reflected out is mirrored back, the artists' creations, visually and audibly, effect all those who come in contact with them. Not only has the artist been intricately involved with the Earth Mother, but through the resulting creations, the audiences exposed to the art or music also becomes connected, come into a closer relationship with Nature and her creatures. This serves as another beginning for Earth-Self awarenesses.

Use of the Metaphysical Medicine Wheel

Educators, doctors, counselors, social workers--all have various testing guides to determine, help the individual determine, personality traits and the career potentials that would best suit that individual as a result of their characteristics and interests. Tests, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the Strong-Campbell, the Kuder D.D. Occupation Interest Survey, the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule, the Differential Aptitude Test, the Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale, etc., help the individual to become aware of some of the subtle parts of their whole personality. This awareness then potentially opens new doors to the understanding of interests and abilities in selecting career and life paths.

What would happen if educators, counselors, doctors, etc. incorporated in their testing the concepts of the Medicine Wheel? As described in the section on Native American Philosophies, the Medicine Wheel is symbolic of all life and the interconnections of each spirit's path with all other spirits' paths. The wheel is circular representing the continuity of all life. As we enter and travel the wheel, during our life we touch with the characteristics of other parts of the whole--to include directions, seasons, animals, plants, minerals and colors. The characteristics of all these parts of the Whole influence our spirit as a new integrated being with that Whole.

(see Footnote 7)

If we were to explore the different characteristics of these influences on our being, potentially would we not have a better understanding of ourselves, our preferences, our life paths? Potentially we would also have a clearer understanding of our connection with the Earth Mother. We would understand our interdependencies and interconnections with the directions and seasons, animals, plants, and minerals; appreciating their subtle personalities and characteristics as we appreciate our friends and their particular personalities and characteristics.

Also, as one would be directly exploring characteristics with the understanding of their influence on the self, would there not be a greater interest in knowing more about these spirits and pieces of the whole that effect our being? If there is a greater interest in knowing the plants, animals, minerals, directions and seasons, would there not be a greater interest in preserving them? We stay away from or fear a great deal of nature because we are unfamiliar with her. The more we understand Nature's many complicated parts, the more comfortable we tend to feel. The more comfortable we feel, the more we relate directly with her. This relationship is a process of growth for both the Earth and us.

Understanding the concepts of the Medicine Wheel and how the individual fits into it is a process of opening to the concept of the continuity of life. Conceptually the Medicine

Wheel encompasses all circles of all lives and processes. By exploring/studying the different parts of the wheel, from the seasons and climates to the various kingdoms, one opens to an understanding of these different segments' characteristics as well as opens to a greater awareness of the Earth's children.

Conceptually, to be a whole person, one must travel the Medicine Wheel during one's lifetime and incorporate and understand the aspects of each life segment as it connects to the whole. Through careful awareness and study of these segmented characteristics, one potentially begins to understand one's own personality traits and how they enhance or take away from one's life path. Conceptually, an individual tries to learn from the positive aspects of each Medicine Wheel segment and incorporates this knowledge into the Self for purposes of growth. At the same time, because of clearer understanding of the Earth, one becomes more attuned to the planet and our interdependencies.

Conceptually, the Medicine Wheel is allegorical in nature. Through explorations and right brain awarenesses of various traits, characteristics and personalities of everything from the times of day, directions of north, east, south or west, seasons, animals, plants and minerals, one becomes more attuned to learning potentials through observations, as well as understandings of the interrelationships of all energies. Hopefully, this opening to other energies eliminates any

prejudices held toward the energy.

As an example: if one has anxieties concerning the dark and night, by studying conceptually what the night holds, one opens to realms of possibilities both positively and negatively. The darkness holds many night creatures, holds security for many, is a time of rest and sleep for some, is a quiet time. We can learn from these different characteristics, just by opening to them. Allegorically if one looks into darker quieter sides of the self, one may find a great haven and peace. One may find a different creative self in the inner hidden sanctums of the self that only unconsciously appeared before.

One can examine anything in nature, beyond the external level or pre-formed, precharacterized level and discover teachings for both the world of nature as well as the self. By doing this, as is the concept of the Medicine Wheel, one opens to self awareness, earth awareness and awarenesses of the interconnectedness and interdependencies of all life.

With the new awareness of the self, the individual will also have a clearer understanding of others. To understand the characteristics on the Great Wheel, is to understand the influences and strong connections of those characteristics. This insight can open doors to further communication because of the understanding of perspectives.

The concept of studying the Medicine Wheel for Self and Earth awareness is not meant to be at the exclusion of other

personal and career tests. Rather it is suggested to be offered in conjunction with other indicators of path directions. All serve to clarify meaning for the individual. As a further growth the Medicine Wheel helps to open up understanding of the Earth Mother and the planet-self relationship as well.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

As a people, we were once all very connected with the Earth. We were both her caretaker as well as the recipient of her many gifts. We lived in cooperation with the Earth Mother and all her children in a harmonious, well balanced orchestra. We attuned to the life energies around us and learned to utilize these energies for our benefit and the benefit of all our brothers and sisters.

As was the philosophy of the Native American, all that is reflected out is reflected back to us; we understood the interdependent, interconnected relationship we had with the Earth Mother and every energy form on her. We did not take without knowing the effect that action had on all of life. We did not take without reverence for the Great Give-Away. We did not pollute for that would be defiling ourselves. Our health was reflected in the health of the planet and visa versa.

Somewhere along the evolutionary path, technology advanced and we stopped listening to the earth connections. We stopped listening to our Mother's voice and the voices of our sisters and brothers. We became unbalanced as we closed ourselves from our Mother and each other. We became unhealthy, as did our Earth, from our many pollutions and unthinking actions. The Earth Mother became unbalanced; as is evidenced by the many

climatic and meteorological changes causing land and water changes.

It is time to rebalance now, both ourselves and the planet. It is time to combine the knowledges of long ago from our interconnectedness and interrelationship with the Earth Mother, with the knowledges and inventions of our technological advancements. This seems to be a logical process that reopens the self to the Earth, rebalances the energies on the Earth and creates an Earth-Self awareness for growth. We will once again be able to live in harmony on the Earth, as will the Earth be able to live in harmony with us.

In trying to find a balance between the modern, technological world and our long past interdependencies with the Mother Earth, some of the basic philosophies of the Native American Indian can be explored for potential intergration for reconnection with the planet. Native Americans believe all life, all aspects of life, were and are connected. Every spirit is connected with and interdependent on every other energy. This philosophy is the basic realization of modern quantum physics. Quantum physics relates the connection of all matter as part of an entire whole. Within this realm of quantum physics, there is no absolute, but rather a realm of probabilities, whereby all actions influence all other actions with, or without, affecting the results.

If one opens to the realm of possibility of the

interconnectedness of all life, all matter, all energy, then the realm of our responsibility, as well as our potential growth is all encompassing. This can either be viewed as an overwhelming possibility, or as a limitless growth potential within a realm of a collective consciousness.

Native Americans with their views of interconnectedness held a basic philosophical premise that they were responsible to the Earth Mother. However, at the same time, life being circular and connected, the Earth Mother was also responsible to them. With this view of integration in their lifestyles, they actively cared for the planet, while utilizing her many unseen energies for their continued existence. Often these energy sources were their only means of survival for they allowed healing and communication potentials that connected them to other spirits. Using earth ley lines, healing knowledges, channeled energies, crystals, Native Americans were able to survive. This certainty was for the good of the Self as well as the good of the planet for man was considered to be her caretaker.

As we have advanced technologically, we have discovered and invented and explored in areas we never knew existed even a few years ago. Unfortunately, as man has become more excited about bigger and better technological advancements, he has forgotten about the planet he is connected to. We, as a people, have neglected our responsibility to the Earth Mother and it's

beginning to show. The nuclear and chemical wastes and pollutions, the rising oceanic temperatures, the changing climates, the extensive land erosions, the massive starvations of peoples, the extinctions of plants and animals, are all indicative of our neglect. We have not been heeding the concept that what is reflected out is mirrored back. So when we create pollutions from technical developments, although the developments provide us with benefits, they also cause major problems as a result of the contaminations. A good example of this good/bad process can be seen in the development of nuclear power. As a benefit, nuclear power provides energy without destroying some of nature's other "children." However, the nuclear waste products and accidents resulting since nuclear development have caused damage and destruction to countless people and lands.

How do we weigh the good and the bad? Rather than trying to segment each aspect, why not look at it wholistically to gain full understanding and value. Through awareness and opening to the many potentials available to us, we should be able to incorporate modern technologies with earth awareneses.

To do this, don't we need to return to basics? Don't we need to begin with a basic connection with this planet and all the life forms on it? Don't we need to return to the openness and understanding of the many useful energies available naturally before we rely strictly on the man-developed energies?

The earth is going through many changes right now. Some are man-induced, some are natural, geological changes that have been occurring for billions of years. To survive some of these changes, which have the potential of being tremendous, we need to know how to work with the energies naturally available to us in case man-made energies no longer exist.

Opening one to these potentials is not necessarily an easy task. The entire concept of earth energies may not be readily accepted by individuals. However, this is not the issue. The issue is how to open individuals to the realm of possibility of the existence and utilization of other energies for survival and self growth.

Individuals can not be forced to open to concepts. Individuals will open when they feel secure, ready and perhaps needy. Thus, the only way to provide the initial possibility of opening is to provide an atmosphere in which the individual feels secure, and then introduce them to various potentials--not on a level of "having to learn" but rather on a level of "asking to open to potentials."

Yet, again, one can not be forced to open or accept. Therefore, a means of exposing an individual to potentials becomes a way of teaching. Through exposure, one becomes aware. Through awareness, one opens to other possibilities. By opening to other possibilities, one knocks down walls of absolutes and opens the door to the realm of probabilities and possibilities.

As with a mirror facing a mirror, the reflections will continue on infinitely.

Suggested ways to reconnect with the Earth Mother while working within the realms of the modern world are through the process of both formal and informal education. Within this context adult education is looked at in the broadest sense. It encompasses the learning process on many different levels and concentrations. It includes learning and growth experientially and academically, for both personal, technical and professional potentials. In this same light, the adult learner is viewed as a unique individual made up of many different roles and potentials. For the adult educator the task becomes more challenging, but holds more creative potentials as well. For the adult educator, opening to awarenesses concerning the needs and abilities of the adult learner, as well as the potential program designs that could potentially encompass the Earth-Self relationship in a wholistic sense without alienating the learner are necessary. Awareness and acceptance that the learner will learn and grow at a level that is comfortable and necessary for him or her at that time is necessary. As an adult educator the task becomes one of exposure. If one can provide a program design that potentially exposes the student to the Earth on a wholistic level--encompassing the physical, cognitive, emotional and spiritual--without forcing any aspect of that wholism, then the realm of possibility of opening to the environment on one or

more level increases. To do so, one must be aware of the environment, must be aware of the student, and must be open to learning potentials on multitudes of levels. The adult educator should remain open to potentials to provide an educational atmosphere of openness--for what is reflected out will be mirrored back.

By combining the formality of learning in the classroom, with the experiential process of learning outside in Nature, the individual becomes aware of the self, the Earth, and the Earth-Self interrelationships and interdependencies. This can be accomplished from individual activities to group processes. The "how to" is a matter of opening to other possible methods of subject discovery in order to retouch with the Earth. This can happen through vision, or path, quests by an individual spending time alone in nature; through team building processes while touching with outdoor activities; through understanding the influences from the Great Medicine Wheel on our individual medicine wheels; through studying early peoples' methods of connecting with the earth in order to create artistically or musically; and more. In general, if we open our selves we have the potential to realign with the energies of the Earth Mother. Native Americans believe that all life is interconnected, interdependent; that what is reflected out is mirrored back. This also is the basic premise of quantum physics. If such is the case, if we are well balanced by opening, the Earth Mother

will catch this reflection and mirror it back to us.

The means of exposing individuals to wholistic levels of awarenesses--physical, cognitive, intuitive, emotional--is as infinite as the mirrored reflections. The few suggested means of incorporating academic with experiential learnings offered in this paper only begin to touch the realm of possibilities. Many areas of research could be devoted to the very question of how to open one to the Earth wholistically through every discipline known to man.

Much has been written concerning the environment--its destruction, its potential beauty, ways of preventing pollution and damage. Much has been written on the concepts of working in a natural environment for the purpose of team building and managerial techniques. Much has been written on the concepts of wholistic health. However, little has been addressed that links the environment with man on a wholistic level. When team building programs go into the natural environment, often the concept is to overcome the severity of that environment. Thus man becomes the warrior against the natural world in a fight for survival as opposed to an integrated segment of the whole. When individuals wholistically work toward wellness, they often do so with focus entirely within the self rather than with connections to their environment. When the environment is focused on for preservation purposes, it is looked at as a separate entity from the rest of life; a lake is preserved, a forest is

preserved, a species is preserved. The significance of the preservation of that individual on the Whole is not addressed.

Many avenues are unexplored that connect the environment, the Earth, directly with the Self and the resulting potentials. One of the primary conclusions as a result of this paper is the need for further research in a variety of areas. The following questions are presented as suggested potential research areas for further pursuit on the Earth-Self Interconnections: What are the potentials for assimilation of Earth-Self awarenesses and interdependencies when the adult learner is directly confronted with the Earth? What are ways of directly connecting and integrating, wholistically, the individual with the environment on an equal level as opposed to resisting one another? What significance does awareness of Nature have on the individual? When the individual is consciously aware and connected to the Earth, what significance does this interconnection have on other individuals and the environment? As we become aware of our impact on our environment, do we become more aware of our environment's impact on us? In what specific ways, within given disciplines, can man and the planet prosper by reconnecting with Earth energies in a modern world? What has happened to our Earth-Self interrelationship as we advance technologically? Of what significant impact does our technical advancement have on other spirits on this planet? How do we reconnect wholistically with the Earth Mother to fit

individual comprehensions and perspectives? How do we tap, re-tap, into Earth energies? How do we utilize Earth energies within a modern context? Of what significance are the knowledges of interrelationships we once had during early existence, with the modern world of today? What methods of Earth-Self awarenesses would be most beneficial to a specific individual, or a group? How can Earth awareness benefit the technical world? What are the potential results of Earth-Self awareness in the modern world? As one connects with the Earth Mother in one area of wholism--e.g. the physical, cognitive, intuitive or spiritual aspect--what impact or significance does that connection have with the other aspects of wholism? How does opening to one level of wholism effect on opening of the Self to the Earth?

Further research questions concerning specific disciplines and means of Earth-Self interconnections for awareness could be explored. Research could connect, potentially, any discipline with the earth--to include the impact of that discipline on the planet and on the Self; and how an interconnection of the Earth and that discipline could benefit the Earth-Self interrelationship for growth.

As a result of research and experiential interconnections, it appears to be relevant that the individual actually, physically, touch with the earth to begin initial awarenesses. That appears to be one of the significant links in the Native

American philosophy of Nature-Self interconnections. It appears Native Americans' close physical link to the earth plays an important role in their philosophical connection to the Earth. This in itself could be another potential research question: Of what significance does physical contact with the Earth have on Earth-Self awarenesses? By developing ways to reconnect awarenesses to this planet through many different disciplines, more people, because of individual preferences, would probably make efforts to open.

The more people open to any level of earth awareness, the greater potential for earth survival. Also, as each individual opens, the greater potential that individual has in reconnecting with the earth energies for self growth. As individuals begin to tap into earth energies, possibilities for increased communication, healing, communal interactions and global peace increase. If we open to an acceptance or a realm of possibility that all life is interconnected and interdependent, we potentially will open the door to personal and planetary growth and survival.

The more balanced and healthy the individual, the greater the awareness of other energy potentials. The more one opens, the more will be revealed to us. To open is to share. Idealistically, the more people share, the less world tension and hostility. All leads to a healthier earth, and a healthier self, with potentials limitless.

Footnotes

¹Man unthinkingly has caused major damages to the planet and her "children." These damages are often long-range, affecting many different eco-systems on an on-going level. As an example, on April 26, 1986 a nuclear reactor at Chernoble in the Soviet Union burned. The radioactive smoke from the fire affected hundreds of thousands of miles of lands--affecting animals and plants world wide. A total of 179 cities around the site were evacuated; one year later only 10% have been repopulated, the remaining 90% were still reading too high in levels of radioactivity. Fallout from the accident is affecting the Scandanavian reindeer population from the deer eating contaminated grass. The resulting meat is contaminated and poisonous for human consumption. On a long range scale, other indications of long-term radiation contamination is expected to be found in water systems, animal and plant species, genetic changes in species, etc.

Acid rain is also a major problem to the eco-system in areas where factories have not regulated their pollutions. As a result, the atmosphere has been filled with acids, which rain on fragile eco-systems causing imbalances and destructions. A prime example can be seen in the mountains in New England where acid rains from Canada have caused major problems. Specifically, Camel's Hump in Vermont has been a long-time site

for concern because the fragile ecology is being destroyed from the damaging rains.

Presently deforestation is taking place in the Amazon to make space for new housing developments. The result of this deforestation is affecting many aspects of the eco-system. The heavy tree layer had been directly responsible for the tropical rains because of the vast amount of oxygen placed in the environment from the flora. Without the trees, rains are no longer falling, as a result the lands that had been watered by the forests and Amazon river are now drying up. As a result, animals and people are beginning to starve from lack of vegetation to supplement the animal kingdom. Also, the forest's animal systems are changing as the food chain changes. A resulting imbalance is taking place where once existing natural predators kept a balance in the food chain, but now no longer exist.

Within the Amazon forests, even the people who cleared areas and built homes are finding it impossible to remain with the land. The soil is not good enough to sustain agriculture; and undergrowth is taking over areas cleared for planting. Even close to the forests, droughts are increasing at an alarming rate, which decreases possibilities of farming.

Damaging to the planet's atmosphere are the major carbon dioxides being spewn forth from vehicles and factories. These carbon dioxides "blanket" the planet and cause a greenhouse

affect which heats up the planet. Between 1958 and 1986, the carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere have risen 9% causing a 3-10 degrees F. increase in temperature around the globe. The results of the warming trend affects everything from the glaciers to the tropical forests. In turn, the glaciers melting affect ocean currents which affect weather currents, which affect land masses and all the life on these masses--including man (National Geographic Special (film), 1986).

There are many other imbalances occurring as a result of man's technological advances. This is not to say new technologies are bad, however there are indications that further safe guards are needed as well as conscious awareness of the domino affect each action has on all other actions to ensure earth continuation. For further information on environmental changes due to man's technologies, the ambitious reader is encouraged to contact the Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Public Affairs A-107, 401 M Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20460.

²Nature has set an elaborately balanced ecosystem whereby each plant and animal is interdependent upon others for survival. To remove one of those links in the chain is to effect all other links. Often nature has been able to rebalance through time when one link disappears. However, when many links disappear from a chain, the chain becomes weaker and weaker as do all those parts of it. Man is the only link in the life

chain who arbitrarily destroys links for immediate self gratification, regardless of the resulting domino effect on other segments of the chain.

Examples of these effects on the entire chain can be seen with almost every animal and plant that is on the Environmental Protection Agency's Endangered Species List. As an example, eagles are now on the list. The eagle, which eats both fresh game and carion, keeps the rabbit populations down, keeps disease at a check by consuming carion, regulates other bird populations etc. However, because farmers in the west found some herd loss (smaller animals such as lambs, etc.) from eagles preying on the herds, they began to wipe out the population. As a result, the rabbit population grew, which meant the coyote population grew, and then the coyotes began to feed on the herds. Grass lands were harmed by the abundant supply of rabbits, which in turn then effected the herds grazing abilities as well as erosion to the top soil. Erosion then effects the lands ability to soak up water and both ground water tables and streams are effected. The chain continues on and on as one water supply affects another in another territory.

The eagle is but one example of unthinking responses to emotional reactions. Man has forgotten he also belongs in that whole chain and his actions affect, circularily himself as well.

This arbitrary destruction covers all kindgoms--plant, animal and mineral. For further information, the reader is

encouraged to contact the Environmental Protection Agency concerning endangered species and natural eco-systems interdependencies.

³Quartz is a crystalline mineral with many different qualities. Notable are its piezo-electric properties whereby it can produce an electric current when put under tension or pressure. It oscillates or vibrates with both a positive and negative energy field at frequencies measured in millions per second and is used in resonators and oscillators for frequency control in electronic communication equipment. Radio, satellite communications, telephone and television exist because of this energy activity. Recent solid state breakthroughs of quartz timepieces, and other scientific advancements owe their existence directly to this crystal oscillation phenomenon (Deaver, 1986, p. 2-6).

Today rock crystals are used by science in computers, optical equipment, oscillators and sound resonators for radio transmitters, radar location equipment and lenses for microscopes, cameras or any other instrument using a lens. It is used in almost any electronic device where high precision and sensitivity are required.

Although there are differing opinions concerning this process, Kirlian photographs of various crystals show that the energy emanations are all different. Individual crystals produce identical patterns each time they are photographed as

long as the conditions remain the same, but each crystal has its own energy signature like fingerprints.

Quartz crystal is commonly found in almost every country in the world. It is found in both its true form as well as in combinations with other minerals--granite being a common example which is as much as 40% quartz. Natural quartz crystals were formed in quartz veins and pockets that pushed into earlier sandstone deposits roughly 100 to 250 million years ago. The geometry of these formations is intricate and aligns with the magnetic fields of the earth (Bord & Bord 1976).

Native Americans, past and present, as well as many other peoples have used, do use, quartz crystals for purposes of distant communications with other peoples and ethereal levels. It is believed the high frequency levels associated with the stone are sent out and connected to other sources, just as they are in modern communication devices. The individual "listens" to the frequencies of the stone and understands the messages through the connection of frequencies of the self and the other entity. Crystals are also used in healing. It is believed the balance and regulated frequencies of a stone can be used to balance and harmonize unbalanced frequencies with an individual.

(see Footnote 12)

⁴Throughout the world there can be found stone circles, stone monuments, stone caverns, stone alters and more which were and are believed by some people today to contain tremendous

amounts of energies for use in healing and communications. Most often these stones are quartz or granite. They also are believed often to be located on earth ley lines which help to balance and intensify the energy states within the crystals to begin with (Bord & Bord, 1976). For further information the ambitious reader is encouraged to review the following sources listed in the references: The Old Straight Track by Alfred Watkins, The View Over Atlantis by John Mitchell, and Quicksilver Heritage by Paul Screeton. Stone Circles of the British Isles by Aubrey Burl and Beyond Stonehenge by Gerald Hawkins also provide indepth studies on stone circles, stones, monuments, mounds, etc. in the British Isles and Europe.

Ley lines are the connecting energy lines forming an alignment between ancient sites of all kinds. These sites can be any combination of stone circles, stone rows, standing stones, henges, cromlechs, hillforts, burial mounds, religious buildings, ancient trackways, etc. The sites, especially when close together, are an indication of the underlying "lines" of energy. The sites are thought to have been built at points on the earth where energies were particularly strong. Then by utilizing quartz and other energy conducting crystals, people could purportedly pull some of the in-earth energy upward for use in healing and communication.

Alfred Watkins of Hereford, England discovered that ancient sacred sites were arranged in straight lines that extended for

several miles. He believed prehistoric people traveled to and from one landmark to another in straight tracks to find their way across country. The landmarks include Medicine Wheels, Neolithic Stones, holy wells or trees, and stone crosses. In 1952 he published The Old Straight Track containing his conclusions of his many years hunt that the patterns in British landscapes (like the tracks, monuments and sacred places and the lore about them) did not arise by chance. It was rather, a "pattern laid down by Neolithic surveyors that developed over 4000 years. He viewed the country as one vast archeological relic, a structure of lines and centers, arranged on universal principles and related to the topography and the seasonal movements of the heavens" (Bryant, 1983, p. 157).

Ley lines are thought to extend far beyond the British Isles, crossing every land and water mass on this planet. They are thought to store energies and were, and are by some peoples to this day, used for healing and communication purposes.

Ley lines are stores of information and any one who is sensitive to them can read or translate the information. It is known that ancient people were aware of these lines and also the power points...called vortices. Sometimes they would sleep on them by passing the conscious mind and its interferences, allowing the information to come through the dream state. Many believe this is one of the ways that prophets could make predictions about the planet and their environment. Mapping the landscape was, and still is, a part of various cultures worldwide. The Native Americans knew Geomancy quite well, though they didn't use that particular term. They knew of power posts on the Earth, but didn't call them vortices. Rather they simply designated them as sacred (Bryant, 1983, pp. 157-158).

The ambitious reader is encouraged to study Page Bryant's book The Earth Changes Survival Handbook, Hawkins book Beyond Stonehenge as well as other books mentioned under the footnotes on crystals for further information on ley lines.

⁵In the quantum theory of physics, J.S. Bell published a mathematical theorem which asserts "that at a deep and fundamental level, the 'separate parts' of the universe are connected in an intimate and immediate way" (Zukav, 1979, p. 309). Albert Einstein's theory introduced the equation $E=mc^2$; all matter is energy. Within the quantum world of sub-atomic particles, all activity is governed by loose probability rather than by rigid predictable certainties.

The following passage from Capra's Tao of Physics captures the energy-matter relationship:

The exploration of the subatomic world in the twentieth century has revealed the intrinsically dynamic nature of matter. It has shown that the constituents of atoms, the subatomic particles, are dynamic patterns which do not exist as isolated entities, but as integral parts of an inseparable network of interactions. These interactions involve a ceaseless flow of energy manifesting itself as the exchange of particles; a dynamic interplay in which particles are created and destroyed without end in a continual variation of energy patterns. The particle interactions give rise to the stable structures which build up the material world, which again do not remain static, but oscillate in rhythmic movements. The whole universe is thus engaged in endless motion and activity; in a continual cosmic dance of energy (Capra, 1975, p. 225).

Combining the individual theories that make up the quantum theory of physics, one finds a sub-atomic world which is influenced by and interconnected to all else that comes in

contact with it. On a more esoteric level, one can then combine the quantum theory of matter and energy and probability with brain mind theory (Loye, 1983).

⁶The concept of wholism refers to a balanced integration of the self--the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual realm of a life. "Wholistically well" can be defined as a balanced state of being for all the segments of the whole. Each part or segment affects all other parts. Thus, an individual may be physically well, all bodily parts functioning properly, but may be emotionally unbalanced. The result would be a less than well individual. The stress from the emotional imbalance could then cause imbalances on the physical state--causing high blood pressure or headaches or worse. Thus, to become well again, the individual would not only have to treat the physical imbalance, but the emotional imbalance as well.

All parts of life are interconnected with all other parts to create a balanced whole. Wellness is the interbalancing of all these parts.

⁷A medicine wheel is the symbol, both tangibly and ethereally, for the interconnection and continuum of all life. In essence, it serves as the Native American symbol of quantum physics where by all segments of life and energy are interconnected and interdependent with the whole. For further clarification on the quantum theory. (see Footnote 5. p.-)

⁸A medicine man, or woman, serves a multifacted purpose

within a tribe. Medicine persons were/are responsible for both the physical and spiritual well-being of the people they serve. Having apprenticed many, many years with their elders as they grew up, medicine people learned the ways of healing with herbs, with "other energy sources"(see Footnote 3,4 and 10) with prayers and ceremonies. They learned and became responsible for the spiritual, psychological, physical and emotional care of those individuals in their tribe. Generally medicine people were sought for their council when major decisions concerning the tribe were to be made. They were consulted by the leaders and chiefs of the group because of their ability to "see far" and their knowledge. Another term for medicine man is shaman.

⁹Native Americans feel a strong connection with the earth and her elemental forces. They believe that all energies and aspects are interdependent upon all other energies; and, if attuned to these energies, they can bring about needed changes that benefit both themselves and the planet. The raindance was, and still is, a practiced medicine power used to connect with the earth's elemental forces to bring rain or snow to a dry area. It is the calling of the "Thunder Beings." Modern science can not give reasons why such a practice seems possible, but indications of the results can be seen in many areas. The following examples serve as but an indication of the practice and results.

In 1965 when the northeastern section of the United States

experienced a severe drought, in order to alleviate the conditions, Black Cloud, a Tuscarora Chief, performed a rainmaking ceremony on June 30. He began the ceremony at 10:25 a.m. and by 11:00 a.m. rain was soaking Manhattan, N.Y.

Lorraine Carr writing in the Albuquerque Tribune on Jun. 5, 1972, states that rain dances held at the Tesuque Indian Pueblo on May 28 brought a gentle five hour rain that soaked the parched earth. She also recalled a June day at Santo Domingo Pueblo where a ceremony took place causing torrents of rain in a drought stricken area (Steiger, 1984, p. 20).

In 1959 Calgary Productions, a subsidiary of Walt Disney Studios, was filming Nomads of the North. They were on location in the Kananaskis Forest near Banff, Alberta Canada. Usually this would be an ideal location for snow, yet this year the snow was only covering the ground in patches. After five days of major financial loss while waiting for a snow storm, moviemakers approached Chief Johnny Bearspaw and the Stony tribe. (Chief Bearspaw was known in that area for his raindance and resulting rain at the Calgary Stampede.) The group performed the dance at Kananaskis and within hours seven inches of snow blanketed the area (Steiger, 1984, p.21).

Sun Bear, Chippewa medicine man, travels around the U.S. and European countries speaking and conducting Medicine Wheel gatherings concerning Earth awareness. Often he is known to be "followed" by Thunder Beings at these gatherings, where one to

three days of rain fall during his time in any given location. These occurrences of rain have happened so many times in areas where droughts have been present before his arrival, that people with whom he associates are convinced its because of his strong connection with the Earth's elements (Bear, Wabun & Weinstock, 1983, p.223-226).

Commonly farmers and non-Native Americans in the west are joining together to ask for rain when crops are drying up. The results have been anything from a gentle soaking to a downpour (Steiger, 1984 p.23-24).

The medicine power for rain has also been considered to be transferred to artifacts and icons. On April 17, 1964 the New Anthropological Museum in Chapultepec Park in Mexico City installed a 167 ton statue of Tlaloc, Teotihuacan god of rain. The 24 foot, 12 centuries old idol had been transported into Mexico City from Coalinchan, 31 miles east of the city. During the trip and upon its arrival in the city it was followed by cloudburts that "rained out ballgames" (Steiger, 1984. p. 21-22).

In 1953 Professor William Payne, an archaeologist, ceramicist and art professor, found likenesses of the rain god Cocijo while digging at a site of the Zapotec civilization in Mexico. When Professor Payne returned to Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, CA he produced several ceramic copies and decided to try an experiment. He picked a day weather forecasters

decreed no rain was in store for Costa Mesa, placed several icons around campus and had his students join him in a raindance. Within hours the college and community were inundated with rain. Since that time Professor Payne and his students have produced rain 12 out of 13 times when clear weather was predicted. Four of the rainstorms came in on southerly winds from Mexico, an occurrence uncommon in the Costa Mesa area (Steiger, 1984, p. 22).

Are these climatic changes coincidence or connected with the request of the askers? Can weather be changed by the will of an individual or collective will of a group as is theorized through quantum physics? There are no absolute answers, one can only form one's own belief; concepts. However, for whatever reason or coincidence, raindances and climatic changes do often occur coincidentally according to documented proof of meteorological occurrences at given times, places and dates.

¹⁰The brain is made up of matter, matter is energy, thus the brain is energy. The mind, or will, of the individual exists on the subatomic particle level of anti-matter, with wave patterns and frequencies (evident from wave movements on electro-encephalographs). Because each particle influences all other particles, the probability or possibility of the brain-mind influence on something else, some other matter or energy, is very probable according to quantum physics. Thus, the possibility of one person's energies affecting another energy

field because of the flow of particles hitting other particles is probable or possible.

Within this concept lies the possibility of touch healing or mediational healing where the thought process of consciously influencing another energy pattern is possible.

"....everything in the universe, past, present and future, is connected to everything else, by a web of electromagnetic radiation that 'sees' everything else" (Gribbin, 1984, p. 191).

Within the same realm, because quantum physics works within a "no time," "no space" limitation, all is only perceived. The probability that we can consciously touch our frequencies to this anti-time, anti-matter level and "see" possible outcomes lies within the realm of precognition as a real possibility (Loye, 1983).

The Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics marked the emergence of the new physics, wherein scientists acknowledged that "a complete understanding of reality lies beyond the capabilities of rational thought" (Zukav, 1979, p. 38).

As stated by Henry Pierce Stapp:

'The Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics was essentially a rejection of the presumption that nature could be understood in terms of elementary space-time realities. According to the new view, the complete description of nature at the atomic level was given by probability functions that referred, not to underlying microscopic space-time realities, but rather to the macroscopic objects of sense experiences. The theoretical structure did not extend down and anchor itself on

fundamental microscopic space-time realities. Instead it turned back and anchored itself in the concrete sense realities that form the basis of social life... This pragmatic description is to be contrasted with descriptions at an attempt to peer 'behind the scenes and tell us what is 'really happening' (Zukav, 1979, p. 39).

It is clearly noted in the quantum theory that it is impossible to observe reality without changing it. If we observe a certain event, not only do we have no way of proving that the result of that event would have been the same if we had not been watching it, all that we do know indicates that it would not have been the same because the result that we got was affected by the fact that we were observing it (Gribbin, 1984 Zukav, 1979). We influence our environment by the very act of our consciousness of it. The more aware we are, the more we influence, actively, that environment.

¹¹Sun Bear is a Chippewa medicine man. In 1969 he formed an interracial tribe called the Bear Tribe in Spokane, Washington on Vision Mountain. He is a respected medicine man, or shaman, by many different Native American tribes across the country. His vision, which he is actively involved with now, is to teach people on the earth, of all races, self reliance and Earth awareness. Sun Bear is considered a great healer, physically and spiritually, among the people with whom he comes into contact. His Bear Tribe is a community of concerned individuals who live with respect and reverence for and with the Earth Mother. Sun Bear also has many apprentices world wide who

are working toward the Earth's and individual survival. The Bear Tribe teachings combine spirituality with practicality. Students learn practical skills such as farming, herbology, foraging, hunting, building, beekeeping, waste removal, composting, etc., while learning and understanding the interdependency we all have with the Earth Mother. For more information on this individual, the ambitious reader is urged to contact the Bear Tribe, P.O. Box 9167, Spokane, WA. 99209.

¹²According to quantum mechanics (see Footnote 5, p.-.) all matter has energy. Matter is energy and all matter is made up of sub-atomic particles moving in waves or frequencies. The higher the frequency, the higher the energy; the lower the frequency, the lower the energy. Because all energy has a frequency, some frequencies will be on the same wavelength as others--thus some energy or matter will relate more easily to other matter or energy because of similar or equal frequencies. At the same time, some frequencies will be at opposite ends of the spectrum and will move at different speeds with one another. When matter with one frequency is matched with matter of a different frequency, the result is either: the slowing or speeding up of a frequency to flow compatibly; or two separate unconnected flows of energy that do not/can not sync (Zukav, 1979, p. 53-65).

¹³Today, Native Americans, still philosophically living with Native traditions in a modern world, come together in "pow-

wows." These gatherings serve the purpose of both social interaction and re-acquaintancing, as well as tribal council and business meetings. Pow-wows take place from one day to a week, can be open or closed to the public depending on the purpose and group gathering, and include dance, song ceremonies, contests, and tribal business affairs meetings. Sometimes only members of one tribe join together in a pow-wow, at other gatherings several clans and tribes join together for the purpose of sharing.

¹⁴Eagle feathers are no longer randomly used for ceremonies as the eagle is now on the Environmental Protection Agency's "Endangered Species" List. Often, for modern ceremonies, turkey feathers are painted to look like eagle feathers. Some Native Americans are given permits by the U.S. Government to carry eagle feathers for the purpose of religious ceremony.

¹⁵Man's development, physically, historically, culturally, and in an evolutionary perspective has been studied/documentated/explored by many people and cultures. For an indepth study of the anthropological explorations of man's development, the ambitious reader is encouraged to read J.Z. Young's An Introduction to the Study of Man, Kroeber's Anthropology, Peter Hammond's An Introduction to Cultural and Social Anthropology, Jacob Bronowski's Ascent of Man, as well as the International Encyclopedia of Educational Research on Anthropology.

¹⁶Mystics, prophets, American Indians and others have prophesized many changes in the earth over the years of man's existence. Many of the prophecies of the American Indians have proven themselves true. American Indians are so close to the land and have such an understanding of the interconnectedness of all life and energies that they have learned to listen to visions and acted accordingly. Regardless of individual philosophies on visions etc., the reader is not asked to accept this method of "knowing" as true or false. Rather, as with the quantum theory, the reader is asked to open to the realm of possibility of this visionary interconnection with the Earth Mother, concerning earth changes. The following examples are given as results of "precognitive" visions. Whether one believes or not is not the issue. The point remains that these precognitions have been written down through various Native American histories and "proof" of their reality lies in the actual event that has already occurred. For further information, the interested reader is encouraged to read Frank Waters Book of the Hopi and Sun Bear's book The Path of Power. Precognitive materials include:

* Overall Native prophecy (no specific tribe-intertribal) indicates that the time will come the Earth Mother will withhold her increase. One area would be too wet, another too dry, one place too hot another too cold. This is occurring now. The southern and mid-atlantic states had some of their worst

droughts in history during 1986 with over four billion dollars worth of crop damage. In the winter of 1986-1987, Russia had record colds with deaths resulting. In the mid-west during the fall of 1986, major flooding occurred, with the Missouri river overflowing causing crop damage.

* Native American prophecies noted that major changes in the earth would begin in the 1970's. This was the beginning of major weather pattern changes. This was also the year a tidal wave hit Bangladesh and killed over 500,000 people.

* Hopi prophecy notes that in the 1970's the "eagle would walk on the moon" and indeed the United States landed the first men on the moon in a space craft named Eagle I.

* In 1953 a Kahuna medicine man from Hawaii told of a prophecy that major changes would begin in Hawaii when two volcanoes on the land erupted at the same time. In 1984 both Kilauea and Mauna Kea both erupted at once.

* A Native prophecy also speaks of major changes occurring when the trees started dying. Today, 95% of the trees in the Black Forest of Germany are dying, 85% of the trees in Sweden are dying and countless numbers of trees in Canada and the upper regions of the U.S. are dying from acid rain.

* In the 1930's a small band of Indians living down-stream from a dam in Southern California prophesized that the water was coming. They moved from their homes overnight. Within two weeks the dam broke and flooded the valley.

* In Dec. of 1979 Donald Matheson, leader of the Puyallup Tribe "saw" that the Little Sister, the name for Mt. St. Helens, would "speak" soon. In five months, in 1980, Mt. St. Helens erupted causing a great deal of damage and destruction.

* Another prophecy yet to be realized concerning Mt. St. Helens notes that when the Little sister speaks, the Grandfathers will answer and wipe the land clean to the ocean. The grandfathers are Mt. Rainier and Mt. Baker. Scientists are now beginning to find evidence of volcanic activity in these mountains.

Other prophecies exist--some yet to be realized some already realized. Fact or not, it is all within the quantum realm of probability. (see Footnote 5 and 10)

¹⁷Scientists are just now beginning to realize and approach life wholistically. They are beginning, on a small, segmented scale to realize how some segments interconnect/influence other segments. In the world of medicine, scientists and doctors are beginning to understand that the physical self and wellness are related to diet, to stress levels each body is subjected to, mental and emotional states each individual is in, along with genetic predisposition of potential physical problems. When treating the body, scientists are only beginning to realize they need to treat the entire self--the psyche, the spirit and the body (Berkeley Holistic Health Center, 1985).

For further information on holistic health, the ambitious

reader is encouraged to explore Dennis Jaffee's Healing from Within; Holistic Medicine: Harmony of Body Mind and Spirit edited by Tracy Deliman and John Smolowe; Ways of Health: Holistic Approaches to Ancient and Contemporary Medicine edited by David Sobel; Biotypes, the Critical Link Between Your Personality and Your Health by Joan Arehart-Treichel; and John Milsum's Health, Stress and Illness: A System Approach.

Scientists are also beginning to realize the effects that various parts of the environment have on the individual. Light is now being studied for its effects on the body and psyche.²⁰ Climate has been found to have an effect on both the physical and mental states of individuals, whereby violent crime rates soar during hot humid periods in cities, as well as during extended low pressure systems passing through an environment.

Natural mineral baths are and have been for years, used for treatment of patients with severe arthritis and bone and muscle diseases (Skow, 1986, December, p. 72-82).

Mountains or dessert, lowlands or coastal regions, scientists are now finding peoples' energy levels, and their wholistic wellness are being effected by the environment in which they live. Because of the makeup of the entire being, from physical to etheric, the earth environment has been found to cause everything from depressions to exuberations depending on how an individual responds to the energies within a given area (Bryant, 1983).

Thus, in treating the individual, scientists and doctors are wholistically beginning to look at the symptoms of a disease and treat the problem wholly. Modern medicine is incorporating new technologies such as lasers and x-rays with traditional medicines from many cultures--to include acupuncture from the Orient; meditations from India; herbal remedies from the American Indians; and more.

¹⁸For more indepth study on plate techonics, both past and present the ambitious reader is referred to the Public Affairs Office for the U.S Geological Survey, National Center, Reston, Va 22092.

¹⁹Alfred Lewy, director of the Sleep and Mood Disorders Laboratory at Oregon Health Science University is continuing a study that he and his former colleagues at the National Institute of Mental Health (Norman Rosenthal, David Sack and Thomas Wehr) started on Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). SAD is a depression whose cyclic onset appears to be governed by the changing length of the day. Patients who seem to respond dramatically to the length of daylight, or lack there of, are treated with full-spectrun fluorescent tubes in a box which create light-likenesses. Each person's system is believed to respond within its own biological clock to the amount of full spectrum light available.

John Ott is also known in the realm of photo response through his study of the effects of light on plants and animals

using photography as a medium. He found that the flow of pigment granules in animal cells and chloroplasts in plant cells was in different patterns and directions when they were exposed to different wavelengths and intensities of light. Through various informal studies he concluded the ultraviolet light as well as whole spectrum of normal sunlight was necessary for health.

In agreement is John Parrish who directs the photo medicine unit within Massachusetts General Hospital's Wellman Laboratories. This constellation of five facilities is exploring aspects of basic human interaction with light as the optical properties of tissue, the immune response to ultraviolet light, the effects of laser light on single cells, the photobiochemistry of organic molecules and the impact of long wave ultraviolet on circulating substances such as hormones and enzymes.

Further studies in light are conducted concerning light effects on ingested hormones and medications, on internal chemical reactions to sunlight and on external, dermatological responses (Fincher, 1985, p. 71-76).

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