

Consciousness Evolution and Planetary Survival:*
Psychological Roots of Human Violence and Greed.

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Abstract.

Diplomatic negotiations, administrative and legal measures, economic and social sanctions, military interventions, and other similar efforts have had so far very little success in alleviating the rapidly escalating global crisis. Drawing on the observations from forty years of research of non-ordinary states of consciousness, the author explores the implications of this material for the understanding of the psychological and spiritual roots of the problems humanity is currently facing.

The vastly expanded cartography of the human psyche that has emerged from this work offers a new understanding of insatiable greed and malignant aggression, two powerful forces that have played a critical role in human history and currently represent a serious threat for life on our planet. The author suggests that the problems in modern world are products and symptoms of a psychospiritual crisis and that any effective solution will require a deep inner transformation of humanity and a new scientific world view emphasizing unity, co-evolution, and cooperation. He explores the possible role of ancient and modern methods facilitating spiritual opening and consciousness evolution in achieving these goals.

The two most powerful psychological forces in human history have been without doubt violence and greed. The amount and degree of atrocities that have been committed throughout ages in various countries of the world - many of them in the name of God - is truly unimaginable and indescribable. We can think here of the countless Christians, sacrificed in Roman arenas to provide a highly sought-after spectacle for masses, many hundreds of thousands of victims of the medieval Inquisition who were tortured, killed, and burned in the autos-da-fe, the mass

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slaughters on the sacrificial altars of the Aztecs, and the millions of soldiers and civilians killed in wars and revolutions of all times.

Genghis Khan's hordes sweeping through Asia killing, pillaging and burning villages, Alexander the Great's army conquering all the countries lying between Macedonia and India, the amazing spread of Islam by sword and fire, the expansion of the Roman Empire, the Crusades, the ventures of Cortez and Pizarro, the colonialism of Great Britain and other European countries, and the Napoleonic wars - all these are examples of unbridled violence and insatiable greed.

This trend has continued in an unmitigated fashion in the twentieth century. Historically, more people were killed in the last hundred years than have existed from the dawn of humanity up to the last century. A total of twenty million men and women were killed on the battlefields of World War II and an equal number as a consequence of the wars off the battlefield.

The expansionism of Nazi Germany and the horrors of the Holocaust, Stalin's domination of Eastern Europe and his Gulag archipelago, the civil terror in Communist China and in the South American dictatorships, the atrocities and genocide committed by the Chinese in Tibet, the cruelties of the South African Apartheid, the war in Korea and Vietnam, and the recent bloodshed in Yugoslavia and Rwanda are just a few salient examples of the senseless bloodshed we have witnessed during the last fifty years.

The human greed has also found new less violent forms of expression in the philosophy and strategy of capitalist economy emphasizing increase of the gross national product, "unlimited growth", plundering recklessly non-renewable natural resources, encouraging conspicuous consumption, and practicing "planned obsolescence". Moreover, much of this wasteful economic policy that has disastrous ecological consequences has been oriented toward production of weapons of increasing destructive power.

In the past, violence and greed had tragic consequences for the individuals involved in the internecine historical events and their immediate families. However, they did not threaten the evolution of the human species as a whole and certainly did not represent a danger for the eco system and for the biosphere of the planet. Even after the most violent wars, nature was able to recycle all the aftermath and completely recover within a few decades. This situation has changed very radically in the course of the twentieth century. Rapid technological progress, exponential growth of industrial production, massive population explosion, and particularly the discovery of atomic energy have forever changed the equations involved.

In the course of this century, we have often witnessed more major scientific and technological breakthroughs within a single decade, or even a single year, than people in earlier historical periods experienced in an entire century. However, these astonishing intellectual successes have brought modern humanity to the brink of global catastrophe, since they were not matched by a comparable growth of emotional and moral maturity. We have the dubious privilege of being the first species in natural history that has achieved the capacity to eradicate itself and destroy in the process all life on this planet.

The intellectual history of humanity is one of incredible triumphs. We have been able to learn the secrets of nuclear energy, send spaceships to the moon and all the planets of the solar system, transmit sound and color pictures all over the globe and across cosmic space, crack the DNA code and start genetic engineering. At the same time, these superior technologies are being used in the service of primitive emotions and instinctual impulses that are not very different from those which motivated people of the Stone Age.

Unimaginable sums of money have been wasted in the insanity of the arms race and the use of a miniscule fraction of the existing arsenal of atomic weapons could destroy all life on earth. Many millions of people have been killed in the two world wars and in countless other violent confrontations occurring for ideological, racial, religious, or economic reasons; hundreds of thousands were bestially tortured by the secret police of various totalitarian systems. Insatiable greed is driving people to hectic pursuit of profit and acquisition of personal property beyond any reasonable limits. This strategy resulted in a situation where, beside the specter of a nuclear war, humanity is threatened by several less spectacular, but insidious and more predictable doomsday scenarios.

Among these are industrial pollution of soil, water, and air; the threat of nuclear waste and accidents; destruction of the ozone layer; the greenhouse effect; possible loss of planetary oxygen through reckless deforestation and poisoning of the ocean plankton; and the dangers of toxic additives in our food and drinks. To this we can add a number of developments that are of less apocalyptic nature, but equally disturbing, such as species extinction proceeding at an astronomical rate, homelessness and starvation of a significant percentage of the world's population, deterioration of family and crisis of parenthood, disappearance of spiritual values, absence of hope and positive perspective, loss of meaningful connection with nature, and general alienation. As a result of all the above factors, humanity now lives in chronic anguish on the verge of a nuclear and ecological catastrophe, while in possession of fabulous technology approaching the world of science fiction.

Modern science has developed effective means that could solve most of the urgent problems in today's world--combat the majority of diseases, eliminate hunger and poverty, reduce the degree of industrial waste, and replace destructive fossil fuels by renewable sources of clean energy. The problems that stand in the way are not of economical or technological nature; their deepest sources lie inside the human personality. Because of them, unimaginable resources have been wasted in the absurdity of the arms race, power struggle, and pursuit of "unlimited growth". They also prevent a more appropriate distribution of wealth among individuals and nations, as well as a reorientation from purely economic and political concerns to ecological priorities that are critical for survival of life on this planet.

Diplomatic negotiations, administrative and legal measures, economic and social sanctions, military interventions, and other similar efforts have had very little success; as a matter of fact, they have often produced more problems than they solved. It is becoming increasingly clear, why they have to fail: it is impossible to alleviate this crisis by application of the strategies rooted in the same ideology that created it in the first place. In the last analysis, the current global crisis is of a psycho-spiritual nature; it reflects the level of consciousness evolution of the human species. It is therefore hard to imagine that it could be resolved without a radical inner transformation of humanity on a large scale and its rise to a higher level of emotional maturity and spiritual awareness.

The task of imbuing humanity with an entirely different set of values and goals might appear too unrealistic and utopian to offer any real hope. Considering the paramount role of violence and greed in human history, the possibility of transforming modern humanity into a species of individuals capable of peaceful coexistence with their fellow men and women regardless of race, color, and religious or political conviction, let alone with other species, certainly does not seem very plausible. We are facing the necessity to instil into humanity profound ethical values, sensitivity to the needs of others, acceptance of voluntary simplicity, and a sharp awareness of ecological imperatives. At first glance, such a task appears too fantastic even for a science-fiction movie.

However, although serious and critical, the situation might not be as hopeless as it appears. After more than thirty-five years of intensive study of non-ordinary states of consciousness, I have come to the conclusion that the theoretical concepts and practical approaches developed by transpersonal psychology, a discipline that is trying to integrate spirituality with the new paradigm emerging in Western science, offers very promising new strategies that could help alleviate the crisis we are all facing. They are in full agreement with the perennial wisdom of the great spiritual philosophies of the East and the mystical traditions of the world.

The observations and insights from the fields of modern consciousness research, transpersonal psychology, and the emerging paradigm that are relevant from the point of view of the current situation in the world fall into the following five categories:

1. Development of a new image of the universe and of a more comprehensive understanding of human nature and of the psyche replacing the behaviorist and Freudian models

2. New understanding of the roots of malignant aggression and human violence
3. New insights into the nature of insatiable greed
4. Experiential approaches facilitating positive personal transformation and consciousness evolution
5. Implications of modern consciousness research for the understanding and treatment of the global crisis

1. New Image of the Universe, the Psyche, and Human Nature.

In recent years, many authors have pointed out that a significant factor in the development of the global crisis has been the Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm that has dominated Western science for the last three hundred years. It portrays the universe as a giant, fully deterministic supermachine governed by mechanical laws and involves a sharp dichotomy between mind and nature. The image of the cosmos as a mechanical system has led to the belief that it can be adequately understood by dissecting it and studying all its parts.

In addition, by elevating matter to the most important principle in the cosmos, Western science reduced life, consciousness, and intelligence to its accidental by-products. In this context, humans appear to be nothing more than highly developed animals. This led to the acceptance of antagonism, competition, and the Darwinian "survival of the fittest" as the leading principles of human society. In addition, the description of organic and inorganic nature as unconscious provided the justification for its exploitation by humans following the program, so eloquently formulated by **Francis Bacon**.

Freudian psychoanalysis has painted a pessimistic picture of human beings as creatures whose primary motivating forces are bestial instincts. If we were not afraid of societal repercussions and controlled by the superego (internalized parental prohibitions and injunctions), we would kill and steal indiscriminately, commit incest, and be involved in unbridled promiscuous sex. This image of human nature relegated such concepts as complementarity, synergy, mutual respect, and peaceful cooperation into the domain of temporary opportunistic strategies or naive utopian fantasies. It is not difficult to see how these concepts and the system of values associated with them have helped to create the crisis we are facing.

During the twenty-five years of its existence, revolutionary developments in Western science have brought convincing evidence for a radically different understanding of the cosmos, human beings, and the psyche. It has become increasingly clear that consciousness is not a product of the physiological processes in the brain, but a primary attribute of existence. The universe is imbued with creative intelligence and consciousness is inextricably woven into its fabric. Modern consciousness research has shown that the conceptual framework of traditional psychiatry and psychology that reduces the human psyche to biology, postnatal biography, and the Freudian individual unconscious is superficial, inadequate, and incorrect.

In non-ordinary states of consciousness, such as systematic meditation, shamanic rituals, near-death experiences, psychedelic sessions, powerful forms of experiential psychotherapy, and spontaneous psychospiritual crises, the psyche can reach far beyond such narrow limits. It is possible to transcend the dynamics of the unconscious dominated by animal instincts and connect with transpersonal domains. In the last analysis, the individual psyche of each of us is commensurate with the totality of existence; the deepest nature of humanity is not bestial, but divine. This understanding of existence provides a natural basis for reverence for life, cooperation and synergy, concerns for humanity and the planet as a whole, and deep ecological awareness.

2. New understanding of the roots of malignant aggression and human violence.

Modern human study of aggressive behavior started with **Charles Darwin's** epoch-making discoveries in the field of evolution in the middle of the last century (Darwin 1952). The attempts to explain human aggression from our animal origin generated such theoretical concepts as **Desmond Morris'** image of the "naked ape" (Morris 1967), **R. Ardrey's** idea of the 'territorial imperative' (Ardrey 1961), **Paul MacLean's** 'triune brain' (MacLean 1973), and **Richard Dawkins'** sociobiological explanations interpreting aggression in terms of genetic strategies of the 'selfish genes' (Dawkins 1976). More refined models of behavior developed by pioneers in ethology, such as **Konrad Lorenz**, **Nikolaas Tinbergen**, and others, complemented mechanical emphasis on instincts by the study of ritualistic and motivational elements (Lorenz 1963, Tinbergen 1965).

However, any theories suggesting that the human tendency to violence simply reflects our animal origin are inadequate and unconvincing. Animals exhibit aggression when they are hungry, defending their territory, or competing for sex. However, the nature and scope of human violence - **Erich Fromm's** "malignant aggression" (Fromm 1973) - has no parallels in the animal kingdom. There are no natural parallels to the

atrocities committed in the course of human history. Awareness of the inadequacy of the belief that aggression is an inborn fact of evolutionary nature led to the formulation of psychodynamic and psychosocial theories that consider a significant part of human aggression to be learned phenomena. This trend began in the late 1930's by the monograph *Frustration and Aggression* by **Miller and Dollard** (Miller and Dollard 1939).

Psychodynamic theories are trying to explain the specifically human aggression as a reaction to frustration, abuse, and lack of love in infancy and childhood. However, even explanations of this kind fall painfully short of accounting for extreme forms of individual violence (such as the Boston Strangler, serial murders of the Geoffrey Dahmer type, or the Texas gunman White), crimes committed by gangs and criminal groups (like the Sharon Tate murders, prison uprisings), and particularly mass societal phenomena like Nazism, Communism, bloody wars, revolutions, genocide, and concentration camps.

In the last several decades, psychedelic research and deep experiential psychotherapies have been able to throw much light on the problems of human aggression. They discovered that the sources of this problematic and dangerous aspect of human nature are much deeper and more formidable than traditional psychology ever imagined. However, at the same time, it also revealed extremely effective approaches that can help to neutralize and transform them. In addition, these observations indicate that malignant aggression does not reflect true human nature. It is connected with a domain of unconscious dynamics that separates us from our deeper identity. When we reach the transpersonal realms that lie beyond this screen, we realize that our true nature is divine rather than bestial. This finding is fully congruent with the image described in the ancient Indian Upanishads by the phrase "Tat tvam asi" (Thou art That), meaning that, in the last analysis, each of us is identical with the creative principle of the universe.

Perinatal sources of violence.

There is no doubt that 'malignant aggression' is connected with traumas and frustrations in childhood and infancy. However, modern consciousness research has revealed additional significant roots of violence in deep recesses of the psyche that lie beyond postnatal biography and are related to the trauma of biological birth (or perinatal). The vital emergency, pain, and suffocation experienced for many hours during biological delivery generate enormous amounts of anxiety and murderous aggression that remain stored in the organism. The reliving of birth in various forms of experiential psychotherapy does not involve only concrete replay of the original emotions and sensations, but is typically associated with a variety of experiences portraying violent scenes. Among these are often powerful sequences depicting wars, revolutions, racial riots, concentration camps, totalitarianism, genocide, and others.

This spontaneous emergence of sociopolitical themes and insights during the perinatal process makes it possible to make very specific conclusions about the psychological dynamics involved. Naturally, wars and revolutions are extremely complex phenomena that have historical, economic, political, religious, and other dimensions. The intention here is not to offer a reductionistic explanation, but to add some new insights concerning the psychological and spiritual dimensions of these events which have been neglected or covered in an inadequate and superficial way.

The images of sociopolitical events accompanying the reliving of biological birth tend to appear in very specific connection with the consecutive stages of the birth process. I refer to these experiential patterns as Basic Perinatal Matrices (BPMs). While reliving episodes of undisturbed intrauterine existence (BPM I), subjects typically experience images from early human societies with an ideal social structure, cultures living in complete harmony with nature (pristine Polynesian Islands), or of future utopian societies where all major conflicts have been resolved. Disturbing intrauterine memories (toxic womb, imminent miscarriage, attempted abortions) are accompanied by images of human groups living in industrial areas where nature is polluted and spoilt, or belonging to societies with all-pervasive insidious danger and paranoia.

Regressive experiences related to the first clinical stage of birth (BPM II), during which the uterus periodically contracts but the cervix is not open, present a diametrically different picture. They portray oppressive and abusive totalitarian societies with closed borders, victimizing their populations, and "choking" personal freedom (Czarist or Communist Russia, Hitler's Third Reich, South American dictatorships, the African Apartheid) or inmates in Nazi concentration camps and Stalin's Gulag Archipelago. Subjects experiencing these scenes of living hell identify exclusively with the victims and feel deep sympathy for the down-trodden and the underdog.

The experiences accompanying the reliving of the second clinical stage of delivery (BPM III), when the cervix is dilated and continued contractions propel the fetus through the narrow passage of the birth canal, feature a rich panoply of violent scenes - - bloody wars and revolutions, human or animal slaughter, mutilation sequences, sexual abuse and murder. These scenes often contain demonic elements and repulsive scatological motifs. Additional frequent concomitants are visions of burning cities, launching of rockets, and explosions of nuclear bombs. Subjects are not limited to the role of victims, but can participate in three roles- that of the victim, of the aggressor, and of an emotionally involved observer.

The events characterizing the third clinical stage of delivery (BPM IV) -- the actual moment of birth and the separation from the mother-- are associated with images of victory in wars and revolutions, liberation of prisoners, success of collective efforts, such as patriotic or nationalistic movements, triumphant celebrations and parades, or post-war reconstruction.

In 1975, I described these observations linking sociopolitical upheavals to stages of biological birth in my first book, **Realms of the Human Unconscious** (Grof 1975). Shortly after its publication, I received a letter from Lloyd de Mause, a New York psychoanalyst and journalist. De Mause is one of the founders of psychohistory, a discipline that applies the findings of depth psychology to history and political science. Psychohistorians study such issues as the relationship between the childhood history of political leaders and their system of values and process of decision-making, or the influence of child-rearing practices on the nature of revolutions of that particular historical period. Lloyd de Mause was very interested in my findings concerning the trauma of birth and its possible sociopolitical implications, because they provided independent support for his own research.

For some time, de Mause had been studying the psychological aspects of the periods preceding wars and revolutions; it interested him how military leaders succeed in mobilizing masses of peaceful civilians and transform them into killing machines. His approach was very original and creative; in addition to analysis of traditional historical sources, he drew data of great psychological importance from caricatures, jokes, dreams, personal imagery, slips of the tongue, side comments of speakers, and even doodles and scribbles on the edge of the rough drafts of political documents. By the time he contacted me, he had analyzed in this way seventeen situations preceding the outbreak of wars and revolutionary upheavals, spanning many centuries since antiquity to most recent times.

He was struck by the extraordinary abundance of figures of speech, metaphors, and images related to biological birth in this material (de Mause 1975). Thus military leaders and politicians of all ages describing a critical situation or declaring war typically use terms that equally apply to perinatal distress. They accuse the enemy as choking and strangling us, squeezing the last breath out of our lungs, or confining us, and not giving us enough space to live (Hitler's "Lebensraum"). Equally frequent are allusions to dark caves, tunnels, and confusing labyrinths, dangerous abysses into which we might be pushed, and the threat of engulfment or drowning. Similarly, the offer of the resolution of the crisis comes in the form of perinatal images; the leader promises to rescue us from the treacherous labyrinth, to lead us to the light on the other side of the tunnel, and to create a situation where everybody will again breathe freely after the dangerous aggressor and oppressor is overcome.

Lloyd de Mause's historical examples at the time included such famous personages as Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Samuel Adams, Kaiser Wilhelm II., Hitler, Khrushchev and Kennedy. Samuel Adams talking about the American Revolution referred to "the child of Independence now struggling for birth." In 1914, Kaiser Wilhelm stated that "the Monarchy has been seized by the throat and forced to choose between letting itself be strangled and making a last ditch effort to defend itself against attack." During the Cuban missile crisis Khrushchev wrote to Kennedy, pleading that the two nations not "come to a clash, like blind moles battling to death in a tunnel." Even more explicit was the coded message used by Japanese ambassador Kurusu when he phoned Tokyo to signal that negotiations had broken down with Roosevelt and that it was all right to go ahead with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He announced that the "birth of a child was imminent" and asked how things were in Japan: "Does it seem as if the child might be born?" The reply was: "Yes, the birth of the child seems imminent." Interestingly, the American intelligence listening in recognized the meaning of the war-as-birth code.

Particularly chilling was the use of perinatal language in connection with the explosion of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima. The airplane was given the name of the pilot's mother, Enola Gay, the atomic bomb itself carried a painted nickname "The Little Boy, and the agreed-upon message sent to Washinton as a signal of successful detonation was " The baby was born". It would not be too far-fetched to see the image of newborn also behind the nickname of the Nagasaki bomb, Fat Man. Since the time of our correspondence, Lloyd de Mause collected many additional historical examples and refined his thesis that the memory of the birth trauma plays an important role as a source of motivation for violent social activity.

The issues related to nuclear warfare are of such relevance that I would like to elaborate on them using the material from a fascinating paper by **Carol Cohn** entitled **Sex and Death in the Rational World of the Defense Intellectuals** (Cohn 1987). The defense intellectuals (DIs) are civilians who move in and out of government, working sometimes as administrative officials or consultants, sometimes at universities and think tanks. They create the theory that informs and legitimates US nuclear strategic practice- how to manage the arms race, how to deter the use of nuclear weapons, how to fight a nuclear war if the deterrence fails, and how to explain why it is not safe to live without nuclear weapons.

Carol Cohn attended a two-week seminar summer workshop on nuclear weapons, nuclear strategic doctrine, and arms control. She was so fascinated by what had transpired there that she spent the following year immersed in the almost entirely male world of defense intellectuals (except secretaries). She collected some extremely interesting facts confirming the perinatal dimension in nuclear warfare; in her own terminology, these facts confirm the importance of the motif of "male birth"

and "male creation" as important psychological forces underlying the psychology of nuclear warfare. She uses the following historical examples to illustrate her point of view:

Ernest Lawrence (1942) sent a telegram to a Chicago group of physicists developing the nuclear bomb: "Congratulations to the new parents. Can hardly wait to see the new arrival." At Los Alamos, the atom bomb was referred to as "**Oppenheimer's baby**". Richard Feynman wrote in his article **Los Alamos from Below** that when he was temporarily on leave after his wife's death, he received a telegram that read: "The baby is expected on such and such a day."

At Lawrence Livermore laboratories, the hydrogen bomb was referred to as "**Teller's baby**", although those who wanted to disparage Edward Teller's contribution claimed he was not the bomb's father, but its mother. They claimed that Stanislaw Ulam was the real father, who had all the important ideas and conceived it; Teller only "carried it" after that. Terms related to motherhood were also used to the provision of "nurturance" -- the maintenance of the missiles.

General Groves sent a triumphant coded cable to Secretary of War **Henry Stimson** at the Potsdam conference reporting the success of the first atomic test: "Doctor has just returned most enthusiastic and confident that the little boy is as husky as his big brother. The light in his eyes discernible from here to Highhold and I could have heard his screams from here to my farm". **Stimson**, in turn, informed Churchill by writing him a note that read: "Babies satisfactorily born."

William L. Laurence witnessed the test of the first atomic bomb and wrote: "The big boom came about a hundred seconds after the great flash -- the first cry of a new-born world". **Edward Teller's** exultant telegram to Los Alamos, announcing the successful test of the hydrogen bomb "Mike" at the Eniwetok atoll in Marshall Islands read: "It's a boy". The male scientists gave birth to a progeny with the ultimate power of domination over female Nature.

The Enola Gay, Little Boy, and "The baby was born" symbolism of the Hiroshima bomb, and the Fat Man symbolism of the Nagasaki bomb were mentioned already.

Carol Cohn also mentions in her paper abundance of overtly sexual symbolism in the language of defense intellectuals. The nature of this material, linking sex to aggression, domination, and scatology shows a deep similarity to the imagery occurring in the context of birth experiences (BPM III). Examples: American dependence on nuclear weapons was explained as irresistible, because "you get more bang for the buck". A professor's explanation, why the MX missiles should be placed

in the silos of the newest Minuteman missiles, instead of replacing the older, less accurate ones: "You are not going to take the nicest missile you have and put it into a crummy hole." At one point, there was a serious concern that "we have to harden our missiles", because "the Russians are a little harder than we are." One military adviser to the National Security Council referred to "releasing 70-80% of our megatonnage in one orgasmic whump."

Lectures were filled with terms like "vertical erector launchers, thrust-to-weight ratios, soft lay-downs, deep penetration", and the comparative advantages of "protracted" versus "spasm attacks". Another example is the popular and widespread custom of "patting the missiles", an expression of phallic supremacy, but also homoerotic tendencies. It clearly is quite appropriate for feminist critics of nuclear policies to refer to "missile envy" and "phallic worship".

Further support for the pivotal role of the perinatal domain of the unconscious in war psychology can be found in **Sam Keen's** excellent book **The Faces of the Enemy** (Keen 1988). Keen brought together an outstanding collection of distorted and biased war posters, propaganda cartoons, and caricatures from many historical periods and countries. He demonstrated that the way the enemy is described and portrayed during a war or revolution is a stereotype that shows very little variation and has very little to do with the actual characteristics of the culture involved.

He was able to divide these images into several archetypal categories according to the prevailing characteristics (e.g. Stranger, Aggressor, Worthy Opponent, Faceless, Enemy of God, Barbarian, Greedy, Criminal, Torturer, Rapist, Death). According to Keen, the alleged images of the enemy are essentially projections of the repressed and unacknowledged shadow aspects of our own unconscious. Although we would certainly find in human history instances of "just wars", those who initiate war activities are typically substituting external targets for elements in their own psyches that should be properly faced in personal self-exploration.

Sam Keen's theoretical framework does not specifically include the perinatal domain of the unconscious. However, the analysis of his picture material reveals preponderance of symbolic images that are characteristic for BPM II and BPM III. The enemy is typically depicted as a dangerous octopus, a vicious dragon, a multiheaded hydra, a giant venomous tarantula, or an engulfing Leviathan. Other frequently used symbols include vicious predatory felines or birds, monstrous sharks, and ominous snakes, particularly vipers and boa constrictors. Scenes depicting strangulation or crushing, ominous whirlpools, and treacherous quicksands also abound in pictures from the time of wars, revolutions, and political crises. Juxtaposition of pictures from non-ordinary states of consciousness that depict

perinatal experiences with the historical pictorial documentation collected by Lloyd de Mause and Sam Keen represents strong evidence for the perinatal roots of human violence.

According to the new insights, provided jointly by observations from non-ordinary states of consciousness and the findings of psychohistory, we all carry in our deep unconscious powerful energies and emotions associated with the trauma of birth that we have not adequately mastered and assimilated. For some of us, this aspect of our psyche can be completely unconscious, until and unless we embark on some in-depth self-exploration with the use of psychedelics or some powerful experiential techniques of psychotherapy, such as the Holotropic Breathwork or rebirthing. Others can have varying degrees of awareness of the emotions and physical sensations stored on the perinatal level of the unconscious.

The activation of this material can lead to serious individual psychopathology, including unmotivated violence. It seems that, for unknown reasons, the awareness of the perinatal elements can increase simultaneously in a large number of people; this creates an atmosphere of tension, anxiety, and anticipation. The leader is an individual who is under a stronger influence of the perinatal energies than an average person; he also has the ability to disown his unacceptable feelings, (the "Shadow" in Jung's terminology), and to project them onto the external situation. The collective discomfort is blamed on the enemy and a military intervention is offered as a solution.

The war provides an opportunity to abandon the psychological defenses that ordinarily keep the dangerous perinatal tendencies in check. Freud's superego, a psychological force which demands restraint and civilized behavior, is replaced by the "war superego": we now receive praise and medals for the same behaviors which are unacceptable and punishable in peacetime- murder, indiscriminate destruction, and pillaging. Once the war erupts, the destructive and self-destructive impulses can be freely acted out. The perinatal elements that we normally encounter in a certain stage of the process of inner exploration and transformation (BPM II. and III.) now become the images that are part of our life, either directly or in the form of TV news. Various no exit situations, sadomasochistic orgies, sexual violence, bestial and demonic behavior, unleashing of enormous explosive energies, and scatology, which belong to standard perinatal imagery, are all enacted in wars and revolutions with extraordinary vividness and power.

However, the acting out of unconscious impulses, whether it occurs on the individual scale or collectively in wars and revolutions, does not result in transformation as would their full conscious experience, since insight and therapeutic intention are missing. Thus the goal of the underlying birth fantasy, which represents

the driving force of such violent events, is not achieved; even if the war or revolution has been brought to a successful closure. The most triumphant external victory does not deliver what was expected and hoped for: an inner sense of emotional liberation and spiritual rebirth. After the initial intoxicating feelings of triumph comes at first a sober awakening and later bitter disappointment. And it usually does not take a long time and a facsimile of the old oppressive system starts emerging from the ruins of the dead dream, since the same unconscious forces continue to operate in the deep unconscious. This seems to happen again and again in human history, whether the event involved is the French Revolution, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, or World War II.

Since I conducted for many years deep experiential work in Prague at the time when Czechoslovakia had a Marxist regime, I was able to collect some fascinating material concerning the psychological dynamics of Communism. The issues related to Communist ideology typically emerged at the time when my clients were struggling with perinatal energies and emotions. It became obvious that the passion the revolutionaries feel toward the oppressors and their regimes receives a powerful reinforcement from their revolt against the inner prison of the perinatal memories. And, conversely, the need to coerce and dominate others is an external displacement of the need to overcome the fear of being overwhelmed by one's own unconscious. The murderous entanglement of the oppressor and the revolutionary is thus an externalized replica of the situation experienced in the birth canal.

The Communist vision contains an element of psychological truth which has made it appealing to large numbers of people. The basic notion that a dramatic experience of a revolutionary nature is necessary to terminate suffering and oppression and institute a situation of greater harmony is correct when understood as a process of inner transformation. However, it is dangerously false when it is projected into the external world as a political ideology of violent revolutions. The basic fallacy lies in the fact that what on a deeper level is essentially an archetypal pattern of spiritual death and rebirth takes the form of an atheistic and antispiritual program.

Communist revolutions have been extremely successful in their destructive phase, but instead of the promised brotherhood and harmony their victories have bred regimes where oppression, cruelty, and injustice ruled supreme. Today when the economically ruined and politically corrupt Soviet Union has collapsed and the Communist world has fallen apart, it is obvious to all people with sane judgment that this gigantic historical experiment conducted at the cost of millions of human lives and unimaginable human suffering has been a colossal failure. If the above observations are correct, no external interventions have a chance to create a better

world, unless they are associated with a profound transformation of human consciousness.

The observations from modern consciousness research also throw some important light on the psychology of concentration camps. Over a number of years, professor **Bastians** in Leyden, Holland, has been conducting LSD therapy for people suffering from the "concentration camp syndrome"; it is a condition that develops in former inmates of these camps many years after the incarceration. Bastians has also worked with former kapos on the issues of guilt. An artistic description of this work can be found in the book **Shivitti** written by a former inmate, **Ka-Tzetnik 135633**, who underwent a series of therapeutic sessions with Bastians (Ka-Tzetnik 135633 1989).

Bastians himself wrote a paper describing his work, entitled **Man in the Concentration Camp and Concentration Camp in Man**. There he pointed out, without specifying it, that the concentration camps are a projection of a certain domain which exists in the human unconscious: "Before there was a man in the concentration camp, there was a concentration camp in man" (Bastians 1955). Study of the non-ordinary states of consciousness made it possible to identify the realm of the psyche Bastians was talking about. Closer examination of the general and specific conditions in the Nazi concentration camps reveals that they are a diabolical and realistic enactment of the nightmarish atmosphere which characterizes the reliving of biological birth.

The barbed wire barriers, high-voltage fences, watch towers with submachine guns, mine fields, and packs of trained dogs certainly created a hellish and almost archetypal image of an utterly hopeless and oppressive no exit situation that is so characteristic of the first clinical stage of birth (BPM II). At the same time, the elements of violence, bestiality, scatology, and sexual abuse of women and men, including rape and sadistic practices, all belong to the phenomenology of the second stage of birth (BPM III), familiar to people who have relived their birth.

In the concentration camps, the sexual abuse existed on a random individual level, as well as in the context of the "houses of dolls", institutions providing "entertainment" for the officers. The only escape out of this hell was death- by hunger, disease, or suffocation in the gas chambers and the fire of the crematoria. The books by **Ka-Tzetnik 135633**, **House of Dolls** and **Sunrise Over Hell** (Ka-Tzetnik 1955 and 1977), offer a shattering description of the life in concentration camps. Special bestiality of the SS was directed against pregnant women. The irrational nature of the camps is best shown in the scatological dimension- throwing eating bowls into the latrines and asking the inmates for their retrieval and forcing the inmates to urinate into each other's mouth were practices that besides their bestiality bring the danger of epidemics. As a result of these perverted practices, in Buchenwald alone, twenty-seven inmates drowned in feces in the course of a single month.

The intensity, depth, driving quality, and convincing nature of all the emotions and sensations involved in these experiences suggests that they are not individually fabricated from such sources as adventure books, movies, and TV shows, but originate in the collective unconscious. It certainly seems that when, in our inner exploration, we reach the memory of the trauma of birth, this seems to open the gates into the collective unconscious and mediate access to experiences of people who once were in a similar predicament. It is not hard to imagine that the perinatal level of our unconscious which "knows" so intimately the history of human violence is actually partially responsible for wars, revolutions, and similar atrocities. If this is true, it should be possible to reduce the amount of malignant aggression by a change in birth practices.

The role of the birth trauma as a source of violence and self-destructive tendencies has been confirmed by many clinical studies. There seems to be an important correlation between difficult birth and criminality; the data suggest that a traumatic childhood in and of itself is not sufficient to produce criminal behavior in later years. To be a significant factor in this regard, postnatal traumatization, such as separation from mother, has to be preceded by complicated birth. Also aggression directed inward, in particular suicide, seems to be psychogenetically linked to difficult birth. According to a recent article published in *Lancet*, resuscitation at birth is conducive to higher risk of committing suicide after puberty. The Scandinavian researcher **Bertil Jacobson** found a close correlation between the form of self-destructive behavior and the nature of birth (Jacobson et al. 1987). Suicides involving asphyxiation were associated with suffocation at birth, violent suicides with mechanical birth trauma, and drug addiction leading to suicide with opiate and/or barbiturate administration during labor.

The circumstances of birth thus play an important role in creating a disposition to violence and self-destructive tendencies or to loving behavior and healthy interpersonal relationships. French obstetrician **Michel Odent** (1995) has shown how the hormones involved in the birth process and nursing (oxytocine, endorphine, adrenaline, nor-adrenaline, and prolactine) participate in this imprinting. While oxytocine is known to induce maternal behavior in animals and endorphines foster dependency and attachment, the adrenaline mechanisms played an important role in evolution as mediators of the aggressive protective instinct of the mother at the time when birth was occurring in unprotected natural environments. Under the present circumstances, it should not be difficult to provide for birthing a quiet, safe, and private environment conducive to positive interpersonal imprinting. Busy, noisy, and chaotic milieu of many hospitals interferes with this process, induces anxiety, and imprints the picture of a world that is potentially dangerous and requires aggressive responses.

Transpersonal sources of violence.

The above material clearly indicates that a conceptual framework limited to postnatal biography and the Freudian unconscious does not adequately explain extreme forms of human violence on the individual and collective scale. However, it seems that the roots of these phenomena reach even deeper than to the perinatal level of the psyche. Consciousness research has revealed significant additional sources of aggression in the transpersonal domain; here belong, for example, archetypal images of demons and wrathful deities, complex destructive mythological themes, matrices for animal aggression, and painful past life memories.

C. G. Jung believed that the archetypes of the collective unconscious not only have a powerful influence on the behavior of individuals, but also govern large historical movements. From this point of view, entire nations and cultural groups might be enacting in their behavior important mythological themes. In the decade preceding the outbreak of WW II., Jung found in the dreams of his German patients many elements from the Nordic myth of Ragnarok, or the twilight of the gods. He concluded from this that this archetype was emerging in the collective psyche of the German nation; he also predicted that it would lead to a major world catastrophe which would ultimately turn out to be self-destructive.

In many instances, leaders of nations specifically use not only perinatal, but also archetypal images and spiritual symbolism to achieve their political goals. The medieval crusaders were asked to sacrifice their lives for Jesus in a war that would recover the Holy Land from the Mohammedans. Hitler exploited the mythological motifs of the supremacy of the Nordic race and of the millennial empire, as well as the ancient Aryan symbol of the swastika and the solar eagle. Ayatollah Khomeini and Saddam Hussein have ignited the imagination of their Moslem followers by references to "jihad", the holy war against the infidels.

It is interesting to mention in this context **Carol Cohn's** observations on the spiritual symbolism and religious imagery associated with the language of nuclear weaponry and doctrine; from her feminist perspective, she saw this as an effort of male scientists to appropriate and claim ultimate creative power. The authors of the strategic doctrine refer to members of their community as the "**nuclear priesthood**". The first atomic test was called **Trinity** -- the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the male forces of creation. The scientists who worked on the bomb and witnessed the test described it in the following way: "It was as though we stood at the first day of creation". And **Robert Oppenheimer** thought of Krishna's words to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita: "I am become Death, the Shatterer of Worlds."

3. New insights into the nature of insatiable greed.

Psychoanalytic interpretation of the insatiable human need to achieve, to possess, and to become more than one is, emphasizes the sublimation of lower instincts. According to Freud, "What appears as an untiring impulsion toward further perfection can easily be understood as a result of the instinctual repression upon which is based all that is most precious in human civilization. The repressed instinct never ceases to strive for complete satisfaction, which would consist in the repetition of a primary experience of satisfaction. No substitutive or reactive formations and no sublimations will suffice to remove the repressed instinct's persisting tension" (Freud 1955).

More specifically, Freud saw greed as a phenomenon related to disturbances during the nursing period. According to him, frustration or overindulgence during the oral phase can reinforce the primitive infantile need to incorporate objects to such an extent that is in adulthood transferred to a variety of other objects and situations. When the acquisitive drive focuses on money, psychoanalysts attribute it to a fixation on the anal stage of libidinal development. Insatiable sexual appetite is considered to be the result of phallic fixation; many other unrelenting human pursuits are then interpreted in terms of sublimation of such phallic instinctual urges. Modern consciousness research has found these interpretations to be superficial and inadequate; it discovered significant additional sources of acquisitiveness and greed on the perinatal and transpersonal levels of the unconscious.

Perinatal Sources of Insatiable Greed.

In the course of biographically oriented psychotherapy, many people discover that their life has been inauthentic in certain specific sectors of interpersonal relations (e.g. problems with parental authority lead to specific patterns of difficulties with authority figures, repeated dysfunctional patterns in sexual relationships can be traced to parents as models for sexual behavior, sibling issues color future peer relationships, etc.).

When the process of experiential self-exploration reaches the perinatal level, people typically discover that their life up to that point has been largely inauthentic in its totality, not just in certain partial segments. They also find out to their surprise and astonishment that their entire life strategy has been misdirected and therefore incapable of providing genuine satisfaction. The reason for this is the fact that it was primarily motivated by the fear of death and the unconscious forces associated with biological birth that have not been adequately processed and integrated (we are born anatomically, but not emotionally).

When the field of consciousness is strongly influenced by the underlying memory of the struggle in the birth canal, it leads to a feeling of discomfort and dissatisfaction with the present situation. It can focus on a large spectrum of issues: unsatisfactory physical appearance, inadequate resources and material possessions, low social position and influence, insufficient amount of power and fame, and many others. Like the child stuck in the birth canal, the individual feels the need to get to a better situation that seems to lie ahead.

Whatever is the reality of the present circumstances, it is not satisfactory and the solution always seems to lie in the future. Our fantasy will create an image of a future situation that will be more satisfactory; until we reach it, life will be only preparation for a better future, not yet "the real thing". This results in a life pattern that has been described as "treadmill" or "rat-race" type of existence. The existentialists talk about "auto-projecting" into the future. When the goal is not reached, the continuing dissatisfaction is rationalized by the failure to reach the correcting measures.

When the goal is reached, the continuing dissatisfaction is typically explained by the fact that the goal was not quite right or was not ambitious enough and has to be amplified or exchanged for another one. The failure is not correctly diagnosed, that is attributed to a fundamentally wrong strategy that is in principle incapable of delivering happiness. This pattern is responsible for reckless irrational pursuit of various grandiose goals that results in much suffering and many problems in the world. It can be played out on many different levels, since it never brings true satisfaction.

Transpersonal roots of insatiable greed.

Modern consciousness research and experiential psychotherapy have discovered that the deepest source of our dissatisfaction and striving for perfection lies far beyond the biographical and perinatal domain; this insatiable craving that drives human life is ultimately transpersonal in nature. In Dante Alighieri's words, "the desire for perfection is that desire which always makes every pleasure appear incomplete, for there is no joy or pleasure so great in this life that it can quench the thirst in our soul." In the most general sense, the deepest transpersonal roots of insatiable greed can best be understood in terms of **Ken Wilber's** concept of the Atman Project (Wilber 1980). Our true nature is divine - God, Buddha, Brahma, Tao - and although the process of creation separates and alienates us from our source, the awareness of this fact is never completely lost. The deepest motivating force in the

psyche on all the levels of consciousness evolution is to return to the experience of our divinity. However, the constraining conditions of the consecutive stages of development prevent a full experience of full liberation in and as God.

Real transcendence requires death of the separate self, dying to the exclusive subject. Because of the fear of annihilation and because of grasping onto the ego, the individual has to settle for Atman substitutes or surrogates, specific for a particular stage. For an infant, this will be satisfaction of age-specific physiological needs, for the adult beside food and sex also money, fame, power, appearance, knowledge, etc. Because of our deep sense that our true identity is the totality of cosmic creation and the creative principle itself, substitutes of any degree and scope-- the Atman Projects-- will always remain unsatisfactory. Only the experience of one's divinity in a non-ordinary state of consciousness can ever fulfill our deepest needs. Thus the ultimate solution for the insatiable greed is in the inner world, not in secular pursuits of any kind and scope. This can be illustrated by the following quote from Traherne describing a mystical experience:

The streets were mine, the temple was mine, the people were mine. The skies were mine, and so were the sun and moon and stars, and all the world was mine, and I the only spectator and enjoyer of it. I knew no churlish proprieties, nor bounds, nor divisions; but all proprieties and divisions were mine; all treasures and the possessors of them. So that with much ado I was corrupted, and made to learn the dirty devices of this world, which I now unlearn, and become, as it were, a little child again that I may enter into the kingdom of God.

4. Experiential approaches facilitating deep personal transformation and consciousness evolution.

The discovery that the roots of human violence and insatiable greed reach far deeper than academic psychiatry ever suspected and that their reservoirs are truly enormous could in itself be very discouraging. However, it is more than balanced by the discovery of new therapeutic mechanisms and transformative potential associated with the perinatal and transpersonal levels of the psyche.

I have seen over the years profound emotional and psychosomatic healing, as well as radical personality transformation, in many people who were involved in serious and systematic inner quest. Some of them were meditators and had a regular spiritual practice, others had psychedelic experiences or spontaneous episodes of psychospiritual crises, and many participated in various forms of experiential psychotherapy and self-exploration. As they were consciously facing and integrating sequences of perinatal and transpersonal experiences, their personality typically underwent radical changes.

As the content of the perinatal level of the unconscious is brought into consciousness, the level of aggression typically decreases, and people become more peaceful, more comfortable with themselves, and more tolerant of others. The experience of psychospiritual rebirth and connection with the memories of positive postnatal or prenatal memories reduces irrational drives and ambitions and enhances the ability to enjoy the present circumstances of life (everyday activities, nature, music, love-making). Experiences of cosmic unity and one's own divinity further reduce irrational drives, bring the sense of wonder and the ability to love, and open deep sources of creativity. The most consistent consequence of deep experiential self-exploration is the emergence of universal spirituality of a mystical nature that is based on personal experience.

Non-ordinary states of consciousness offer even more exciting possibilities of positive evolutionary changes in the form of experiential identification with other people, entire human groups, animals, plants, and even inorganic materials and processes in nature. One can gain experiential access to events occurring in other countries, cultures, and historical periods and even to the mythological realms and archetypal beings of the Jungian collective unconscious. The fact that these experiences can contain accurate information about various realms of existence which goes far beyond what the individual has obtained in his or her lifetime through the conventional channels proves that they are authentic.

This suggests that, on a deeper level, each individual psyche is intimately connected with the rest of the cosmos and, in a certain sense, is actually commensurate with it. In this way, modern consciousness research has confirmed the basic thesis of the ancient Indian Upanishads that each of us, in the last analysis, is identical with the totality of existence and with the creative principle of the universe. An individual is not just a body-ego, but also the supreme cosmic principle (Atman-Brahman).

The above observations from transpersonal psychology have far-reaching theoretical and practical implications for the area of our discussion. People who gain experiential access to the perinatal area of their unconscious have the unique opportunity to bring into consciousness profound destructive and self-destructive energies and disturbing emotions that are stored in this domain of the human psyche, come to terms with them, and integrate them. They also discover within themselves deep spirituality of a universal and all-encompassing nature. As a result of it, they feel increase of inner peace, self-acceptance, tolerance toward others, and acceptance of differences.

These changes deepen and extend even farther when the process of experiential self-exploration reaches the transpersonal level. What began as psychological probing of the unconscious psyche now automatically becomes a philosophical quest for the meaning of life and a journey of spiritual discovery. People who connect to the transpersonal domain of their psyche tend to develop a new appreciation for existence and reverence for all life. One of the most striking consequences of various forms of transpersonal experiences is spontaneous emergence and development of deep humanitarian and ecological concerns. It is based on an almost cellular awareness that the boundaries in the universe are arbitrary and that each of us is identical with the entire web of being. It is suddenly clear that we cannot do anything to nature without simultaneously doing it to ourselves. Differences among people now appear to be interesting and enriching rather than threatening, whether they are related to sex, race, color, language, political conviction, or religious belief. It is obvious that a transformation of this kind would increase our chances for survival if it could occur on a sufficiently large scale.

5. Implications of modern consciousness research for the understanding and treatment of the global crisis

Some of the insights of people experiencing non-ordinary states of consciousness are directly related to the current global crisis and its relationship with consciousness evolution. They show that we have exteriorized in the modern world many of essential themes of the perinatal process that a person involved in deep personal transformation has to face and come to terms with internally. The same elements that we would encounter in the process of psychological death and rebirth in our visionary experiences make today our evening news. This is particularly true in regard to the phenomena that characterize what I call BPM III.

We certainly see the enormous unleashing of the aggressive impulse in the many wars and revolutionary upheavals in the world, in the rising criminality, terrorism, and racial riots. Sexual experiences and behaviors are taking unprecedented forms, as manifested in the sexual freedom of youngsters, promiscuity, open marriages, overtly sexual books, plays and movies, gay liberation, sadomasochistic experimentation, and many others. The demonic element is also becoming increasingly manifest in the modern world. Renaissance of satanic cults and witchcraft, popularity of books and horror movies with occult themes, and crimes with satanic motivations attest to that fact. The scatological dimension is evident in the progressive industrial pollution, accumulation of waste products on a global scale, and rapidly deteriorating hygienic conditions in large cities.

Many of the people with whom we have worked saw humanity at a critical crossroad facing either collective annihilation or an evolutionary jump in consciousness of unprecedented proportions **Terence McKenna** (McKenna 1992) put it very succinctly: "The history of the silly monkey is over, one way or another." It seems that we all are collectively involved in a process that parallels the psychological death and rebirth that so many people have experienced individually in non-ordinary states of consciousness. If we continue to act out the problematic destructive and self-destructive tendencies originating in the depth of the unconscious, we will undoubtedly destroy ourselves and life on this planet. However, if we succeed in internalizing this process on a large enough scale, it might result in an evolutionary progress that can take us as far beyond our present condition as we now are from primates. As utopian as the possibility of such a development might seem, it might be our only real chance.

Let us now look into the future and explore the various avenues that would have to be pursued should the concepts that have emerged from the transpersonal field and the new paradigm in science be put into action in the world. Although the past accomplishments are very impressive, the new ideas still form a disjointed mosaic, rather than a complete and comprehensive world-view. Much work has to be done in terms of accumulating more data, formulating new theories, and achieving a creative synthesis. In addition, the existing information has to reach much larger audiences before a significant impact on the world situation can be expected.

But even a radical intellectual shift to a new paradigm on a large scale would not be sufficient to alleviate the global crisis and reverse the destructive course we are on. This would require a deep emotional and spiritual transformation of humanity. Using the existing evidence, it is possible to suggest certain strategies that might facilitate and support such a process. Efforts to change humanity would have to start with psychological prevention at an early age.

The data from pre- and perinatal psychology indicate that much could be achieved by changing the conditions of pregnancy, delivery, and postnatal care - improving the emotional preparation of the mother during pregnancy, practicing natural childbirth, and emphasizing in the postpartum period emotionally nourishing contact between the mother and the child. Much has been written about the importance of childrearing, as well as disastrous emotional consequences of traumatic conditions in infancy and childhood. Certainly this is an area where continued education and guidance is necessary. However, to be able to apply the theoretically known principles, the parents have to reach sufficient emotional stability and maturity themselves. It is well-known that emotional problems are passed like curse from generation to generation. We are facing here a very complex problem of the chicken and the egg.

Humanistic and transpersonal psychologies have developed effective experiential methods of self-exploration, healing, and personality transformation. Some of these come from the therapeutic tradition, others represent modern adaptations of ancient spiritual practices. There exist approaches with a very favorable ratio between professional helpers and clients and others that can be practiced in the context of self-help groups. Systematic work with them can lead to a spiritual opening, a move in a direction that is sorely needed on a collective scale should our species survive. It is essential to spread the information about these possibilities and get enough people personally interested in pursuing them.

We seem to be involved in a dramatic race for time that has no precedent in the entire history of humanity. What is at stake is nothing less than the future of life on this planet. If we continue the old strategies which in their consequences are clearly extremely destructive and self-destructive, it is unlikely that the human species will survive. However, if a sufficient number of people undergoes a process of deep inner transformation, we might reach a level of consciousness evolution that will bring us to the point of deserving the name given to our species - **homo sapiens**.

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