

THE PROSPECT OF PSYCHEDELIC USE AS A TOOL IN REALIZING A  
TRANSPERSONAL ECOLOGY

By

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## ABSTRACT

### THE PROSPECT OF PSYCHEDELIC USE AS A TOOL IN REALIZING A TRANSPERSONAL ECOLOGY

David Lawlor

Through an examination of key texts and ideas concerning deep and transpersonal ecology; transpersonal psychology; psychedelics; and altered states of consciousness; this thesis explores the prospect for psychedelic use to serve as an effective tool in realizing a transpersonal ecology and developing a holistic relationship with the earth. Discussion of the theory's implications will focus on the prospect for its acceptance and integration into the mainstream of American society considering its pluralistic nature. In this context, challenges to the theory's viability will be presented along with ideas for how such challenges might be addressed.

Deep ecology is a philosophy that was first developed by philosopher Arne Naess in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century in resistance to the dominant anthropocentric worldview. Naess stressed the importance of humans achieving a symbiotic relationship with the earth; realizing the unified totality of nature; and asking deep, probing questions about what it means to be a human being living on the earth with non-human beings. Philosopher and ethicist Warwick Fox later refined Naess' framework, deconstructing the essence of deep ecology, and concluding that Naess' fundamental notion of deep ecology is best articulated as a transpersonal ecology wherein human beings achieve transpersonal identification with nature and thus form a holistic relationship with the earth. While Fox's

transpersonal ecology is a significant step forward in refining the logic underpinning Naess' original philosophy, it still fails to answer one vital question: how or by what means might human beings achieve a transpersonal identification with nature and form a holistic relationship with the earth? Addressing this question is the primary concern of this thesis.

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## INTRODUCTION

Perhaps many years from now, distant from its point of origin, the most salient philosophical contribution of the 20<sup>th</sup> century will be seen as a significant turning point in human evolution. Yet, at that future time, it may scarcely be contemplated in such a grandiose manner—as a monumental accomplishment for human beings—and rather viewed as the moment when the unified totality of nature was realized. As it stands now, little more than 30 years in existence as a defined subject, the deep ecology philosophy has had a substantial impact on philosophical and environmental movements taking place in the United States of America and numerous countries around the globe. By espousing the philosophy's normative principles and ethical framework, its founders and adherents have exposed human beings' collective consciousness to a worldview or life perspective vastly different than that promoted by the dominant paradigm.

Where the dominant worldview is anthropocentric and justifies humans' parasitic domination of nature, the deep ecology perspective stresses humans living in symbiotic harmony with nature. Where the dominant worldview sees humans as a separate entity from nature, deep ecology views humans as one part of a greater whole that is the unified totality of nature. Where the dominant worldview pushes for the ever increasing production and consumption of material goods and technological advances, the deep ecology worldview urges humans to examine their lives and the world in which they reside and acknowledge that the persistent consumption of gratuitous material goods and

so-called progress in the form of alienating technology has, in large, helped foment the current ecological crisis (Devall & Sessions, 1985; Drengson & Inoue, 1995; Naess, 1989; Fox, 1990).

While significant and influential in its scope, deep ecology has consistently failed to address a serious issue concerning the philosophy's application in the physical world of people's everyday lives. Deep ecology is a philosophy that stresses the importance of humans achieving a symbiotic relationship with the earth; realizing the unified totality of nature; and asking deep, probing questions about what it means to be a human being living on the earth with non-human beings. More than two decades following its establishment, the essence of deep ecology was significantly deconstructed and subsequently best articulated as a transpersonal ecology wherein human beings achieve transpersonal identification with nature and thus form a holistic relationship with the earth. While the notion of transpersonal ecology is a significant step forward in refining the logic underpinning the original deep ecology philosophy, it still fails to answer a vital question: how or by what means might human societies achieve a transpersonal identification with nature and form a holistic relationship with the earth?

By examining key texts and ideas concerning deep ecology; eco-feminism; transpersonal psychology; psychedelic plant use; and shamanism, this thesis explores the prospect for psychedelic use to serve as an effective tool in realizing a transpersonal ecology and developing a holistic relationship with the earth. By exploring the nature of consciousness and the key role identification plays in expanding consciousness beyond the personal human realm, this thesis will explore the prospect that psychedelic plant use

can serve as a catalyst for human societies' realization of a transpersonal ecology. This prospect will be examined specifically within the context of modern American society and the pluralistic framework that shapes American society's perspective and consciousness.

## FROM DEEP TO TRANSPERSONAL ECOLOGY

### Arne Naess and His Followers

The Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess coined the term deep ecology when in 1972 he delivered a lecture titled “The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement” (Devall, 1988, p. 20). Building on the recent works of ecologically minded scientists like Rachel Carson, while simultaneously reaching back to the thoughts of naturalist John Muir and numerous others of a similar ilk, Naess was part of a cadre of thinkers in the 1960s developing ecophilosophy or what he calls an ecosophy. Naess’s goal was to establish a long-range ecology movement grounded in personal exploration and deep questioning about the most basic tenets of what it means to be a human being in a world of nonhuman beings (Devall, 1988, p. 20-21).

In their examination of the subject, *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered*, deep ecologists Bill Devall and George Sessions offer a broad overview on the development of the philosophy over its first decade. Dissecting the dominant, anthropocentric worldview and offering a critique, Devall and Sessions claim that reform or “shallow” environmentalists do not go far enough in addressing the root of the ecological crisis as the reforms do not question the very worldview from which they were spawned. Discussing reform or “shallow” environmentalists, Devall and Sessions explain: “In this worldview, the Earth is seen primarily, if not exclusively, as a collection

of natural resources. Some of the resources are infinite; for those which are limited, substitutes can be created by technological society. There is an overriding faith that human civilization will survive. Humans will continue to dominate Nature because humans are above, superior to or outside of the rest of Nature. All of Nature is seen from a human-centered perspective, or anthropocentrism.” (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 43)

Deep ecology represents a very different perspective from that of the shallow or reform ecology philosophies. Rather than taking a piecemeal approach to environmental problems, deep ecology examines the basic intuitions and experiences of human beings in everyday life that help shape and develop ecological consciousness. Development of a deep ecological consciousness—an acknowledgement that ontological boundaries of life do not exist—affords a realization of the illusory nature of dominance and power as tools for positive growth, as one successfully rids oneself of anthropocentrism (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 65-66). Further delving into this question, Devall and Sessions compare and contrast the resource conservation approach and its scientific management techniques based in a dominator ethic, with the deep ecology approach focusing on working symbiotically with the flow of nature and approaching sustenance from a community or bioregional perspective (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 132-146). The distinction between living symbiotically with the earth and living to dominate the earth is key for deep ecologists, yet it is puzzling that deep ecology writers often fail to draw explicit connections between domination of the earth by humans and the domination of humans by other humans in society.

Parallels can be drawn between the human domination of the earth and the domination of human females by males. Despite much discussion concerning anthropocentrism, Naess and many deep ecologists often neglect to make this apparent connection (King, 2005; Zimmerman, 1995; Hallen, 1995). Patriarchal societies adhere to a dominator ethic that stresses hierarchy and justifies oppression through a limiting of the self-realization process. All of nature and everyday life is seen from a male-centered or androcentric perspective (King, 2005). And, while moving away from anthropocentrism (as deep ecology suggests) necessarily implies discarding androcentrism as well, it is difficult to find in the writings of Naess and his followers the notion that for human domination of the earth to cease, male domination of females must cease as well. Acknowledging androcentrism and its effects is a significant step in understanding the process of developing a deep ecological consciousness and addressing the question of how the philosophy can manifest itself in society, especially when considering the prevalence of conflation of the feminine with nature in many patriarchal societies (King, 2005; Zimmerman, 1995; Hallen, 1995).

Devall, professor emeritus of sociology at Humboldt State University and one of the early leading voices in deep ecology, understands the anthropocentric argument and its implications, but in his writings rarely makes a connection between males dominating females and humans dominating the earth. This is illustrated as he articulates the difference between the shallow conservationist approach and the more holistic deep ecology philosophy: “‘Shallow ecology’ is shallow because it lacks probing philosophical questioning. Deep ecology combines the day-to-day problems of environment, including

human health problems, with the global, cultural, psychological, long-range problems.” (Devall, 1988, p. 21)

And while Devall’s assertion is accurate, the deep ecology philosophy as articulated by Naess goes beyond simply “probing philosophical questioning” or a deep thinking exercise as its moniker might imply. Additionally, it goes beyond examining environmental and health issues; it also questions the dominator ethic, the legitimacy of patriarchy and the role of humans on the earth.

Naess’s deep ecology is a philosophy or ecosophy—a way of thinking about the world, relating to it, and interacting with it. As such, it employs two primary principles or ultimate norms: self-realization and biocentric equality. By self-realization, Naess and deep ecologists do not refer to narrow, ego-realization in the traditional Western sense of the term, but rather to a realization of the self within a greater self; or, the self within and contained by the Self. To realize “full, mature personhood” and “our unique spiritual/biological personhood” (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 67) is self-realization, which is arrived at through spiritual growth. As Devall and Sessions explain: “Spiritual growth, or unfolding, begins when we cease to understand or see ourselves as isolated and narrow competing egos and begin to identify with other humans... But the deep ecology sense of self requires a further maturity and growth, an identification which goes beyond humanity to include the nonhuman world.” (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 67)

Devall and Sessions competently explain the concepts of self-realization and identification beyond the ego, yet it is the ability to no longer “see ourselves as isolated and narrow competing egos” and achieve “an identification which goes beyond

humanity” that is key. While implicit in Devall and Sessions understanding of deep ecology is the notion that identification and sense of self must be developed to realize unity with nature, lacking in their explanation is an explicit methodology to manifest this understanding into physical reality. This a major obstacle for deep ecology as the lack of a coherent, structured plan for implementing the philosophy into human society creates the stigma that deep ecology is an interesting idea, but, in the end, untenable.

In Naess’s Ecosophy T (the philosopher’s personal articulation and systemization of deep ecology), self-realization is viewed as a “process” and also an “ultimate goal.” While the process of self-realization is both communal and personal in nature, and the highest expression of its attainment is the transformation of human societies, as Naess notes, it “...is conceived also to refer to an unfolding of reality as a totality.” (Naess, 1989, p. 84) This unfolding of reality as a totality is a “...condensed expression of the unity of certain social, psychological, and ontological hypotheses: the most comprehensive and deep maturity of the human personality guarantees beautiful action.” (Naess, 1989, p. 86) The beautiful action Naess refers to as stemming from “deep maturity” is fostered by the process of self-realization experienced individually as leading toward a fuller understanding and realization of personal potential, and collectively in much the same manner leading toward a realization of the collective potential of a specific community. The key for the transformation of human societies is the understanding of an approach or method for achieving “deep maturity” and navigating the self-realization process. Without an approach or methodology the deep ecology

philosophy remains an idea on paper lacking physical application in people's everyday lives.

Maturity, spiritual growth, and identification "beyond humanity to include the nonhuman world," leads naturally to Naess's second ultimate norm of biocentric equality. This ultimate norm acknowledges that the same growth and self-realization occurring among human beings is in turn occurring within and among nonhuman entities on earth, all contained within a larger, unfolding Self-realization. Recognizing the interconnected nature of all living entities on earth, and realizing the significance and value therein, are the foundations of biocentric equality (Devall & Sessions, 1985; Naess, 1989). "This basic intuition is that all organisms and entities in the ecosphere, as parts of the interrelated whole, are equal in intrinsic worth." (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 67) This type of reasoning is dubbed ecocentric or biocentric or nonanthropocentric by deep ecologists to denote its lack of human chauvinism and realization of the interconnected nature and value of all life.

Deep ecology does not view humans as the most important life force at the top of an arbitrary, hierarchical chain of beings or as existing outside of nature. Rather, the philosophy sees human beings as a biological and spiritual component in a network or web of life that is interconnected throughout and with the earth. Through discourse incorporating Eastern thought, traditional Western culture and religion, American Indian culture, philosophy, ecology, and quantum physics, deep ecology attempts to abolish the classical dualism of man and nature (Devall & Sessions, 1985; Naess, 1989; Fox, 1990). In doing so, the philosophy fulfills the charge of realizing the oneness of all beings, does

away with alienation and anthropocentrism, and embraces a new consciousness anchored in deep ecology's ultimate norms of self-realization and biocentric equality.

Naess, the acknowledged father of the deep ecology philosophy, was a professor at the University of Oslo from 1939 until 1970. He has published numerous works concerning multiple realms of philosophy and religion, and performed an extensive examination and reworking of the ethics system developed by the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza. In addition, Naess is an avid mountaineer whose personal experiences in nature have helped inform his own worldview and the deep ecology philosophy (Devall & Sessions, 1985, 225).

Through Naess's philosophy in conjunction with a multitude of voices representing disparate practices and traditions, deep ecology makes apparent that experiential knowledge and that which is known through intuition or identification with the other, are both valuable tools in fostering an expansive understanding of the world (Devall & Sessions 1985; Naess, 1989; Fox, 1990). Perhaps due to the fact that experiential knowledge of the intuitive type is subjective and difficult to translate to words, deep ecologists frequently steer clear of making any claims as to the nature of such experiences or intuitions and how they might come about. In addition to valuing the experiential, intuitive knowledge of the individual in question, the philosophy also takes inspiration directly from more formal religious and philosophical traditions. As Naess notes:

In order to facilitate discussion it may be helpful to distinguish a common platform of deep ecology from the fundamental features of philosophies and religions from which that platform is derived, if the platform is

formulated as a set of norms and hypotheses. The fundamentals, if verbalized, are Buddhist, Taoist, Christian or of other religious persuasions, or philosophic with affinities to the basic views of Spinoza, Whitehead, Heidegger, or others. The fundamentals are mutually more or less incompatible ... The incompatibility does not affect the deep ecology principles adversely. ... In order to clarify the discussion one must avoid looking for one definite philosophy or religion among the supporters of the deep ecological movement. (Naess, 1985, p. 225)

What Naess suggests instead of a dogmatic religion is the development of eco-philosophy or what he calls an ecosophy. An ecosophy is comprised of contrasting voices and elements that combine to create a greater framework. This panoply of influence is the strength of ecosophy and the deep ecology philosophy therein. As Naess states, "...insofar as ecology movements deserve our attention, they are ecophilosophical rather than ecological. Ecology is a limited science which makes use of scientific methods. Philosophy is the most general forum of debate on fundamentals ... By an ecosophy I mean a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium. A philosophy as a kind of sofia wisdom, is openly normative, it contains both norms, rules postulates, value priority announcements, and hypotheses concerning the state of affairs in our universe." (Naess, 2005, p. 346)

While the details of specific ecosophies will differ, Naess acknowledges, "it should be fully appreciated that the significant tenets of the Deep Ecology movement are clearly and forcefully normative." It is put forward by Naess and others that the significant, normative tenets of the philosophy are "not derived from ecology by logic or induction", but, rather, "suggested, inspired, and fortified" by the empirical realities of living on the earth. Bearing this in mind, Naess stresses that it is meaningful to view the

deep ecology philosophy not as a general systems theory but as an ecosophy that is, “...more like a system of the kind constructed by Aristotle or Spinoza. It is expressed verbally as a set of sentences with a variety of functions, descriptive and prescriptive.” (Naess, 2005, p. 346)

While deep ecology utilizes ideas, concepts and systems of thinking adopted from Eastern traditions, traditions of American Indians and other indigenous societies, there is also a history of ecological, nonanthropocentric thinking in Western discourse. This history informs a metaphysical framework in the minority tradition that aligns with thought originating from Eastern traditions, quantum physics and the science of ecology. As deep ecologist George Sessions notes in his essay “Western Process Metaphysics (Heraclitus, Whitehead, and Spinoza)”:

The process metaphysics of the Presocratic pantheist, Heraclitus, has been mentioned by several theorists as a possible basis for an ecological metaphysics for the West. The Presocratics ... developed perennial philosophies which were pantheistic and surprisingly ecological, as they both engaged in theoretical scientific speculation and attempted to reconcile the emerging science with spiritual development and nature mysticism. The parallels between these systems and Eastern philosophy/religion is startling, including a rejection of the ideas of historical progress in favor of a cyclical conception of time which accorded the natural seasons and growth cycles of organisms, together with theories of the harmony resulting from the conflict of opposites. (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 236)

In attempting to employ a Presocratic pantheistic system, such as that developed by the theorist Alfred North Whitehead, an ingrained anthropocentric hubris rejecting biocentric equality is often inimical to such a system’s full realization (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 236). In order to apply pantheistic, ecological metaphysics within the

confines of a nonanthropocentric ethic, it is necessary to adopt a respect for natural systems that rejects domination and classic Western dualism. This respect for natural systems is, the philosopher Ludwig von Bertalanffy writes: "... a reverence for our own kind when our vision is wide enough to see ourselves not only in our children, family and compatriots, and not even in all human beings and all living things, but in all self-maintaining and self-evolving organizations brought forth on this good earth and, if not perturbed by man, existing here in complex but supremely balanced hierarchical interdependencies." (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 236-237) Once respect for natural systems is realized, a biocentric worldview becomes not only palpable, but essential if life and its perpetuation on earth are deemed to hold value.

Positing a biocentric ethic in conjunction with the Presocratic, pantheistic understanding that nature is a holistic web of interconnected systems that are mutually dependent, led Naess to the ethic system and metaphysics of Spinoza. Here a model is presented where exists a whole greater than the sum of its parts which are, in turn, absolutely essential for the maintenance of the greater whole. Such a notion conjures ideas of systems operating within systems or a self-realization concurrently unfolding within a greater, holistic Self-realization (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 237).

For Sessions, "Spinozism is clearly a modern version of perennial philosophy", such that Spinoza suggests that without metaphysics—and access to a mystical, intuitive level of knowing—a system of ethics is frivolous and without viable application (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 238). Human beings must first broaden identification beyond the ego to understand intuitively how they fit into and flow with the systems of the earth and

what their place and role is therein, before attaining a deep ecological consciousness.

Only after such a process has been undertaken can humans come to know how to exist in balance with the unity of the human and nonhuman world—the dynamic at the crux of the deep ecology philosophy. This idea is articulated by Sessions in discussing his interpretation of Spinoza’s notions of the unity of all nature:

Spinoza’s metaphysics is a conceptualization of the idea of unity; there can be only one Substance or non-dualism which is infinite, and this Substance is also God or Nature. What we experience as the mental and the physical have no separate metaphysical reality, but rather are aspects or attributes of this one Substance. Individual things ... are temporary expressions of the continual flux of [this] God/Nature/Substance ... (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 238)

In addition to Sessions’ reading of Spinoza’s theory of the metaphysical unity of all nature, Naess as well discusses broadening identification beyond the human ego to aid in realizing the oneness of all nature. Naess asserts that, “...from the identification process stems unity, and since the unity is of a gestalt character, the wholeness is attained. ... So we are more than our egos, and are not fragments, hardly small and powerless. By identifying with greater wholes, we partake in the creation and maintenance of this whole.” (Naess, 1989, p. 173)

While intriguing, Naess’s statement is somewhat vague and leaves out information vital for a full understanding of the identification process; how is the process started, what are its steps, how does one partake in it? The notion of humans integrating their egos with other living systems makes sense and, in large, forms the foundation of deep ecology, but figuring out a tactic by which to initiate such an integration is an element inadequately addressed by deep ecologists.

One can interpret that for Spinoza and Naess alike, attaining a higher plane of consciousness allows for a greater access to and understanding of God/Nature/Substance and thus leads to a more total, unified worldview free of anthropocentrism, domination or nihilism. Such an understanding serves to foster identification beyond the individual ego to form a realization of the greater whole and informs manners of living that are symbiotic and mutualistic in character; important elements stressed by Naess and deep ecologists (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 238-239).

The binding of the human ego to the life force of another such that boundaries no longer exist is a level of identification that reaches beyond the personal ego and even beyond feelings of empathy for a fellow human being. The unmediated experience of identification with the oneness of the world is essential in the deep ecology philosophy, as extension of the self to include and identify with the unified totality of nature provides the impetus for practice of the two ultimate norms of self-realization and biocentric equality. Naess describes this identification that reaches beyond the human ego and the ramifications it has on what is perceived as the self.

The ecosophical outlook is developed through an identification so deep that one's own self is no longer adequately delimited by the personal ego or the organism. One experiences oneself to be a genuine part of all life. Each living being is understood as a goal in itself, in principal on equal footing with one's own ego. ... The greater our comprehension of our togetherness with other beings, the greater the identification, and the greater care we will take. ... We seek what is best for ourselves, but through the extension of the self, our 'own' best is also that of others. (Naess, 1989, p. 174-175)

Looking closely at Naess's above statement, it is apparent that at the present time Americans and other humans are lacking in identification with other beings and a sense

of greater togetherness as the earth is not lived with in a careful, respectful manner (Devall & Sessions, 1985; Naess, 1989). Currently, ideas of progress, consumerism, limitless growth and an ever-higher standard of living dictate that identification with other beings will be limited and thus care taken for the earth will be limited (Naess, 1989, p. 88). As Naess explains: “These ideas, manifest as firm attitudes and habits, are powerful agencies preventing large-scale, long-range changes. ... A central slogan of ecosophical lifestyle: ‘Simple in means, rich in ends.’ It is not to be confounded with appeals to be Spartan, austere, and self-denying. The ecophilosophical lifestyle appreciates opulence, richness, luxury, affluence. But the joys are defined in terms of quality of life, not standard of living.” (Naess, 1989, p. 88)

Yet, as Naess notes, the desire for an ever-higher standard of living and limitless economic growth has created a society where citizens are tied to social and economic systems that disregard the earth, the earth’s health, and, in turn, the health of individual citizens. What is harder to find in the writings of Naess and other deep ecologists is a strategy for moving people away from the agenda of limitless economic growth and altering the perspective of people such that they embrace the tenets of deep ecology. From Naess, Devall, Sessions and others we know what deep ecology is concerned with, the types of practices that a deep ecologist might partake in on a regular basis, and the difference between the deep ecology philosophy and mainstream American environmental philosophy. The manner or mechanism by which the deep ecology philosophy would become practiced by American or other human societies is not made clear by the vast majority of deep ecology literature available. Bridging the gap between

the philosophy and its physical application by human societies is the critical factor for deep ecology; the question of how to bridge this gap is central to this thesis.

In their extensive study of American culture, Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler and Tipton (1985), note that the roles of the manager and therapist have come to govern American life. Where the manager assigns tasks, divides the labor into specialized groups, and dictates the minute-to-minute operations, the therapist works out a way to retain meaning and make sense of one's life. These two roles focus not on universal truths or knowledge, but rather on individual judgments that stress the effectiveness of the means to an end where the end is assumed a fixed entity (Bellah et al., 1985, p. 45-47). This formulation has allowed American society and many others around the world to experience life not as a set of moral certitudes, but as a pluralistic cornucopia of possibilities where one can create an identity for oneself based on any number of interests, hobbies or personal inclinations all deemed to be of equal value. "What has dropped out are the old normative expectations of what makes life worth living. With the freedom to define oneself anew in a plethora of identities has also come an attenuation of those common understandings that enable us to recognize the virtues of the other." (Bellah et al., 1985, p. 48)

Yet, while the "old normative expectations" have disappeared, the new therapist-manager culture maintains order by formulating a normative system based not on universal ethics, but individual freedom. This is the culture that strives constantly for an ever-higher standard of living (not quality of life, as Naess would stress) where

technological gadgetry and materialistic lust overshadow meaningful relationships between humans and the other living beings of the earth. As Bellah et al. note:

The social basis of that culture is the world of bureaucratic consumer capitalism, which dominates ... most older, local economic forms. While the culture of manager and therapist does not speak in the language of traditional moralities, it nonetheless proffers a normative order of life, with character ideals, images of the good life, and methods of attaining it. Yet it is an understanding of life generally hostile to older ideas of moral order. Its center is the autonomous individual, presumed able to choose the roles he will play and the commitments he will make, not on the basis of higher truths but according to the criterion of life-effectiveness as the individual judges it. (Bellah et al., 1985, p. 47)

Naess asks us to question the manager-therapist paradigm and essentially inquires how humans can be fulfilled and realize their potential when the earth is being destroyed through human activity and the human connection to nature being rendered obsolete. He asks us also to question the value judgments and central tenets that form the foundation of capitalist, Western society—namely, the stressing of individualism rather than collectivism and allegiance to consumerism rather than moral certitude. Naess realizes, as do other deep ecologists, that lusting after the latest technological gadget and existing in a world of materialistic greed is a wholesale acceptance of alienation and apparent disconnection from the essence of nature. And, as long as alienation and egoistic anthropocentrism reign as the supreme human experiences, then the unified totality of nature and living in a symbiotic manner with the earth will be little more than abstract thoughts, never to be experienced in the flesh. Rather, experiences will remain wholly anthropocentric, with the culture and society reflecting an anthropocentric reality and serving to reinforce it through its human constructions. Changing this process and

breaking free of the manager-therapist paradigm requires an alternative perspective or way of thinking that questions the basic assumptions, activities, and behaviors of human society.

For example, Naess posits the question of why Americans or Europeans covet economic growth and consumption so dearly. The natural answer, he figures, is that a lack of steady growth and consumption will bear negative economic consequences (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 74). But, in questioning the basis of capitalism, Naess and deep ecologists go beyond the superficial economic impacts of constant growth and consumerism. In a 1982 interview Naess states: "...in deep ecology, we ask whether the present society fulfills basic human needs like love and security and access to nature, and, in doing so, we question our society's underlying assumptions. We ask which society, which education, which form of religion, is beneficial for all life on the planet as a whole, and then we ask further what we need to do in order to make the necessary changes." (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 74) Deep ecology's focus on quality of life as measured in terms of self-realization and spiritual fulfillment, rather than consumerism and materialism, is an approach that encourages identification with all of nature and realization of the unity of all entities.

Thus, at the core of the deep ecology philosophy, as espoused by Naess, are the two ultimate norms of self-realization and biocentric equality. Practicing concomitant individual self-realization unfolding within the totality of the greater Self-realization, in combination with a biocentric ethic respecting all forms of life, leads to an understanding of the unified totality of nature (Devall & Sessions, 1985; Naess, 1989). Naess developed

his philosophy with inspiration from Spinoza, employing an egalitarian ethics system and stressing the importance for humans to expand their sense of self to include all the earth's entities and to recognize that these entities possess inherent value (Devall & Sessions, 1985; Naess, 1989).

While Naess and deep ecologists offer a thorough, important foundation for the development of a deep ecological consciousness and a worldview steeped in the tenets of self-realization and biocentric equality, the deep ecology philosophy fails to adequately address some of the issues that are central to its practice. The primary issue deep ecology fails to address is how human societies can adopt the tenets of deep ecology and alter their societies to form a holistic relationship with the earth, do away with mindless consumerism and expand their sense of self to include all of the earth's entities. This issue, which this thesis will examine throughout, is illustrated in one important instance in that deep ecology does not give sufficient consideration to the issue of male domination in most cultures around the world and the human (especially male) lack of identification with the feminine. This oversight means that only a portion of the picture is being revealed when deep ecologists discuss domination of nature by human beings; the domination of females by males and the conflation of nature with females perform significant roles in forming the worldview that has created the current ecological crisis (King 2005). The next section offers an examination of these topics and looks to see if the eco-feminist perspective can bolster claims made by deep ecology and help develop a better understanding of how human societies can adopt the philosophical logic and alter their physical behavior in accordance with the tenets of deep ecology.

### Eco-feminism, Androcentrism and Domination

Feminist theory holds a somewhat contentious relationship with deep ecological thought. As the initial voices developing the deep ecology philosophy were overwhelmingly male, with the likes of Naess, Devall, Sessions, and others, a female perspective was often severely lacking. Yet, while a feminist perspective was not central to the early development of the philosophy, deep ecology and feminism do share several goals and theoretical similarities. As philosopher Carolyn Merchant notes in her essay on feminism and ecology: “Ecology and feminism have interacting languages that imply certain common policy goals.” (Merchant, 1985, p. 229) Merchant names four general tenets that serve as the foundation for both ecological and feminist thought: recognizing that “all parts of a system have equal value”, that the “Earth is a home”, that “process is primary”, and that there is “no free lunch” (Merchant, 1985). Merchant is speaking about ecology and not specifically deep ecology, but the four tenets listed are perspectives shared by the deep ecology philosophy and display a further confluence between the goals of the two movements.

Specifically addressing the connection between deep ecological and feminist thought, Patsy Hallen notes similarities in structure and perspective between the two philosophical systems. These similarities include embracing symbiotic practices and an endorsement of the constant flux of all interconnected natural systems where an effort to achieve a harmonious human relationship with other life forces on earth is paramount (Hallen, 1995).

“Both ecology and feminism share a non-hierarchical, egalitarian perspective. Both participate in a common philosophy whereby process and participation are primary. Process philosophy is a deep and complex topic with its sources in the philosophies of Alfred North Whitehead and Henri Bergson. ...it is sufficient to say that feminism and ecology both stress creative activity over inert matter, dynamic order over static laws, partial autonomy over determinism, relation over substance, objects as subjects over subjects as objects.” (Hallen, 1995, p. 205-206)

While deep ecology and eco-feminism have many structural and goal-oriented commonalities, the process by which each philosophy achieves its goals and works within its structure generates different conclusions as to the root causes of human alienation from nature and the current ecological crisis. The worldview of deep ecologists is tempered by Naess’s two ultimate norms of self-realization and biocentric equality, which implicitly and explicitly posit anthropocentrism (human centeredness or chauvinism) to serve as the primary culprit in catalyzing the human exploitation and domination of the earth. This anthropocentric ethic—perpetuated by a failure to identify with nature by moving beyond the ego—allows humans to exploit and/or destroy the earth without guilt and with justified impetus. Life entities that are not human are seen as merely potential resources to serve the needs of humans and therefore hold value only in as much as they are beneficial to fulfilling egocentric human desires (Devall & Sessions, 1985; Naess, 1989).

Many eco-feminist critiques of the deep ecology philosophy, while recognizing the existence of the anthropocentric worldview and its detrimental effects, contend that

androcentrism, or male chauvinism and domination, is at the psychological root of the environmental crisis and human domination of nature (Zimmerman, 1995; Hallen, 1995).

According to eco-feminist theory, traditionally (or at least for many thousands of years), women have been deemed closer to nature both psychologically via access to a more intuitive, esoteric realm of knowledge and biologically through the menstruation and birth processes. Historically, with the separation of the atomistic ego from the earth and its living entities, humans adopted a more rationalistic, mechanistic worldview that made clear distinctions between that which is human and that which is other than human. Fear of a natural world that humans were no longer part of, but in competition with, cultivated an ethic of domination over nature and, in turn, domination over women. Domination of the natural world and women in kind leads to an increasing sense of male alienation from the earth and the feminine, perpetuating a cycle of further alienation and thus facilitating further domination of both females and the earth (Zimmerman, 1995; Hallen, 1995).

Understanding the eco-feminist perspective that domination of women and the earth increases human alienation from nature and the feminine helps in developing a greater strategy for deep ecology to become the philosophy and practice of human societies. Addressing the conflation of the feminine with nature and the androcentric traditions of American and other human societies will be essential issues for the deep ecology philosophy to grapple with if it is to achieve everyday practice in human society. By analyzing the androcentric and anthropocentric components of the mainstream

ecological perspective, the psychological components that need to be addressed for deep ecology to become a viable practice in human societies become clearer.

Feminist scholar Ynestra King addresses the association of women with nature and the concomitant domination of both that must be addressed for human societies to realize and practice deep ecology's central tenets of self-realization and biocentric equality.

For the most part, ecologists, with their concern for nonhuman nature, have yet to understand that they have a particular stake in ending the domination of women because a central reason for woman's oppression is her association with the despised nature they are so concerned about. The hatred of women and the hatred of nature are intimately connected and mutually reinforcing. (King, 2005, p. 399)

Eco-feminism argues that failing to recognize the link between women and nature and the ethic of domination that persists in an androcentric worldview, leads to an incomplete and tainted vision of deep ecology. Without awareness and critique of the androcentric worldview, masculine thought patterns and interpretations persist in many deep ecology texts despite the philosophy's aim to realize the interconnected, holistic nature of all life. As feminist theorist Michael Zimmerman concludes: "...deep ecology obscures the crucial issue by talking about human-centeredness, instead of about male-centeredness (androcentrism). A truly 'deep' ecology would have to be informed by the insights of eco-feminists, who link the male domination of nature with the male domination of woman." (Zimmerman, 1995, p. 169)

Writing about two primary elements discussed by deep ecologists, hierarchy and centralization (as opposed to egalitarianism and bioregionalism), Zimmerman illustrates

how an androcentric perspective hinders the realization of a deep ecological consciousness.

“For example, when deep ecologists call for decentralizing society, they ignore the fact that patriarchal culture has always favored hierarchy and centralization—and that unless patriarchal consciousness is abandoned, schemes for decentralization are hopeless. Despite their good intentions, then, deep ecologists exhibit a pervasive masculinist bias that works against their aims.” (Zimmerman, 1995, p. 184)

Further explaining the connection between androcentrism and a failure to fully realize a deep ecological consciousness and implement the deep ecology philosophy, King notes that:

Without a thorough feminist analysis of social domination that reveals the interconnected roots of misogyny and a hatred of nature, ecology remains an abstraction: it is incomplete. If male ecological scientists and social ecologists fail to deal with misogyny, the deepest manifestation of nature-hating in their own lives, they are not living the ecological lives or creating the ecological society they claim. (King, 2005, p. 403)

While King and other eco-feminists see deep ecology’s concentration on anthropocentrism to be misplaced and a product of a male-centered society that denies androcentrism as the root of domination over nature, both philosophies are wrestling with the issue of identification. For deep ecologists like Naess, Devall and others, anthropocentrism and its individualistic, chauvinistic framework, disallows human beings from being able to move beyond the fixed, atomistic ego and experience the identification process with nature (Naess, 1989; Fox, 1990). This identification process is of supreme significance as Naess and, most prominently, the ethicist Warwick Fox illustrate,

identification with nature via a broadening of the ego boundary (or even its complete dissolution) allows for human consciousness to identify with and, in a manner, share in the consciousness of the totality of nature. Once a unity is achieved via identification, the human relationship with nature and all entities is changed from a subject-object dualism to a holistic oneness free from alienation, domination or hierarchy (Fox, 1990).

For eco-feminists, however, a lack of human identification with nature, while obviously displaying elements of anthropocentrism, cannot be wholly explained by simple human chauvinism. Rather, eco-feminists argue that the inability of males to identify with nature and the feminine aspect of their consciousness leads to an imbalance of the masculine and feminine elements (King, 2005; Zimmerman, 1995). This imbalance, articulated through the ebb and flow of daily life in a patriarchal society, disallows humans from realizing a deep ecological consciousness as it hinders the process of identification with the other and allows for a continuation of the dominator ethic.

“Sadly, from the ecofeminist point of view deep ecology is simply another self-congratulatory reformist move: the transvaluation of values it claims for itself is quite peripheral... the deep ecology movement will not truly happen until men are brave enough to rediscover and to love the woman inside themselves.” (Zimmerman, 1995, p. 170)

If deep ecology were “brave enough” to address the issue of androcentrism and recognize the need for identification with the feminine, eco-feminists argue, Naess’s self-realization project and biocentric equality ethic become real potentials rather than mere philosophical pipe dreams. This criticism is well-developed as it runs in line with deep

ecology's perspective that domination leads to alienation and that only through a partnership ethic focused on symbiosis can true balance be achieved. As Zimmerman notes below, the success of deep ecology in human society hinges on understanding the role domination and specifically the domination of women plays in humans' overall alienation from the earth:

Only the interpretive lens of androcentrism enables us to understand the origin and scope of dualistic, atomistic, hierarchical, and mechanistic categories. Deep ecologists are still only reformists: they want to improve the humanity-nature relationship without taking the radical step of eliminating both man's domination of woman (including the woman inside of each man) and the culturally enforced self-denigration of woman. (Zimmerman, 1995, p. 183)

Deep ecology and eco-feminism both recognize the dominator ethic to be at the heart of human exploitation and ruination of nature, but the two philosophies differ on its origin. Yet, despite deep ecology's stress on anthropocentrism as the cause of domination and eco-feminism's assertion that deep ecologists fail to recognize androcentrism as the principal offender, both see the struggle for identification as central. Eco-feminism's emphasis on the consequences (including the inability to broaden the ego and identify with the feminine) of the dominator ethic produced by androcentrism and a patriarchal society rather than by simple anthropocentrism, is significant. By illustrating the cultural-historical linkage of females with nature and the concurrent rise of the dominator ethic, eco-feminist theory offers a more complete explanation of human beings' (and specifically males') lack of identification with nature and the resulting alienation from nature facilitated by androcentric misogyny, and a conflation of nature with the feminine. This more complete understanding of deep ecology afforded by an eco-feminist analysis

makes clear the importance of the process of identification in expanding the sense of self. Examining the power components of the relationships between men and women in human societies makes clearer the level of introspection and transformation required for a society to experience a fundamental shift in perspective and adopt a deep ecological consciousness.

### Fox, Transpersonal Ecology and Identification

Eco-feminist critiques of the deep ecology philosophy aid in enabling the development of a deep ecological consciousness in all human beings as eco-feminist theory implores those wishing to achieve a harmonious, symbiotic, respectful relationship with the earth to examine the nature of androcentrism and patriarchy. The eco-feminist challenge to deep ecology to examine not only the domination of humans over nature but of men over women *and* nature, requires a yet deeper investment in Naess's self-realization project and an expansion of the potential for identification beyond the ego. But, in what manner or by what means might the fulfillment of Naess's tenets of self-realization and biocentric equality be achieved? In what manner or by what means might human beings begin to examine the androcentric and anthropocentric basis for the dominator ethic? How might human beings begin to expand their sense of self and identify with the feminine and nature such that a fundamental shift in consciousness and worldview is realized?

These are difficult questions for deep ecologists to answer and, possibly as a consequence, have been scarcely addressed. While the subtle nuances of the philosophy have received substantial attention, discussion of the means by which deep ecology would supplant the dominator ethic is far from abundant. Even Naess himself struggles to explain how one might expand one's identification with nature and all entities to overcome the dominator ethic. In his most comprehensive work to offer a feasible vision for the practice and application of deep ecology, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*,

Naess explains the ideas of identification beyond the individual human ego, broad self-realization, and their inherent characteristics.

“The ecological self of a person is that with which this person identifies. This key sentence (rather than definition) about the self shifts the burden of clarification from the term ‘self’ to that of identification, or rather ‘process of identification.’” (Naess, 1995, p. 15)

And, while Naess’s discussion of developing a deep “ecological self” through the “process of identification” provides a crucial foundation for such work, it fails to adequately explain how human beings might go about partaking in this “process of identification” and development of the “ecological self.”

In his 1990 book, *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism*, the ethicist Warwick Fox addresses the aforementioned concerns illuminated by Naess, focusing on a broadening of the sense of self and the process of identification. After excising anomalies in the deep ecology philosophy, Fox determines that Naess’s most accurate sense of deep ecology is best described as a transpersonal ecology wherein humans go beyond the sense of their individual egos to identify with the unified totality of nature and their cosmological position therein (Fox, 1990). Fox’s move away from Naess’s original notions of “deep questioning” and the “deep versus shallow” debate within the deep ecology philosophy and toward a focus on the human ego, identification, and ultimate self-realization, is no small feat. While he understands the logic underpinning Naess’s “deep questioning” that allows Naess to arrive at his ultimate norms, Fox shows how Naess’s “deep questioning”

can lead to ultimate norms that are anthropocentric and fail to satisfy deep ecology's two central tenets (Fox, 1990, p. 134-141). But, rather than dabbling in semantics and subtle interpretations of the term "deep," Fox takes Naess's philosophy to a place where its essence is realized and interpreted into empirical reality. Fox contends that, in its purest sense, deep/transpersonal ecology is a philosophy of unity and totality where transpersonal experience enables the individual human ego to go beyond its fixed, atomistic complacency and identify with the unified totality of nature (Fox, 1990).

Fox's primary achievement in his examination of the philosophy is this emphasis and focus on the issue of identification. To be sure, Naess devotes large sections in some of his articles and books to identification, but Fox takes the issue a step further in discussing it as the crux of deep/transpersonal ecology. As has been discussed, deep/transpersonal ecology stresses holistic self-realization (in the widest, most expansive sense) and biocentric equality as its two central principles. To realize both of these tenets requires a broadened and deepened sense of self achieved through identification with that which is other than the self—other human beings, other animals, other living entities, and indeed all of nature.

Identification should be taken to mean what we ordinarily understand by that term, that is, the experience not simply of a sense of similarity with an entity but of a sense of commonality. ...one can have a sense of certain similarities between oneself and another entity without necessarily identifying with that entity, that is, without necessarily experiencing a sense of commonality with that entity. (Fox, 1990, p. 231)

Beyond the technical distinction between similarities and commonalities, getting to the heart of what identification really means for Naess, Fox and others of a similar ilk

is a necessary process in understanding the development of a transpersonal ecological consciousness. In reaching such an understanding, it is helpful to note what deep/transpersonal ecologists do not intend the term identification to infer or imply. First, the notion that a human identifying with nature is somehow relinquishing the ego such that there is no demarcation between the human and the other is not implied by deep/transpersonal ecologists' use of the term identification. As Fox explains:

What identification should not be taken to mean...is identity—that I literally am that tree over there, for example. What is being emphasized is...that through the process of identification my sense of self (my experiential self) can expand to include the tree even though I and the tree remain physically 'separate' (even here, however, the word separate must not be taken too literally because ecology tells us that my physical self and the tree are physically inter-linked in all sorts of ways). (Fox, 1990, p. 231-232)

What Fox is discussing is not a physical fusion of matter but rather a psychological or energetic fusion creating a shared consciousness. As University of California, Davis psychology Professor Robert Sommer explains, shared consciousness represents a connection that goes beyond mere material unity and instead emphasizes a way of experiencing the other such that the empirical knowledge shared and understood creates a psychological bond grounded in the concept of identification, not compounded physical identities (Sommer, 2003, p. 197-199).

“Shedding homocentrism and adopting a broader view of self has emotional, perceptual, and spiritual implications. The concept of identification rather than merger is central to this shift. One feels identified with the planet, not that one is the planet. One becomes identified with trees, one does not become a tree.” (Sommer, 2003, p. 198)

The notion of an identification that goes beyond the realm of physical union highlights both the interconnected nature of all life energies and the unique, one-of-a-kind knowledge each being contributes to the enrichment of the whole. This interconnection, however, as discussed above, "...should not be taken to deny the very real differences between the human and the nonhuman, or between various members of the nonhuman realm..." (Holmes, 2003, p. 33) In addition, Fox reminds us that, "...the realization that we and all other entities are aspects of a single unfolding reality—that 'life is fundamentally one'—does not mean that all multiplicity and diversity is reduced to homogenous mush." (Fox, 1990, p. 232)

Naess and Fox contend that the process of identification is essential for the development of a deep or transpersonal ecological consciousness as it serves as the primary step in realizing a broader sense of self. Why are identification and a broader sense of self so necessary in developing a deep/transpersonal ecological consciousness? Naess explains: "From the identification process stems unity, and since the unity is of a gestalt character, the wholeness is attained. Very abstract and vague! But it offers a framework for a total view, or better, a central perspective." (Naess, 1989, p. 173)

In his introduction to *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle*, Naess's editor David Rothenberg offers a contextual frame, explaining the thinking behind Naess's use of the term identification and its relationship to self-realization.

The process of motion through experience manifests itself through identification...We discover that parts of nature are parts of ourselves. We cannot exist separate from them. If we try, our Self-realising is blocked. Thus we cannot destroy them if we are to exist fully. This becomes the root of the most powerful application of ecosophical thinking to

specifically environmental conflicts. We must see the vital needs of ecosystems and other species as our own needs: there is thus no conflict of interests. It is a tool for furthering one's own realisation and fullness of life. ...So, if we progress far enough, the very notion of 'environment' becomes unnecessary. (Rothenberg, 1989, p. 9)

Rothenberg's description illustrates the central premise of the process of identification. Namely, that when a human being identifies with another entity, a bond is formed such that the human harbors dedicated concern for the entity's well-being as it is seen as concomitant self concern. Consequently, any attack on the entity by outsiders is seen as the same as an attack on the human being who has identified with the entity and extended the sense of self to include the entity. As activist and deep/transpersonal ecologist John Seed explains the notion: "I try to remember that it's not me, John Seed, trying to protect the rainforest. Rather, I am part of the rainforest protecting itself. I am that part of the rainforest recently emerged into human thinking." (Macy, 1991, p. 184)

Thus, through intimate modes of identification with other life forces, Fox and others argue, human beings are eventually able to identify with all life forces and realize the unified totality of nature. This identification leads to a greater level of advancement in Naess's self-realization project and a worldview that is necessarily biocentric. Flowing from the realization of the centrality of the identification process is Fox's assertion that the moniker "deep ecology" is flawed as it still implies and refers to Naess's old "deep questioning" language rather than the idea of identification beyond the individual human ego to include all of nature. Therefore, Fox posits, a change in title is necessary, appropriate, and offers clarification of Naess's philosophy. Fox explains his renaming as follows:

...Naess's philosophical sense of deep ecology refers to the this-worldly realization of as expansive a sense of self as possible in a world in which selves and things-in-the-world are conceived as processes. Since this approach is one that involves the realization of a sense of self that extends beyond (or that is trans-) one's egoic, biographical, or personal sense of self, the clearest, most accurate, and most informative term for this sense of deep ecology is, in my view, transpersonal ecology. (Fox, 1990, p. 197)

Fox argues that what is unique about transpersonal ecology is not the psychological depth to which it examines human behavior and the human species' place on earth (although this component must be duly noted), but rather that it goes beyond simply imploring humans to live in harmonious symbiosis with nature out of altruism and explains why such a lifestyle is in the best interests of the individual human, the earth and all its entities with which the human identifies. Naess explains how human identification with nature in a manner that goes beyond the ego leads to human behavior promoting the success and prosperity of both.

"The greater our comprehension of our togetherness with other beings, the greater the identification, and the greater care we will take. The road is also opened thereby for delight in the well-being of others and sorrow when harm befalls them. We seek what is best for ourselves, but through the extension of the self, our 'own' best is also that of others." (Naess, 1989, p. 175)

In a manner of speaking, what Naess and Fox are advocating is human action and behavior couched in self-interest. The difference, Fox explains, between transpersonal ecology's sense and mainstream society's sense of self-interest rests in the conception of the self. Thus, as discussed above, when a human being's sense of self can be expanded to include all life forces and entities of the earth, actions and behaviors stemming from

self-interest will logically be in the interest of the whole (i.e. nature) with which the human has identified. But, when an individual's sense of self is limited to what Fox describes as "personal identification," actions and behaviors will be in the interest first and foremost of the individual in question, and to a lesser extent, the individual's small circle of friends and family members (Fox, 1990, p. 249-250).

In contrast to the narrow, atomistic, or particle-like conceptions of self...the transpersonal ecology conception of self is a wide, expansive, or field-like conception from the outset. This has the highly interesting, even startling, consequence that ethics (conceived of as being concerned with moral 'oughts') is rendered superfluous! The reason for this is that if one has a wide, expansive, or field-like sense of self then (assuming that one is not self-destructive) one will naturally (i.e., spontaneously) protect the natural unfolding of this expansive self (the ecosphere, the cosmos) in all its aspects. (Fox, 1990, p. 217)

Embracing self-interest for the purpose of maintaining and protecting the "natural unfolding" of the "expansive self" is essential in practicing transpersonal ecology and achieving symbiosis with nature. Naess argues that this bundled, transpersonal self-interest is the superior method for adopting and fulfilling the notions of self-realization and biocentric equality.

"We need an environmental ethics, but when people feel they unselfishly give up, even sacrifice, their interest in order to show love for Nature, this is probably in the long run a treacherous basis for conservation. Through identification they may come to see their own interest served by conservation, through genuine self-love, love of a widened and deepened self." (Naess, 1995, p. 17)

Naess and Fox both stress that the sense of unity and connection experienced through the identification process leads naturally to an impetus to work in symbiosis with

and even defend the natural world that has become a part of the expanded self. The desire to fulfill such symbiotic interactions and to ensure the well-being of the earth flows naturally from the realization that humans and nature are one and the same; thus, there is no coerced “sacrifice” or exceptional altruism necessary. This is a great strength of transpersonal ecology as humans are not asked to act against their own wishes and desires, but instead to scrutinize the nature of their wishes and desires to ensure they benefit the greater whole of which the individual human is an integral element. Naess explains this logical process:

The relationship between identification and the narrower process of solidarity is such that every deep and lasting state of solidarity presupposes wide identification. The essential sense of common interests is comprehended spontaneously and is internalised. This leads to the dependency of A’s Self-realisation upon B’s. ...A assumes a common stance upon the basis of an identification with B. A may also assume a common stance upon the basis of abstract ideas of moral justice, combined with a minimum of identification, but under hard and long-lasting trials the resulting solidarity cannot be expected to hold. The same applies to loyalty. When solidarity and loyalty are solidly anchored in identification, they are not experienced as moral demands; they come of themselves. (Naess, 1989, p. 172)

The fact that “solidarity and loyalty” can “come of themselves” through internalization of commonalities with the other, rather than through a reliance on abstract moral demands, once again speaks to the importance and centrality of the process of identification. As Naess reminds us: “A lack of identification leads to indifference. Distant objects or events which do not seem to concern us are at best relegated to the indifferent background.” (Naess, 1989, p. 174) Hence, broad identification and an expansive sense of self are essential in realizing the goals and aims of transpersonal

ecology; namely, self-realization and the endorsement of an ethic presupposing biocentric equality.

Despite providing a fairly thorough discussion on the matter, one vital area where Naess and Fox do not fully address the issues of identification and expansion of the sense of self is illuminated by eco-feminist thinkers in the previous section. Naess and Fox advocate a wider sense of self that allows the individual to not only identify with the immediate self or an individual's friends and family, but also to identify with animals, trees, rivers, clouds, and all the myriad entities that make the earth what it is (Naess, 1989; Fox, 1990). However, neither gives any attention to the idea that the reason why there is a profound lack of human identification with nature has to do with the imbalance caused by living in an androcentric, patriarchal society where males dominate all aspects of life including the lives of females, who are inherently associated with nature (King, 2005; Hallen, 1995). Transpersonal ecology's failure to address the androcentric, patriarchal model the vast majority of the world's societies are steeped in (and have been for thousands of years) is a major shortcoming. Without incorporating an androcentric and patriarchal analysis or perspective into transpersonal ecology, the calls by Fox, Naess and others to end the dominator ethic are hollow and fundamentally flawed as androcentrism (and its spawn, anthropocentrism), as discussed in the previous section, lies at the root of human alienation from and rejection or hatred of nature and the feminine (King, 2005; Hallen, 1995).

Acknowledging that overcoming androcentrism and focusing on achieving identification with the feminine is the most important step in the process of identification

for transpersonal ecologists, and indeed all human beings, would be a positive development in moving toward a worldview embracing self-realization and biocentric equality. The focus on the process of identification by Naess and Fox discussed above, combined with the recognition of androcentrism and identification with the feminine stressed by eco-feminists, forms a synthesis where the two philosophies complement one another and push further toward a growing realization of a transpersonal ecology. Thus, when paired together, each philosophy strengthens the other as transpersonal ecology offers a focus on the process of identification, and eco-feminism directs transpersonal ecologists' process of identification to address androcentrism as the root cause of the dominator ethic and to address society's profound lack of identification with the feminine and, in turn, nature.

### Process of Identification

If a human being expressed recognition and acknowledgement of androcentrism and patriarchy, the desire to identify with the feminine and all of nature, the desire to realize as expansive a sense of self as possible, the desire to partake in the process of identification, and the desire to realize a transpersonal ecology as Naess, Fox and others describe it, by what psychological process or by what mode of action or behavior might one proceed? Or, in other words, how might a human being go about realizing a transpersonal ecology; what specific steps must be taken? Naess, Fox and others often discuss the components of transpersonal ecology, the elements that allow for realizing as expansive a sense of self as possible and identifying with the unified totality of nature, but the question as to how an individual is to go about moving toward a transpersonal ecology (as Fox puts it in the title of his book) is at times hinted at, but rarely, if ever, discussed in a comprehensive manner.

Rather than dealing with moral injunctions, transpersonal ecologists are therefore inclined far more to what might be referred to as experiential invitations: readers or listeners are invited to experience themselves as intimately bound up with the world around them, bound up to such an extent that it becomes more or less impossible to refrain from wider identification (i.e., impossible to refrain from the this-worldly realization of a more expansive sense of self). ...That is, as our knowledge grows regarding the extent to which we are intimately bound up with the world, can we resist identifying more widely and deeply with the world...such that we are naturally inclined to care for all aspects of the world's unfolding? (Fox, 1990, p. 244-245)

The central message of Fox's statement rings true in respect to transpersonal ecology as a human experiencing the sensation of being "intimately bound up" with all of

nature will naturally lead to greater identification with all of nature and a desire to care for and respect nature as well as to defend it from would-be destroyers. Yet, Fox does not discuss how a human might encounter the circumstances to experience being “intimately bound up with the world around them.” How, specifically, does a human being begin to realize an expansion of the sense of self and an identification with the unified totality of nature? Fox attempts to discuss the question near the end of *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology*.

Fox explains that: “...a transpersonal approach to ecology is concerned precisely with opening to ecological awareness; with realizing one’s ecological, wider, or big Self; or, as I have already expressed it, with the this-worldly realization of expansive a self as possible.” (Fox, 1990, p. 198)

Then, a few pages later in what appears to be an attempt to answer the *how* question inferred by the above quotation, Fox writes:

“How does one realize, in a this-worldly sense, as expansive a sense of self as possible? The transpersonal ecology answer is: through the process of identification.” (Fox, 1990, p. 249)

And then, the question must be asked of Fox (and Naess and other deep/transpersonal ecologists): how does one take part in the process of identification with all of nature? Fox’s answer: through ontological or cosmological identification (Fox, 1990, p. 250).

“In contrast to personally based identification, ontologically and cosmologically based forms of identification are transpersonal in that they are not primarily a function of

the personal contacts or relationships of this or that particular person.” (Fox, 1990, p. 250)

Thus, unlike personal identification with the other, ontological or cosmological identification does not require that a human have a personal, physical relationship with an entity to identify with it and experience an inherent connection. Of course, personal identification is the most common mode of identification for human beings, and this makes sense considering that it is generally easier for one to care for people one has known one’s whole life as compared with people one has never met. Since personal identification is universally familiar, developing transpersonal identification, either ontologically or cosmologically, is an uncommon course with potential for encountering obstacles and struggles. Fox discusses both ontological and cosmological identification and concludes that while both represent viable modes of transpersonal identification, cosmological identification is a more likely candidate for application among the greatest numbers of people (Fox, 1990, p. 250-256). Fox’s logic, endorsed by Naess and the majority of deep/transpersonal ecologists, rests on the idea that ontological identification is highly esoteric and difficult to explain to those who have not experienced it (Fox, 1990, p. 250-256; 259). Discussing transpersonal ontological identification, Fox writes:

Ontologically based identification refers to experiences of commonality with all that is that are brought about through deep-seated realization of the fact *that things are*. ... The basic idea I am attempting to communicate...is that the fact—the utterly astonishing fact—that things are impresses itself upon some people in such a profound way that all that exists seems to stand out as a foreground from a background of non-existence... (Fox, 1990, p. 250-251)

Fox notes that the “training of consciousness,” through practices like Zen Buddhism, can aid in a human realizing an ontological identification with all of nature, but that such disciplines are by no means simple or easy and often require many years of training (Fox, 1990, p. 250). A more likely candidate for the vast majority of people to achieve transpersonal identification with nature, as noted a few lines above, is cosmological identification. Speaking of a comparison between ontological and cosmological identification, Fox writes: “...I do not think that there is any particular theoretical reason for preferring one of these approaches to the other in transpersonal ecology. There may be a practical reason for this emphasis, however, in that it would seem to be much easier to communicate and inspire a cosmologically based identification...” (Fox, 1990, p. 260)

Unlike ontological identification that relies on discipline and training of the consciousness, cosmological identification relies on realizing a transpersonal ecology by incorporating any cosmology into one’s worldview “that sees the world as a single unfolding process...”. (Fox, 1990, p. 252) Therefore, Fox argues, various religious traditions or philosophies could be incorporated into a transpersonal ecology to facilitate cosmological identification. He urges the reader to: “Consider, for example, the worldviews of certain indigenous people (e.g., of some North American Indians), the philosophy of Taoism, or the philosophy of Spinoza.” (Fox, 1990, p. 252)

By adopting a philosophy or worldview stressing unity as Fox describes, individual humans are better able to understand their place in the cosmos and identify themselves as part of the unified totality of nature. As Fox explains:

“Cosmologically based identification refers to experiences of commonality with all that is that are brought about through deep-seated realization of the fact that we and all other entities are aspects of a single unfolding reality. ...this realization can be brought about through the empathic incorporation of mythological, religious, speculative philosophical, or scientific cosmologies. ...cosmologically based identification proceeds from a sense of the cosmos (such as that provided by the image of the tree of life) and works inward to each particular individual’s sense of commonality with other entities.” (Fox, 1990, p. 252; 258)

In discussing the “empathic incorporation of mythological, religious, speculative philosophical, or scientific cosmologies” Fox is referring to the idea expressed originally by Naess that a deep ecological consciousness can be formed by a panoply of philosophical approaches from various societies and cultures; that it need not be achieved via one specific philosophical approach. Through learning about and gaining experience with a variety of cosmologies, one becomes more open and likely to be accepting of a personal cosmology that is not necessarily say Christian or Muslim or Hindu, but rather an “empathic incorporation” of various systems through a person’s efforts to learn about and gain experience with such systems.

Cosmological identification offers at least two advantages for transpersonal ecology as it does not require a specific cosmology be applied to the identification process and it operates on an external-to-internal basis where a greater perspective of the whole earth and all its entities leads to a greater understanding of how the individual human should behave in relation to the world. Fox notes, “...the fact that cosmologies...are formulated in both words and images means that cosmologically based

identification can readily be inspired through symbolic communication.” (Fox, 1990, p. 260)

As “symbolic communication” is the primary mode of communication for much of the world, opportunities to present the idea of cosmological identification are abundant. Through discussions, books, films, theatre productions, political protests, and myriad other forms of symbolic communication, the notion of cosmological identification can be expressed and expounded upon. Fox argues that a consistent and concerted effort to express the notion via “symbolic communication,” increases societies’ exposure to the idea of cosmological identification and the prospect for its greater realization in society. Cosmological identification—in comparison to personal and ontological identification—has the potential for increasing the likelihood of the realization of a transpersonal ecology for societies. It moves beyond the personal realm to include all the earth’s entities and does not rely on the rare and ineffable phenomenon of ontological identification. Rather, it focuses on the idea that consistent exposure to and examination of various cosmologies naturally leads to an incorporation of the various cosmologies to form a conflated amalgam incorporating aspects of the various systems of belief.

While Fox’s descriptions of ontological and cosmological foundations for transpersonal identification and the apparent preference for cosmological identification make sense, they still fail to answer the essential *how* question. The earlier *how* question that proved to be troubling for transpersonal ecology concerning *how* an individual might realize the most expansive sense of self as possible and take part in the process of identification with all of nature was answered with Fox’s somewhat roundabout response

of ontological and cosmological identification. Yet, even after indulging Fox's helpful dissection of the ontological and cosmological modes of identification, the *how* question still lingers: *how* does one achieve cosmological or ontological identification with all of nature? This question is never answered and rarely even addressed by Naess, Fox, Devall, Sessions, and other prominent deep/transpersonal ecologists. Potential answers that have been put forth mostly evoke images or ideas of identification and expansion of the self, but still lack any realistic plan of action for enabling societies to achieve a transpersonal consciousness. Devall writes:

“Exploring ecological self is part of the transforming process required to heal ourselves in the world. Practicing means breathing the air with renewed awareness of the winds. When we drink water we trace it to its sources—a spring or mountain stream in our bioregion—and contemplate the cycles of energy as part of our body. ... Extending awareness and receptivity with other animals and mountains and rivers encourages identification and engenders respect.” (Devall quoted in Fox, 1990, p. 233-234)

Deep/transpersonal ecologist Robert Aitken, discussing identification writes:

“Deep ecology ... requires openness to the black bear, becoming truly intimate with the black bear, so that honey dribbles down your fur as you catch the bus to work.” (Aitken quoted in Fox, 1990, p. 239)

Deep/transpersonal ecologist John Seed speaks in similar terms about defending the rainforest, as was quoted earlier, and other deep/transpersonal ecologists talk about looking at the sources of our food and water, becoming more knowledgeable about our bioregion, and becoming more aware of mountains and black bears. But the *how* question remains unanswered. Surely Aitken does not advocate humans attempting to actually eat

honey in a grassy field with a black bear; surely Seed does not expect us to live under a tree in the rainforest for a lifetime to identify with the rainforest and defend it; and, surely Devall's attempts at "renewed awareness of the winds" and tracing the source of drinking water from the faucet to the stream are good first steps in achieving an ecological consciousness, but they are hardly the penultimate practice or expressions of transpersonal ecology. *How* can human beings realize the most expansive sense of self as possible and identify with all of nature; which specific steps need to be taken? Why is this question so hard for transpersonal ecologists to answer?

Examining the theories that inspired Fox's deconstruction of deep ecology and his concentration on the process of identification will afford a better understanding of and context for the elusive *how* question. In addition, such an investigation helps move toward developing a plan of action for societies to achieve a broad sense of self, identification with all of nature, and a transpersonal ecological consciousness. To that end, the next section will discuss transpersonal psychology. It will be shown that transpersonal psychology offers a dynamic approach to human consciousness that is amenable to the realization of the deep/transpersonal ecology philosophy. Building on the notion that the human consciousness is not confined to the cranial cavity of every individual human, but is rather a process in flux, influenced by and shared with myriad other entities and energies the psyche interacts with, the transpersonal approach explores ways in which the ego yields, is dissolved, or opens to experience an expanded sense of self and greater identification with nature in a manner that goes beyond the human ego and individual consciousness.

## Transpersonal Psychology

Fox offers a fairly brief yet thorough overview of the development of transpersonal psychology as a recognized area of study in the appendix of *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology*. Fox explains that psychologists Abraham Maslow and Anthony Sutich were the primary voices in developing the field of transpersonal psychology during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The two had earlier been the driving force behind humanistic psychology, the so-called “third force” of psychology following positivistic behaviorist theory and classical psychoanalytic theory. Maslow and Sutich founded the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* in 1961 and the Association for Humanistic Psychology by 1963, experiencing the general institutionalization of humanistic psychology in less than 10 years of its official inception. Yet, as culture changed throughout the 1960s and the decade came to a close, both Maslow and Sutich found humanistic psychology to be a limiting science (Fox, 1990, p. 289-293).

Following extensive study with many patients, Maslow came to the conclusion that while there is a group of people who have reached self-actualization, a smaller number in that group are people who, “find it easier to transcend the ego, the self, the identity, to go beyond self-actualization.” (Maslow quoted in Fox, 1990, p. 295) Maslow’s experiences with self-actualized people transcending their egos coupled with Sutich’s desire for a more cosmologically-based psychology (Fox, 1990, p. 293) led to the formation of transpersonal psychology. The *Journal for Transpersonal Psychology* was first published in 1969 and the Association for Transpersonal Psychology was

officially formed by Sutich in 1971 (Fox, 1990, p. 296). While both Maslow and Sutich died in the 1970s, the study of transpersonal psychology still attracts significant interest as thinkers like Stanislav Grof, Charles Tart, Ken Wilber, and others continue to write and publish on the subject (Fox, 1990, p. 297).

In light of Fox's overview, Ferrer offers a more definitive definition of what transpersonal psychology is and explains its primary areas of focus.

“...Walsh and Vaughan (1993) defined the transpersonal disciplines as ‘those disciplines that focus on the study of transpersonal experiences and related phenomenon. These phenomena include the causes, effects and correlates of transpersonal experiences and development, as well as the disciplines and practices inspired by them.’ Likewise, Lajoie and Shapiro (1992), after surveying more than two hundred definitions of transpersonal psychology, conclude that this field ‘is concerned with the study of humanity’s highest potential, and with the recognition, understanding, and realization of unitive, spiritual, and transcendent states of consciousness.’” (Ferrer, 2000, p. 214 as quoted in Hart, et al.)

Ferrer frames transpersonal psychology and related disciplines as having a phenomenological basis and thus deems experiences of a transpersonal nature or of a transcendent state of consciousness, necessary for the realization of a transpersonal consciousness. He explains the significance of transpersonal experience in the study of transpersonal psychology and theory.

“Transpersonal theory conceptualizes transpersonal and spiritual phenomenon in experiential terms. In other words, transpersonal and spiritual phenomenon are generally understood and defined as *intrasubjective experiences* or *states of consciousness*. The basic ideas underlying this experiential approach is that individuals ‘have’ transpersonal experiences, and then, during these states of expanded awareness, access sources of knowledge that lie beyond their biographical histories and ordinary time-space limitations.” (Ferrer, 2000, p. 213)

The idea Ferrer illuminates, that via transpersonal experience humans can “access sources of knowledge that lie beyond their biographical histories and ordinary time-space limitations,” is extraordinary when considered against the dominant ideation of consciousness. In that familiar framework, human consciousness is articulated as a mere byproduct of a personal biographic history limited to the finite span of one human’s specific life on earth (Grof, 1992, p. 83). Grof, an esteemed psychologist and internationally-respected scholar, discusses how the developments of transpersonal psychology call into question many of the dominant conceptions about the nature of human consciousness formulated by centuries of dualistic, Cartesian cognition. He stresses the need to leave behind the conception of the atomistic individual completely cut off from the influence of the energies of the earth and its entities, and to instead embrace the realm of the unitive consciousness that pervades all humanity and indeed all of nature concomitantly (Grof, 1992).

“To understand the transpersonal realm we must begin thinking of consciousness in an entirely new way. It is here that we begin to free ourselves from the preconception that consciousness is something created within the human brain and thus contained in ... our heads. It is here that we look beyond the belief that consciousness exists only as the result of our individual lives. As we come to terms with the concept of the transpersonal realm, we begin thinking of consciousness as something that exists outside and independent of us...” (Grof, 1992, p. 83)

Grof notes that transpersonal consciousness is “infinite, rather than finite” and that modern consciousness research, along with other fields of science, suggests that consciousness has no boundaries or limits in its scope (Grof, 1992, p. 83-84).

“The acceptance of the transpersonal nature of consciousness challenges many fundamental concepts in our society, concepts that affect us all at

deeply personal levels. If we are to accept this new view of consciousness, it means accepting, also, that our lives are not shaped only by the immediate environmental influences since the day of our birth but, of at least equal importance, they are shaped by ancestral, cultural, spiritual, and cosmic influences far beyond the scope of what we can perceive with our physical senses.” (Grof, 1992, p. 84)

As Maslow found through his research, there were few people that had developed to the point of full self-actualization, and even fewer still within that small group that were able to experience the transpersonal realm and extend beyond their personal egos (Fox, 1990, p. 295).

In reference to Maslow’s findings, Fox explains that, “In contrast to ‘merely healthy’ self-actualizers, transcendents are those individuals who “find it easier to transcend the ego, the self, the identity, to go beyond self-actualization. ... Maslow repeatedly describes transcendence and transcendents in terms of both the Spinozist ideal of living ‘under the aspect of eternity’ and the Taoist ideal of living in harmony with the nature of things by allowing them to develop or unfold in their own way.” (Fox, 1990, p. 295)

How might transcendents achieve a transpersonal consciousness and also achieve a transpersonal ecological worldview or philosophy? Again, as was seen in the last two sections, the answer to the question of *how* one might achieve a transpersonal ecological consciousness can vary from describing the form it takes, the theoretical framework in which it could be achieved or the process by which it occurs yet these explanations do little to discuss the methods or modes one might utilize to achieve a transpersonal consciousness and, eventually, a transpersonal ecology. Fox, Naess, and other

transpersonal ecologists fail to describe at any length a tangible plan of action for societies to achieve a transpersonal consciousness and transpersonal ecology.

In the next section, the *how* question will be addressed through examination of potential methods for achieving transpersonal consciousness with a specific focus on altered states of consciousness produced from the use of plant substances.

## ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

To write about altered states of consciousness (ASCs) among human beings is to presuppose the existence of a state of consciousness (SoC). Consciousness or a state of consciousness is most generally described as the state of self-awareness; the internalization of the realization that the self exists and is aware of its current state (Tart, 1975, p. 13-14). Thus, concerning the terms SoC and ASC, psychologist Dr. Charles Tart of the University of California, Davis argues that the "...common-sense idea behind the terms is recognition of the existence of a state of consciousness, a pattern, an organizational style of one's overall mental functioning at any given time. ...When the experiential 'feel' of one SoC differs radically from another, we then talk about an altered SoC, an ASC." (Tart, 1975, p. 13-14)

Building on Tart's statement, Arnold M. Ludwig explains that: "...altered states of consciousness... [are] any mental state(s), induced by various physiological, psychological, or pharmacological maneuvers or agents, which can be recognized subjectively by the individual himself (or by an objective observer of the individual) as representing a sufficient deviation in subjective experience or psychological functioning from certain general norms for that individual during alert, waking consciousness." (Ludwig, 1969, p. 9-10)

An ASC can be achieved via a number of methods and, as such, all ASCs are not of a similar tone and indeed offer varied experiences each of a singular, distinctive nature. "ASCs may be produced in any setting by a wide variety of agents or maneuvers

which interfere with the normal inflow of sensory... stimuli, the normal outflow of motor impulses, the normal 'emotional tone,' or the normal flow and organization of cognitive processes." (Ludwig, 1969, p. 10)

Ludwig notes the general characteristics of altered states of consciousness that include alterations in thinking, disturbed time sense, loss of control, change in emotional expression, body image change, perceptual distortions, changes in meaning or significance, a sense of the ineffable, feelings of rejuvenation, and hypersuggestibility (Ludwig, 1969, p. 13-16).

From the definitions and characterizations of ASCs offered by Tart and Ludwig, a transpersonal consciousness as described by Fox would indeed be considered an ASC.

First, from a macro perspective on transpersonal theory, as cited earlier, Ferrer argues:

"Transpersonal theory conceptualizes transpersonal and spiritual phenomenon in experiential terms. In other words, transpersonal and spiritual phenomenon are generally understood and defined as *intrasubjective experiences* or *states of consciousness*. The basic ideas underlying this experiential approach is that individuals 'have' transpersonal experiences, and then, during these states of expanded awareness, access sources of knowledge that lie beyond their biographical histories and ordinary time-space limitations." (Ferrer, 2000, p. 213)

And, in laying out the most basic elements of transpersonal ecological philosophy, as cited earlier, Fox explains:

"...Naess's philosophical sense of deep ecology refers to the this-worldly realization of as expansive a sense of self as possible in a world in which selves and things-in-the-world are conceived as processes. *Since this approach is one that involves the realization of a sense of self that extends beyond (or that is trans-) one's egoic, biographical, or personal sense of self*, the clearest, most accurate, and most informative term for this sense of deep ecology is, in my view, transpersonal ecology." (Fox, 1990, p. 197, my emphasis in italics)

The transpersonal states that Ferrer and Fox describe include alterations in thinking (as expansive a sense of self as possible), disturbed time sense (accessing “sources of knowledge” that lie beyond “biographical histories and ordinary time-space limitations” by going beyond a personal or egoic sense of self) change in emotional expression (feelings of oneness with nature via extension of the sense of self and experiencing all life as an interconnected process), body image change (a merging of the sense of the bodily self with nature to the degree such a merging is possible), changes in meaning or significance (access to heretofore unknown “sources of knowledge” via a state of “expanded awareness” achieved by going beyond a personal or egoic sense of self) and a sense of the ineffable (access to heretofore unknown “sources of knowledge” via a state of “expanded awareness” by going beyond a personal or egoic sense of self).

For Fox, the transpersonal aspect of his philosophy centers on the process of identification and an expansion of identification or sense of self that goes beyond the personal, egoic realm to the realm of symbiotic unity where all entities are conceived of as processes within larger processes that constitute a whole. And, as Ferrer explains, transpersonal theory is concerned with experiential phenomenon that are “generally understood and defined as *intrasubjective experiences* or *states of consciousness*.” (Ferrer, 2000, p. 213) Thus, a transpersonal ecological consciousness is a state of consciousness that “differs radically from” everyday waking consciousness in that it goes beyond the personal, egoic realm of identification experienced in everyday waking consciousness to the transpersonal realm where it can “access sources of knowledge that

lie beyond ... biographical histories and ordinary time-space limitations” (Tart, 1975, p. 13-14) and is therefore an altered state of consciousness.

Tart stresses that ASCs represent radical shifts in consciousness rather than minor alterations, such that one experiencing an ASC may describe, “...major quantitative shifts in the range of functioning of psychological/physiological functions such as memory, reasoning, sense of identity, and motor skills, and the temporary disappearance of some functions and emergence of new functions” (Tart, 1975, p. 15) not available during ordinary states of consciousness.

The notion that an ASC involves radical shifts in consciousness is of great importance to the philosophy of transpersonal ecology. As was discussed by Fox, human beings experience a lack of ontological or cosmological identification with nature and an apparent abundance of personal identification with small groups of other humans one is in close contact with (Fox, 1990, p. 250-256). Fox’s assertion illuminates the predominance among many human beings in developing a highly individualistic, rigid ego structure that impedes the experience of an ASC like a transpersonal ecological consciousness. Therefore, developing a consciousness that reaches beyond the realm of personal identification inherently requires an altered state of consciousness such that “major quantitative shifts” in “sense of identity” can be achieved.

The idea and experience of ASCs have been incorporated into the vast majority of human societies around the world, including the United States. Erika Bourguignon, former anthropology department chair at Ohio State University, notes that in a sample study of 488 societies “...in all parts of the world, for which we have analyzed the

relevant ethnographic literature, 437, or 90 percent, are reported to have one or more institutionalized, culturally patterned forms of altered states of consciousness. ... The presence of institutionalized forms of altered states of consciousness in 90 percent of our sample societies represents a striking finding and suggests that we are, indeed, dealing with a matter of major importance, not merely a bit of anthropological esoterica.”

(Bourguignon, 1973, p. 10-11)

However, the mere fact that human beings have the ability to achieve an ASC is not a guarantee that every human society will develop culturally sanctioned and patterned methods for doing so. As Bourguignon explains, “It must be stressed that although the *capacity* to experience altered states of consciousness is a psychobiological capacity of the species, and thus universal, its utilization, institutionalization, and patterning are, indeed, features of culture, and thus variable.” (Bourguignon, 1973, p. 12)

Bourguignon focuses her studies on “institutionalized, culturally patterned altered states,” that can be patterned in a sacred or profane manner. She explains how altered states may be subdivided along these dimensions: “(1) states that are personal and not culturally patterned or minimally patterned in contrast to those that are given an institutional context and culturally patterned form and meaning; (2) this institutional patterning may be of two types, either profane or sacred.” (Bourguignon, 1973, p. 8) The significance and context of an ASC experienced by a human being will be, to some degree, dependent on that person’s culture and its approach to the ASC in question. Further, Bourguignon’s delineation between “profane” and “sacred” ASCs is key. Her recognition that, for example, an American businessman smoking a Marlboro cigarette

after dinner to relax or reduce stress is a very different activity with a very different purpose than a South American shaman smoking tobacco at a ceremony dedicated to divination and healing. While both may be culturally patterned, one is considered profane use and the other sacred. Profane use is concerned with achieving personal, individual pleasure outside of any spiritual context while sacred use occurs in the context and setting of divination and the spiritual realm where one transcends the ego (Bourguignon, 1973, p. 9). This distinction speaks to the elements of intention and context concerned with an ASC—whether the goal or focus of a specific ASC is to expand one’s sense of self and broaden identification beyond the personal realm, or if the goal or focus of a specific ASC is to relax and reduce stress.

Ludwig notes that throughout human history healing has been a central intent or focus of ASCs through the work of shamans, medicine men, psychiatrists and others who incorporate sacred ASCs into healing treatments (Ludwig, 1969, p. 19). The socio-cultural phenomenon of shamanism is globally widespread and found in numerous societies from every region on earth. Shamanism is the practice of a recognized healer achieving an ASC, commonly referred to as a state of ecstasy, that is transpersonal in nature and allows the shaman access to the transpersonal realm; that which is beyond the personal ego (Eliade 1964; McKenna 1991 & 1992). As ethnobotanist and ethnopharmacologist Terence McKenna explains: “Shamanism is the use of the archaic techniques of ecstasy that were developed independent of any religious philosophy—the empirically validated, experientially operable techniques that produce ecstasy. Ecstasy is the contemplation of wholeness.” (McKenna, 1991, p. 13)

Noted ethnographer and anthropologist R. Gordon Wasson argued that the practice of shamanism “originated when an omnivorous proto-human encountered alkaloids” or “psychoactive plants in their environment.” (McKenna, 1991, p. 144) This stands in opposition to the opinion of Mircea Eliade, one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s foremost authorities on shamanism. Eliade believed that the incorporation of psychoactive plants in shamanism was a later practice, initiated only once techniques of ecstasy not involving plants had ceased (McKenna, 1991, p. 144). McKenna explains Eliade’s position:

“Eliade considers what he calls ‘narcotic’ shamanism to be decadent. He feels that if one cannot achieve ecstasy without drugs, then one’s culture is probably in a decadent phase... Wasson’s notion, which I share, is precisely the opposite: it is the presence of a hallucinogen in a shamanistic culture that indicates its shamanism is authentic and alive. It is the late and decadent phase of shamanism that is characterized by elaborate rituals, ordeals, and reliance on pathological personalities. Where these latter phenomena are central, shamanism is well on its way to becoming simply ‘religion.’” (McKenna, 1991, p. 144-145)

While use of psychoactive plants is not universal to all shamanism, the practice of using psychoactive plants fits within the cadre of techniques and manipulations utilized by many shamans to produce a sacred ASC or state of shamanic ecstasy. As McKenna explains:

“Not all shamans use intoxication with plants to obtain ecstasy, but all shamanic practice aims to give rise to ecstasy. Drumming, manipulation of breath, ordeals, fasting, theatrical illusions, sexual abstinence—all are time-honored methods for entering into the trance necessary for shamanic work. Yet none of these methods is as effective, as ancient, and as overwhelming as the use of plants containing chemical compounds that produce visions.” (McKenna, 1992, p. 6)

Thus, McKenna concludes that:

“I believe, along with Gordon Wasson and others, but in distinction to Mircea Eliade ... that it is hallucinogenic shamanism that is primary. Where shamanic techniques are used to the exclusion of hallucinogenic plant ingestion, the shamanism tends to be vitiated; it is more like a ritual enactment of what real shamanism is. The shamanism that is coming to be [in modern times] is coming to be within people in our culture who feel comfortable with psychedelic plants and who, by going into those spaces and then returning...are actually changing the face of the culture.” (McKenna, 1991, p. 166)

As very small numbers of people in modern Western cultures are learning about shamanism and transpersonal consciousness through the use of psychedelic plants, as McKenna notes, the impact of that very small group of people on a mass social level is naturally limited. “The tragedy of our [American] cultural situation is that we have no shamanic tradition. Shamanism is primarily techniques, not ritual. It is a set of techniques that have been worked out over millennia that make it possible, though perhaps not for everyone, to explore these areas.” (McKenna, 1991, p. 45)

However, as McKenna explains, the small numbers of people in Western cultures that are ingesting psychoactive plant materials in order to facilitate a sacred ASC are doing so in a manner that induces ASCs strikingly similar to those induced by some modes of shamanic practice. Dr. Ralph Metzner, a psychology professor formerly of Harvard University and now at the California Institute of Integral Studies, echoes McKenna’s sentiments and makes comparable observations concerning the similarities between the ASCs of traditional shamanic ecstasy and the ASCs achieved by modern Westerners ingesting psychoactive plants. “If we inquire into the basic model of reality, the worldview or cosmology that is revealed by ... hallucinogenic experiences, we find that it is essentially similar to that shared by indigenous shamanistic cultures—and

radically different from the prevailing Western paradigm associated with mechanistic science.” (Metzner, 1999, p. 165)

Metzner concludes that ASCs produced by psychedelics offer a worldview to Westerners that is “radically different from the prevailing Western paradigm associated with mechanistic science.” (Metzner, 1999, p. 165) Thus, the most effective, substantial manner for inducing ASCs—ingesting psychedelic plants—also facilitates a worldview that differs greatly from the Western worldview experienced during everyday waking consciousness and is more akin to the worldview of cultures where shamanism is central. And, as already noted, many of the characteristics of an ASC facilitated by a psychedelic material are conducive to achieving a transpersonal ecological consciousness. Thus, with the ability to catalyze a worldview that is “radically different from the prevailing Western paradigm,” to facilitate “major quantitative shifts” in “sense of identity,” and to spark “changes in meaning or significance,” the prospects for psychedelics to facilitate or catalyze the realization of a transpersonal ecological consciousness are intriguing. It must be considered, however, that a transpersonal ecological consciousness is a static or constant SoC and that ASCs facilitated by psychedelics have a beginning and an ending and are thus nonpermanent. Further, while during a psychedelic-facilitated ASC a person may experience a transpersonal consciousness and expansion of the sense of self, the manner in which this experience impacts an individual’s worldview or cosmology after the psychedelic-facilitated ASC has ended is key.

Metzner makes a well-crafted argument that simply experiencing an ASC as a result of ingesting a psychoactive plant or substance does not propel one into the

transpersonal world of the shaman (Metzner, 1999, p. 73). It is the purpose and technique underlying the ingestion of a psychoactive plant or substance and its context and internalization that affords one access to the transpersonal realm. “For someone whose conscious intention is a psychospiritual transformation, the psychedelic *can* be a catalyst that reveals and releases insight or knowledge from higher aspects of our being.”

(Metzner, 1999, p. 73)

Further research concerning an approach to experiencing nature once a transpersonal consciousness is achieved is needed. While research has been conducted using psychedelics in concert with nature sounds and images to gauge a human’s connection to nature (Metzner 1999), more investigation would be useful to establish best practices for those wishing to achieve a transpersonal ecology with assistance from psychedelics. While exercises like the “Council of All Beings” as described by deep ecologists Johanna Macy and John Seed can be beneficial, they do not truly address a full-blown transpersonal experience with nature. Until such empirical research has been conducted or an established set of practices adopted (perhaps established at an earlier date in human history), it is safe to presume that unmitigated interaction with the natural world during a state of transpersonal consciousness with the goal of achieving a greater connection with nature will yield positive results and prove helpful. Expressing or having feelings of connection with nature, a desire to feel unified with the earth and similar sentiments would also be productive in such a setting.

For those wishing to achieve a static, ongoing transpersonal ecological consciousness, the knowledge and perspective gained during psychedelic-facilitated

ASCs can be integrated in such a manner that one's everyday waking consciousness evolves and is permanently altered from its previous iteration. Metzner argues that obtaining greater knowledge via expansion of consciousness beyond the ego is a significant step in the evolutionary process of the human species.

In an article titled *On the Evolutionary Significance of Psychedelics*, Metzner argues that psychedelics can be viewed as evolutionary tools as they work to expand consciousness. Metzner asks: "If LSD [lysergic acid diethylamide] expands consciousness and if, as is widely believed, further evolution will take the form of an increase in consciousness, then can we not regard LSD as a possible evolutionary instrument?" (Metzner, 1999, p. 71) Metzner further hypothesizes that the evolution of consciousness is a process in flux where the primary function is "gaining insight and understanding, or gnosis." He goes on to assert that, "The acceleration of this process [consciousness expansion] by molecular catalysts not only is a consequence of new chemical discoveries but also is an integral component of traditional systems of transformation, including shamanism, alchemy, and yoga." (Metzner, 1999, p. 71)

The fact that ingestion of psychoactive plants can induce ASCs of a uniquely transpersonal nature is significant for those wishing to realize a transpersonal ecology. Recognizing that the development of a transpersonal ecology will necessarily require the adoption of an alternative worldview and a transpersonal mode of identification as Fox suggests (Fox, 1990, p. 250-256), a verifiable technique, like psychedelic use, that reliably engenders a transpersonal ASC holds promise for the realization of a transpersonal ecology.

Specific to psychedelics, Metzner writes:

“The potential of psychedelic drugs to act as catalysts to a transformation into gnosis, or direct, ongoing awareness of divine reality, even if only in a small number of people, would seem to be of utmost significance. Traditionally, the number of individuals who have had mystical experiences has been very small; the number of those who have been able to make practical applications of such experiences has probably been even smaller. Thus, the discovery of psychedelics, in facilitating such experiences and processes, could be regarded as one very important factor in a general spiritual awakening of collective human consciousness.” (Metzner, 1991, p. 73)

Metzner makes key points concerning psychedelic use and its potential for sparking an evolution in human consciousness. While it may be the case that the occurrence of ASCs are almost universal around the globe as Bourguignon suggests, there is no rule stating that all ASCs must occur among people that wish to evolve their consciousness and expand their sense of self beyond the ego. Again, a human being's underlying intentions and goals in experiencing an ASC of a transpersonal nature play a large role in how the experience is integrated into everyday life following the end of the psychedelic-facilitated ASC. Thus, the goal and intent of achieving a transpersonal ecological consciousness via a transpersonal state induced by psychedelic ingestion is required for the experience to catalyze such an evolution. This is reasonable and logical. For example, a human being ingesting psychedelic plants with the specific goal and intention of *not* achieving a transpersonal ecological consciousness would be extremely unlikely to have a transpersonal ecological consciousness nevertheless forced upon them by the ensuing experience. Thus, it is not the psychedelic plant itself or even the ASC it induces that has the ability to confer upon a human being a transpersonal ecological

consciousness. Rather, ingesting a psychedelic plant reliably enables a human being to experience an ASC of a transpersonal nature that has the potential to catalyze the realization of a transpersonal ecological consciousness should that be the intent and goal of the human being in question.

Yet is the idea, or even the practice, of extending identification beyond the ego and realizing the unified totality of nature viable for much of the world's human population, and specifically, a nation like the United States of America? Is it possible that a culture void of shamanic tradition, suspect of psychedelic plants and comprised of a cornucopia of diverse people, could ever come together under the auspices of identification beyond the ego, oneness with nature and the philosophical assumptions of transpersonal ecology? Given the notion that psychedelic plants can facilitate experiences of a transpersonal nature and have the potential to initiate an evolution in one's consciousness, what are the prospects that such experiences could affect a significant portion of the American population and catalyze it in adopting a transpersonal ecological consciousness? Is it realistic to believe that people living in a nation like America might actually use psychedelics, experience a transpersonal consciousness and go on to adopt a transpersonal ecological consciousness? The next section will address these questions, placing the ideas of psychedelic use, transpersonal consciousness and the adoption of transpersonal ecology, in the context of pluralism.

## THE CHALLENGE OF PLURALISM

Rev. Francis Canavan, a political science professor at Fordham University, sums up the notion of liberal pluralism in one word: neutrality (Canavan, 1985, p. 153-154). Canavan explains how American political theorist Robert Dahl's conception of the "equality of all preferences" is an idea that builds on James Madison's views on pluralism, yet diverges on the matter of "natural rights." Dahl gives equal importance to the preferences of all adults without specific concern as to their origin (Canavan, 1985, p. 154).

"The goals of every adult citizen are to be accorded equal value, not because they have any value at all which reason could discern, but because, in the absence of any rational standard for comparing them, we stipulate that all adult values are equal. ... We are now to be protected, in this view, not from tyranny but from the imposition of anyone's or any group's values on anyone else." (Canavan, 1985, p. 155)

The political philosopher William Galston espouses a similar viewpoint, stating that "...from a liberal pluralist point of view, I argue, there are multiple types of legitimate decision making, and democracy is not trumps for all purposes." (Galston, 2002, p. 9) Yet, Canavan and Galston contend, even pluralistic societies must rely on cultural mores and moral tradition for the creation of boundaries in a society (Canavan, 1985, p. 154-156; Galston, 2002, p. 15). Galston explain that, "...liberal democracies rely on cultural and moral conditions that cannot be taken for granted. But to remain 'liberal,' these regimes must safeguard a sphere in which individuals and groups can act, without

state interference, in ways that reflect their understanding of what gives meaning and value to their lives.” (Galston, 2002, p. 15)

Such assertions appear to stand in contrast to monistic accounts of value that argue for a single truth or universal standard for establishing what is deemed good or moralistic (Galston, 2002, p. 6). This means, in theory, that people living in a pluralistic society, which the United States arguably is, are not forced by the power of the state to recognize one religion or one moral code, but rather to develop religious beliefs or morals as they see fit. This aspect of pluralism allows for the individual or a group to select one manner of life over another, to attribute more validity to one moral judgment over another, and to do so without the interference of others and without interfering with the decisions of others who might arrive at different conclusions.

But, the idea that “...liberal democracies rely on cultural and moral conditions that cannot be taken for granted” negates the notion of pluralism in general and instead refers back to a monistic value system where extant cultural and moral conditions determine accepted manners of behavior and living. Further reinforcing this notion, both Canavan and Galston argue that the state does take agency in creating laws, and the laws created generally represent an established moral code of a specific group of people, such as the American public, and thus the laws are a product of that society’s internally formed and established moral code (Canavan , 1985; Galston, 2002, p. 6-7).

Citing Alexis de Tocqueville’s assertion that the breakdown of traditional hierarchies within democratic society would lead to mass equality and eventually a “tyranny of the majority,” political theorist Marvin Olsen explains that, “...the theory of

sociopolitical pluralism calls for a complex network of interest organizations throughout society, each of which possesses its own power base and hence can function relatively independently of the government.” (Olsen, 1982, p. 30) These interest organizations can range from formal political parties to labor unions to churches to special interest organizations and, as long as they are voluntary and independent of the government, can retain a power base that makes them active in decision making and thus prevents tyranny of the majority.

Since pluralism is tolerant of an infinite number of viewpoints, preferences and ideas, it would stand to reason that in a pluralistic society like the United States, psychedelic plant use with the goal of achieving a transpersonal ecology should be awarded equal value to other ideas or perspectives. Furthermore, if users of psychedelic plants wish to explore their conceptions of a transpersonal ecology without forcing other individuals to practice in the same manner and without presenting any threat to the autonomy of others, such an exploration should be allowed.

However, as Galston reminds us, pluralistic societies have an internally developed moral code or set of values upon which the laws and role of the government are based. Concerning pluralism, he says, “...the moral particularism I am urging is compatible with the existence of right answers in specific cases; there may be compelling reasons to conclude that certain trade-offs among competing goods are preferable to others.” (Galston, 2002, p. 7) Thus, in the United States, the idea of achieving a transpersonal ecology through the use of psychedelic plants is not afforded equal standing with other ideas, even though achieving a transpersonal ecology and using psychedelic plants can

certainly be done without affecting others in any negative manner. The U.S. government has decided that allowing psychedelic use would create “trade-offs” that are less preferable than the status quo. The use of psychedelics, following Galston’s reasoning, must therefore be a “specific case” for which a right answer exists and the right answer is to disallow all psychedelic use, otherwise, an arguably pluralistic nation like the United States would allow psychedelic use as a practice holding equal value with all others. More specific reasons why psychedelic use is not afforded equal value in the United States are extremely complex and would take more examination than is viable in this thesis, but the general reason why such an idea is not afforded equal value in the United States is attributable, in part, to the society’s internally developed moral code and, in part, to the fact that the nation is not consistently pluralistic and at times acts in a manner that is irrational and not representative of the most basic tenets of pluralism.

In practice, a likely result of liberal pluralist institutions will be a high degree of social diversity, which makes necessary the virtue of tolerance as a core attribute of liberal pluralist citizenship. ... Toleration means...a principled refusal to use coercive state power to impose one’s own views on others, and therefore a commitment to moral competition through recruitment and persuasion alone. (Galston, 2002, p. 126)

If what Galston wrote was practiced in the physical world, then the idea of achieving a transpersonal ecology via psychedelic plant use would be legal in a pluralistic society like the United States. It is true that in the United States there is, relatively speaking, a high degree of social diversity that requires a certain amount of tolerance from individual citizens. And, psychedelic plant users most certainly have a place in Olsen’s “complex network of interest organizations throughout society” and constitute an

element of Galston's "social diversity," yet are allotted zero tolerance in American society. Furthermore, Galston's statement that a pluralistic society rejects the notion of "coercive state power" in favor of "moral competition through recruitment and persuasion alone," makes apparent the fact that the United States can be described as inconsistently pluralistic.

In practice, so-called pluralistic societies like the United States often use state-sanctioned, coercive power to achieve the state's goals and impose specific morals and values upon citizens. Therefore, a practice that does not infringe upon the autonomy of others (like achieving transpersonal ecology via psychedelic plant use) being deemed illegal in a so-called pluralistic society appears odd as it violates the philosophy's core principles, but is nonetheless a not infrequent occurrence within inconsistently pluralistic societies like the United States that utilize coercive power and promote specific value systems.

This raises the question of whether or not "inconsistently pluralistic" societies like the United States, in the theory's most basic sense, are actually pluralistic at all. If neutrality and an equal weighting of values and practices are the hallmarks of pluralism (along with not affecting others by maintaining those values and practices), then "inconsistently pluralistic" nations, like the United States, do not make the cut. When a determination is made that a practice like psychedelic use to achieve a transpersonal ecology is disallowed, even though it does not harm others or impact the autonomy of others, then it must be surmised that all values are not granted equal standing and that a monistic value system (although somewhat haphazardly) is being applied.

If the argument for pluralism is to hold water, then pluralism must be practiced in its purest form without restraint and interference from a monistic value system that espouses an established order of hierarchies based on existing cultural and moral norms. For, if pluralism is applied in an arbitrary manner or in a manner that best reinforces existing power structures, maintains the status quo and disregards the theory's principle tenets, then pluralism is a hollow promise or guise. In its most rudimentary iteration, pluralism is freedom from boundaries, interference or judgments about the way one lives because all ways of living are afforded equal value. This does not mean that pluralism promotes a chaotic approach where murder is allotted equal value to prayer. Instead, autonomy is stressed and practices or values that have no apparent impact on the practices or values of others are allowed. Thus, in a truly pluralistic society, no internally developed moral code or similar monistic system would influence the laws of the society and the pluralistic tenets of autonomy and choice would prevail.

This does not necessarily mean that true pluralism must also be individualistic. While it is true that in a purely pluralistic society individuals would be able to behave in any manner they wished as long as their behavior did not impose on the rights of others, it is just as possible that groups of people could establish social norms and mores in such a society. For reasons that might vary from ethnic identity to religious affiliation to a myriad of others, people in a purely pluralistic system might choose to adhere to specific moral codes and social norms by choice, rather than imposition.

On the surface, the outlook for psychedelic plant use becoming legal in America is not very bright. This is primarily due to the society's internally developed moral code

that enables the government (with minimal protest) to ban psychedelic plants, jail the users of psychedelic plants, and encourages citizens to look with disdain upon those who use psychedelic plants. However, moral codes and even monistic value systems evolve and change over time, as was seen in the United States during the 1960s when psychedelic use first became a more common pursuit of the citizenry. The possibility that moral codes and the established value system might evolve to allow or even embrace the use of psychedelics is completely plausible, as morals and values in America have changed significantly over the past 100 years concerning issues like race, gender equality and homosexuality.

Considering the prospect of changing moral codes brightens, to a degree, the outlook for transpersonal ecology achieved via psychedelic plant use. And, at least in theory, pluralism harbors many appealing aspects to people who wish to achieve a transpersonal ecology via psychedelic plants, including tolerance and equality. As Galston notes, one hallmark feature of pluralism is that “individuals and civil associations are not required to give an account of—or justify—themselves before any public bar.” (Galston, 2002, p. 37) Yet, until the United States fully embraces pluralism in its purest form and does away with its monistic moral code, people using psychedelic plants will necessarily be marginalized and labeled deviants, thus diminishing their value in society as an interest group with the ability to exert influence in the political sphere. Olsen explains this phenomenon:

As new interests arise in a society, new organizations are often formed to promote these interests. But it is often difficult for such organizations to gain legitimacy as accepted players in the political system. This is

particularly likely to happen if they advocate radically new ideas or extensive social change. And if such organizations are not recognized by others as representing legitimate collective interests, they cannot enact an influence-mediating role. (Olsen, 1982, p. 34)

Applying Olsen's logic, even if psychedelic plants were made legal in a society like the United States, the prospect that people practicing the use of psychedelic plants to achieve a transpersonal ecology would be able to exert influence and alter society is dubious. The United States lacks a profound cultural history of people using psychedelic plants to achieve consciousness evolution or a greater understanding of ecological symbiosis and the nation's monistic value system has already demonized the practice of ingesting psychedelics. Surely, such an idea would sound bizarre and suspect to a vast majority of the American population who would continue to view psychedelic plant users as deviant regardless of a change in the practice's legal status. In light of this established cultural perspective and Olsen's preceding quote, is it possible that even if the legalistic barrier was crossed, the practice of using psychedelic plants to achieve a transpersonal ecology could ever find widespread cultural adoption in a society with a monistic value system like the United States? Is it possible that sweeping alterations of the moral code and social norms in the United States could occur such that psychedelic plant users wishing to achieve a transpersonal ecology could gain legitimacy and influence?

The idea and viability of a shift in American culture (regardless if true pluralism were fully practiced or not) resulting in the widespread adoption of psychedelic use to achieve a transpersonal ecology can be examined in two phases. Examined first will be the influence of social networks on cultural norms and behavior, followed by an

examination of the structure of revitalization movements that kindle paradigmatic changes in cultures.

For a significant change in culture to occur, there must be a manner or method for its occurrence. Through various methods of symbolic communication, human beings interact with each other and convey information about behaviors and norms. Groupings of human beings connected by any number of means (family, friends, co-workers, and so on) form social networks that have been shown to have great influence as holistic bodies on the individual members of the networks. Specific to cultural norms and behavior, social networks have proven to be very effective in altering those norms and behaviors previously accepted as valid (Christakis & Fowler, 2008).

Harvard University medical sociology professor Dr. Nicholas Christakis and University of California, San Diego political science professor Dr. James Fowler studied data collected from a social network of over 5,000 New Englanders between 1971 and 2003 that participated in a landmark heart study. They found that members of the study were prompted to stop smoking by others in their social network that decided to stop smoking. The influence was greater if the person who quit smoking was well known to a fellow smoker (spouse or relative), but even co-workers of spouses and others outside the main core of a smoker's social network exerted significant influence over the smoker's behavior (Christakis & Fowler, 2008). This manner of influence within the social network resulted in the phenomenon of smokers quitting together in droves, almost simultaneously (Christakis & Fowler, 2008).

Thus, the study found, changes in cultural norms and changes in the behavior of individuals are precipitated by social networks where symbolic communication enables the exchange of information among peers. However, taking the concept one step further, information provided to the social network that might influence behavior must first be deemed valid by individuals within the network for the information to garner influence. In an essay titled “Self-Categorization Theory and Social Influence,” professors John Turner and Penelope Oakes of Macquarie University discuss the role one’s social network plays in confirming or disconfirming one’s perceptions of norms and influencing one’s behavior. As Turner and Oakes explain:

The social categorization of others as identical to self, as an appropriate reference group for social comparison, produces shared expectations of agreement. It is the disconfirmation of these expectations that creates subjective uncertainty and openness to influence. ...what resolves uncertainty is not a matter of information per se but *valid* information, perceived validity being socially determined by its relationship to norms and values. People do not persuade us just because they have information, but only if that information is socially accepted as evidence about reality.” (Turner & Oakes, 1989, p. 251)

The highly influential nature of social networks holds promise for the creation and adoption of new cultural norms and behavior, but the number of Americans using psychedelic plants to achieve a transpersonal ecology is still very small in comparison to the general population. Consequently, social networks that include such people indeed exist, but the ability of such people to significantly influence their wider social networks is naturally somewhat limited due to their scarcity. Yet, in times of cultural crisis or disconfirmation of shared expectations, revolutionary changes in culture can occur that

might have been difficult to achieve during eras marked by stability and widespread social satisfaction (Wallace, 2003, p. 180-181).

Former University of Pennsylvania anthropology professor Dr. Anthony F. C. Wallace studies what prompts cultures to change and the process by which change is achieved. His theory focuses on the concept of revitalization movements.

“A revitalization movement is defined as a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture. Revitalization is thus, from a cultural standpoint, a special kind of culture change phenomenon: the persons involved in the process of revitalization must perceive their culture, or some major areas of it, as a system (whether accurately or not); they must feel that this cultural system is unsatisfactory; and they must innovate not merely discrete items, but a new cultural system...” (Wallace, 2003, p. 10)

Wallace explains the five stages in the process of a revitalization movement. The first stage is the steady state or status quo where minor stresses are tolerated by the general citizenry. This is followed by a period of increased individual stress across society that can occur for any number of environmental or structural changes. If the stress continues for a prolonged period and a “failure of need satisfaction techniques” is experienced, cultural distortion ensues. “In this phase, the culture is internally distorted; the elements are not harmoniously related but are mutually inconsistent and interfering. For this reason alone, stress continues to rise.” (Wallace, 2003, p. 15-16).

The continuation of stress and distortion opens the door for a period of revitalization. A “restructuring of elements and subsystems which have already attained currency in the society” is the hallmark of this period. Wallace describes how a single person, often inspired by a dream or vision, frequently leads such revitalizations

movements and how such movements are often based in religion or spirituality. The dreamer or visionary communicates the instructions of the dream or vision and is soon joined by followers who create an organization surrounding the individual. As revitalization movements are revolutionary by definition, they inevitably encounter resistance. If successful adaptation can occur within the movement, it can move past the resistance and cultural transformation can begin. During this period, “noticeable social revitalization occurs, signaled by...extensive cultural changes, and by an enthusiastic embarkation on some organized program of group action.” (Wallace, 2003, p. 22) If the group action plan is “effective in reducing stress-generating situations, it becomes established as normal in various economic, social and political institutions and customs.” (Wallace, 2003, p. 22) Finally, with the changes accepted into the culture, a new steady state emerges, altered by the process of the revitalization movement.

While focusing on a single person’s vision seems unlikely for social networks of psychedelic users trying to achieve a transpersonal ecology (primarily due to the philosophy’s egalitarian principles), the process of revitalization as described by Wallace is still relevant. As American society evolves and becomes more distorted, uncertainty rises to the surface and stress is generated. Prolonged stress and a dissolution in the effectiveness of techniques to combat the stress leads to widespread cultural distortion and makes possible the adoption of new cultural norms and behaviors (Wallace, 2003). It is within this context that potential exists for the practice of psychedelic use to achieve a transpersonal ecology to become an accepted element of American culture, regardless of the nation becoming purely pluralistic or not. If psychedelic plant use with the intent to

achieve a transpersonal ecology emerges as a viable technique capable of alleviating cultural stress and distortion, and generating satisfaction, then, according to Wallace's theory, it will be integrated into the culture. If this integration were to occur, it would have great potential to catalyze a paradigmatic shift toward transpersonal ecology and away from anthropocentrism.

Pluralism's principle of neutrality and its determination that the preferences of all adults are allotted equal importance bodes well, in theory, for the practice of psychedelic use to achieve a transpersonal ecology. However, due to internally developed moral codes within "inconsistently pluralistic," or, more accurately, monistic nations like the United States, the practice of psychedelic use remains forbidden by law. Whether a society has a pluralistic or monistic value system impacts the accessibility of specific practices like psychedelic use to achieve a transpersonal ecology and impacts the general perspective a society harbors concerning such a practice. Thus, in a society with a monistic value system that looks down on all forms of psychedelic use, psychedelic use to achieve a transpersonal ecology is a practice difficult to access and viewed with great suspicion. In a purely pluralistic society, however, the practice of psychedelic use to achieve a transpersonal ecology would be more easily accessible and accepted as a valid, legitimate pursuit.

There is hope for an alteration of the legal status and social acceptability of psychedelics as cultural mores and norms naturally evolve over time. Furthermore, there exists the potential for psychedelic use with the intent of achieving a transpersonal ecology becoming a widespread cultural phenomenon (regardless of its legal status or a

specific nation's value system). First, social networks are highly influential entities in respect to developing cultural norms and associated behaviors. Second, through a process of revitalization, social networks can institute significant change. During times of dissatisfaction and uncertainty, new ideas, such as the use of psychedelics to achieve a transpersonal ecology, are more easily adopted if they successfully address ongoing social dissatisfaction or uncertainty. Thus, generally speaking, for a paradigmatic shift to occur, the proposed alteration must be broadcast by the social network, serve a purpose in alleviating stress or dissatisfaction, withstand resistance, and, finally, emerge as a new cultural norm. This is the process that represents the potential for psychedelic use and the achievement of a transpersonal ecology to become more accessible and acceptable over time.

## CONCLUSIONS

Gaining more complete knowledge of the formation of the deep ecology philosophy and the insights of Naess and his followers helped establish a common understanding of the ideas of anthropocentrism, biocentric equality and self-realization. The 1972 lecture delivered by Naess outlining the philosophy lays the foundation for its two primary principles of self-realization and biocentric equality. Realizing “full, mature personhood” and “our unique spiritual/biological personhood” is self-realization by way of spiritual growth (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 67). As Devall and Sessions explain: “Spiritual growth, or unfolding, begins when we cease to understand or see ourselves as isolated and narrow competing egos and begin to identify with other humans... But the deep ecology sense of self requires a further maturity and growth, an identification which goes beyond humanity to include the nonhuman world.” (Devall & Sessions, 1985, p. 67) These notions of identification reaching beyond humanity and the discarding of ontological boundaries of life are key to the understanding of transpersonal ecology, and represent significant themes that are addressed throughout the paper.

While Naess and his followers did a commendable job at presenting the deep ecology philosophy to the masses in a fairly thorough manner, the notion of anthropocentrism, on which much of the philosophy is based, lacked depth and context. This paper’s examination of eco-feminism and androcentrism sought to develop a more robust argument for deep ecology by exploring the domination of nature by human beings and its relationship to the domination of females by males and the conflation of

nature with females. Where deep ecology fails to recognize that androcentrism and patriarchy play important roles in forming the worldview that has created the current ecological crisis, the eco-feminist perspective highlights similarities in systems of domination between humans and humans, and humans and nature (King 2005).

Considering the cultural-historical linkage of females with nature and the resulting formation of the dominator ethic it becomes clear that humans' lack of identification with nature is largely fueled by androcentric misogyny, which in turn develops into an unabashed anthropocentrism. By recognizing that androcentrism, or male chauvinism and domination, is at the psychological root of the environmental crisis and human domination of nature (King 2005; Zimmerman 1995; Hallen 1995), eco-feminists come to the momentous conclusion that a patriarchal consciousness necessarily tends toward domination and psychological imbalance. This insight delves to the essence of anthropocentrism and gives many of Naess's claims a contextual basis, while at the same time paving the way for a transpersonal consciousness void of domination.

In seeking a transpersonal consciousness void of domination, Fox's work determined that deep ecology can be best described as a transpersonal ecology wherein humans go beyond the sense of their individual egos to identify with the unified totality of nature (Fox 1990). Moving beyond Naess's vision of deep ecology, Fox focused on expansion of the sense of self and the dissolution of ego barriers as central precepts to the achievement of a transpersonal ecology. Fox argues that in contrast to an atomistic conception of the self, transpersonal ecology presents a wide, expansive sense of self that encompasses all of nature. Thus, if one develops a unified, field-like sense of the self,

then one will naturally seek to live in harmony with nature as it is viewed as one and the same as the self through the process of identification (Fox, 1990, p. 217). Such a viewpoint does away with anthropocentrism and androcentrism as it is steeped in the notion that identification with the other expands the sense of self, allowing for non-coerced, self-interested (rather than altruistic) behavior that is inherently symbiotic and in harmony with the natural world. And yet, while Fox expounds upon the process of identification and explains the distinctions between personal, ontological and cosmological identification, he fails to specifically address the question of *how* a human being is to attain ontological or cosmological identification and a subsequent transpersonal consciousness and ecology. The *how* question is never fully answered by Fox or other deep ecology adherents. For an answer to the *how* question, an in-depth look at transpersonal psychology and consciousness was essential.

The idea of a transpersonal psychology began taking shape when Maslow's research concluded that of the humans who had reached self-actualization, a small subset of that group, "find it easier to transcend the ego, the self, the identity, to go beyond self-actualization." (Fox, 1990, p. 295). Ferrer explains transpersonal psychology's phenomenological basis that deems experiences of a transpersonal nature or of a transcendent state of consciousness, necessary for the realization of a transpersonal consciousness (Ferrer, 2000, p. 213). Grof takes this point further as he posits the idea that consciousness is not a byproduct of a human's personal history and thus confined to that human's brain, but rather a process in flux that exists external of our individual minds and is therefore an independent force (Grof, 1992, p. 83-84). This means that

human beings are capable of a transpersonal consciousness where knowledge is obtained via the phenomenon of transpersonal experience, which occurs when one is able to recognize the nature of consciousness and the process of identification. For those humans falling short of self-actualization and a transpersonal consciousness, Grof's theory implies, it is merely a matter of recognition, rather than an inherent flaw or inability. Grof tries to impress the significance of this idea when he writes: "If we are to accept this new view of consciousness, it means accepting, also, that our lives are not shaped only by the immediate environmental influences since the day of our birth but, of at least equal importance, they are shaped by ancestral, cultural, spiritual, and cosmic influences far beyond the scope of what we can perceive with our physical senses." (Grof, 1992, p. 84) It is this viewpoint exactly that leads closer to the answer to the question of *how* one can expand the sense of self and broaden identification to envelop the realization of the unified totality of nature. To finally reach an answer to the *how* question, a discussion of altered states of consciousness and a dissection of this "new view of consciousness" Grof speaks of was necessary.

Altered states of consciousness (ASC) have existed as long as consciousness itself and there is throughout human history an awareness of ASCs as valuable elements within a culture. One such element is the aspect of healing and its strong tradition of being related to ASCs (Ludwig, 1969, p. 19). What is hinted at in Ludwig's description is the idea of a healing of the collective human psyche through transpersonal consciousness or an altered state of consciousness that allows humans to expand their sense of self through identification with the other, enabled by a shedding of androcentric and anthropocentric

philosophies. Building on Ludwig's claims, Tart contends that ASCs can precipitate, "...major quantitative shifts in the range of functioning of psychological/physiological functions such as memory, reasoning, sense of identity, and motor skills, and the temporary disappearance of some functions and emergence of new functions..." (Tart, 1975, p. 15) And here is the smoking gun! The essential *how* question that has stumped deep ecologists is virtually answered with the notion that self-realization and biocentric equality are only possible once the rigid ego structure has been dramatically altered through phenomenological experience in the transpersonal realm such that the sense of identity and functions like reasoning and memory are able to perceive the world in a different manner. This opens the door to the potential to expand the sense of self to encompass all of nature and achieve a transpersonal ecology. Transcendence of the ego is not a new practice among humans and the discussion of shamanism addressed this point and offered a context for the use of plant psychedelics in human society. With the transpersonal identification process understood and the essential *how* question answered, the final hurdle is the theory's application into the "real" physical world humans inhabit.

Applying the process of achieving a transpersonal ecology through an ASC induced by psychedelic plant substances in a nation like the United States presents numerous challenges. Liberal pluralism, often cited as the bedrock of American culture and political philosophy, is a system that emphasizes individualism and an equal valuation of all preferences (Canavan 1985, Galston 2002). Thus, it would stand to reason that even a fringe practice of a minority sect, such as psychedelic users trying to achieve a transpersonal ecology, would have its views and preferences judged as being of equal

value and validity in a supposedly pluralistic society. This thinking is in line with pluralism's desire to ensure that the values or practices of one group not infringe upon the differing activities or beliefs of another group (Canavan , 1985, p. 155). This manner of thinking about psychedelic users in pursuit of a transpersonal ecology also holds true with another characteristic of a pluralistic society, namely that of interest organizations. Olsen explains that, "...the theory of sociopolitical pluralism calls for a complex network of interest organizations throughout society, each of which possesses its own power base and hence can function relatively independently of the government." (Olsen, 1982, p. 30) These interest organizations thus form a power base and allow everyday citizens to be part of the decision making process, thwarting the possibility of tyranny of the majority.

Yet, Galston and other political theorists remind us, even pluralistic societies must have some basis for acceptable behavior and form rules and regulations that are based upon an internally developed moral code (Canavan 1985; Galston, 2002 p. 6-7). Currently, in the United States and in nations across the globe, the internally developed moral code of various societies disallows the practice of humans using psychedelic plant materials, even if the purpose of the use is to obtain a transpersonal ecological consciousness. This presents a true dilemma for psychedelic plant users attempting to achieve a transpersonal ecology as laws and government intervention interfere with their ability to practice the specific behaviors that constitute their way of life. And, while the consciousness of any society or nation shifts over time to allow behaviors that were once disallowed, such a shift in the overall moral code of the United States and similar nations does not appear to be imminent. That said, recent studies on the highly influential nature

of social networks (Christakis & Fowler, 2008) and Wallace's theory of revitalization movements that initiate and establish cultural change, offer hope for the wider adoption in the United States of psychedelic use with the intent of achieving a transpersonal ecology.

This thesis ultimately urges continued research and study of human consciousness, especially transpersonal consciousness facilitated by plant psychedelics. If humans are to fully understand and achieve a transpersonal ecological consciousness, then they must understand how their own consciousness operates and how it can be expanded beyond the personal, biographical boundaries of the ego. Research into specific techniques for achieving a transpersonal ecology that can be described in everyday language and are accessible to everyday people are most useful. Vague or generalized statements about achieving a transpersonal ecology are only interesting tidbits if not connected with an actual system or process for achieving the state of consciousness being discussed. This thesis has attempted to present the beginnings of an outline for how psychedelic plant use in a sacred, intentioned manner can serve as a catalyst or facilitator for human societies to achieve a transpersonal ecology.

The examination of psychedelic plant use in facilitating a transpersonal ecology is most significant when viewed in the context of social change. Further research and study concerning social change is essential in altering how humans interact with the world they live in. For, the ultimate goal of psychedelic plant use and a transpersonal ecological consciousness must be the complete realization of the unified totality of nature by all of humanity. In this vein, further exploration into the influential nature of social networks

and an assessment of how and why societies change would be advised. While Wallace's theory of revitalization movements is helpful, it is a somewhat shortsighted, functionalist argument. Looking at the reasons why societies change from a macro, world systems perspective could offer further insight into the nature of social change and how it occurs. Dr. Sing C. Chew, a sociology professor at Humboldt State University, has made advances in this area with his exploration of "world ecological degradation" and cyclical "recurring dark ages" in the context of world systems theory as espoused by the German sociologist Andre Gunder Frank. Chew's work explains how ecological degradation serves as the impetus for new ways of thinking and living that ultimately lead to significant alterations in the world system (Chew 2008). Perhaps combining Chew's eco-centric world systems perspective with Wallace's revitalization movement theory could yield an interesting interpretation of how individual human societies cope and change when experiencing a widespread ecological crisis.

Some questions are left unanswered by this thesis. Would a significant number of humans in a society want to partake in psychedelic use with the intention of achieving a transpersonal ecology? How would such a practice change the dominant economic system? Would such a practice be sustainable or would new stresses on a society force an alteration of the practice? While these questions are not fully addressed or answered by this thesis, the foundation has been established for a healthy discussion of such questions. Additionally, for many of the unanswered questions in this thesis to be addressed, laws limiting safe access to psychedelic plants would have to be altered to fully allow human societies to make choices concerning their consciousness.

Regardless of their legal status, as has been the case for thousands of years of human history, psychedelic plant materials are an indisputably established method of facilitating ASCs or a transpersonal consciousness. This ability of psychedelic plants to open human beings' consciousness to the transpersonal realm is significant in that it allows for a dissolution of ego and an expansion of the sense of self. Fox's monumental achievement was extracting the essence of Naess's deep ecology and focusing his transpersonal ecology on the process of identification and an expansion of the sense of self. The link connecting Fox's two key elements for the achievement of a transpersonal ecology with an actual process for enabling these elements is a transpersonal consciousness solidified in phenomenology. The key link to this transpersonal consciousness is a method to induce such a state. An established method that has been a part of human culture throughout its history is the use of psychedelic plants. Thus, if one wished to expand one's sense of self and identify with all of nature via ontological or cosmological identification in order to achieve the transpersonal ecology Fox speaks of, psychedelic plant use in a directed, sacred manner is certainly a method with logical underpinnings that emanate from the halls of human experience. And, while there are currently political realities and cultural barriers that make the widespread practice of using psychedelic plant materials to achieve a transpersonal ecology much more challenging, the fact that the practice of inducing transpersonal consciousness via psychedelic plants has survived to this day in a very hostile environment is itself noteworthy.

The illuminations of Naess concerning humans and their place in the natural world were and still are revolutionary for the vast majority of human society. Undoubtedly his ideas have had a substantial impact on his contemporaries, but the inability of deep ecology to articulate a process or method for achievement has hindered the philosophy's application. The process of using psychedelic plants to achieve a transpersonal ecology as described in this thesis represents an opportunity for Naess's philosophy to become a way of life for everyday people who have traditionally been limited to personal identification and an atomistic sense of the self and consciousness. Psychedelic plant use with the goal of inducing a transpersonal consciousness to expand the sense of self and identify with the unified totality of nature fits well with Fox's notion of a transpersonal ecology and offers humans a realistic approach. And, while the prospects that the number of humans using psychedelic plants materials to achieve a transpersonal ecology could ever reach levels of significance considering existing political and cultural challenges are dubious, it is at the very least an intriguing possibility that warrants further study, and at most, humanity's key to the transpersonal ecological realm of unified totality, oneness and ecstasy.

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