

What Happened to Species-Typical Human Nature?

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Abstract

The clash of civilizations continues between colonizers and Native/First Nation Peoples around the world. Native/First Nation Peoples traditionally are Nature-centric, oriented to gift economies, meeting basic needs through species-normal nestedness. Humanity's evolved nest includes soothing perinatal experiences, breastfeeding for several years, responsive care relationships, a welcoming community and supportive stable caregivers/mentors, extensive affectionate touch (and no negative touch), self-directed social play, nature immersion and attachment, and routine healing practices. The right brain hemisphere is scheduled to grow more rapidly in early childhood, and nest provision supports its optimization which leads to a flexible, socially engaged, emotionally attuned orientation to the world, a spiritual heartmindedness connected to the rest of Nature.

Settler-colonial childraising practices, now spread around the world, do not follow evolved nest practices, undermining holistic brain development. Such undercare impairs spiritual heartmindedness, leading instead to psyches vulnerable to manipulation, easily triggered into self-protectionism. Mind-brains have been colonized by fear and distracted with a focus on deliberation as humanity's uniqueness. Knowhow for living responsibly on Earth is dismissed by the intellect, the focus of Westernized schooling. To return to holistic development, the evolved nest must be provided along with healing practices to restore humanity's full nature.

Keywords: Evolved Nest, human nature, civilization, colonization, spirituality, First Nation, child development

Human Social Origins: The Nested Community

The cooperative nature of most Native Peoples around the world amazed explorers, such as Columbus, who promptly enslaved several on his first voyage to what later became the Americas (Siepel, 2015). Natives of isolated communities that anthropologist E. Richard Sorenson encountered in the 20th century had abilities to communicate, connect, and respond that were so much outside of his experience that he could only fully perceive them from repeatedly watching the films he had collected and then revisiting (Sorenson, 1998). In contrast, the Native Americans were shocked by the soulless egoism of the European explorers and settlers, and when they visited Europe in the 17th century, they condemned the cruel nature of European societies that allowed homelessness and starvation (Lahontan, 1703). The assumptions behind these differences in social cooperation are indicators of the distinctive worldviews anthropologist Robert Redfield identified (Naugle, 2002).

The Indigenous Worldview represents a common cosmology, with corresponding cultural practices, held by Native/First Nation Peoples around the world. Bonded to and cooperative with their landscapes, they feel integrated with the natural world (e.g., Cajete, 2001; Deloria, 2006; Descola, 2013). They live as if all of nature is alive, sentient, and animate, with their senses tuned to receiving the personhood of the more than human (Abram, 2010; Harvey, 2017; Narvaez et al., 2019). Rationality is rooted in living on the earth, according to its laws, not against them. Native American culture traditionally was not closed minded but open to the perspectives of others, as noted in first contact documentation but also Native American scholars and authors themselves.

Today's dominant worldview—emerging in the last millennium primarily from a combination of Western “Enlightenment” and colonial capitalism, although with roots in civilization's earlier separations from Nature—contrasts with the Indigenous Worldview in the following precepts, in that the latter is characterized by these orientations and the former is not (Tope & Narvaez, 2022):

- Spirit pervades all things.
- All (humans, animals, plants, waterways, landscapes) are interdependent relatives.
- Relational harmony and balance are moment-by-moment moral aims.
- Human and other-than-human community welfare is central to a good life.

- Humans, as younger siblings to the rest of the natural world, have much to learn from their elders, the Plants and Animals.
- Restorative justice is about restoring relational connection, trust and responsible action.
- Heart-mind is more important than head-mind.
- The laws of Nature are primary.
- Alternative consciousness is essential for growth.

How can we account for the shift away from these precepts to a worldview that considers the rest of Nature as inert or dumb, humanity as separate and superior, and human analytical reason the pinnacle of creation/evolution? The roots of differences in worldview are initiated in child formation. To understand these roots, we must first examine what species-normal child raising looks like, the type of child raising in 95%-99% of human history, and societies until recently. Species-normal capacities, such as those listed, unfold in the child raising practices we evolved.

The Nested Community

Native/First Nation Peoples traditionally live according to a gift economy, both Nature's gift economy of give and take (Worster, 1999) and a maternal gift economy of unilateral generosity, with each given according to need (Vaughan, 2019; Widlock, 2017). These lifeways support child formation through humanity's evolved practices that meet basic needs and cultivate the innate capacities of the infant for social companionship. In first encounters, Western explorers, settlers, and researchers were contemptuous of the child-raising practices they noted among traditional Native/First Nation Peoples, leading in recent times to kidnapping their children for adoption or residential schools (Adams, 2020). The outsiders called their loving treatment of children "indulgent" (Hewlett & Lamb, 2005). In fact, foragers provide our species' *evolved nest*, a connected community of companionship inherited through the tree of life, millions of years old and characteristic of 99% of human existence (Hrdy, 2009; Konner, 2005; Narvaez & Bradshaw, 2023).

Like every animal's nest, humanity's evolved nest meets the maturational needs and expectations of the child to ensure optimal normal development (Gottlieb, 2002). Humanity's nest includes soothing birth and perinatal experiences (which includes extensive maternal

support), breastfeeding on request for several years, responsive care to keep baby comforted and calm, a welcoming community and a set of supportive stable caregivers, extensive affectionate touch (and no negative touch), self-directed social play, nature immersion and attachment, and routine healing practices (Hewlett & Lamb, 2005; Narvaez, 2021; Narvaez & Bradshaw, 2023; Narvaez & Tarsha, 2021). Every component of the evolved nest is associated with healthy neurobiological and psychosocial development (e.g., Narvaez, 2014; Narvaez, Panksepp et al., 2013). The evolved nest, adjusting its nature over the lifespan, prepares individuals for cultivating and maintaining a spirit of community, generosity, and cooperation as well as a sense of sacred spiritual connection to the world.

In fact, one of the primary mechanisms for species-typical psychospiritual development may be how the early continuum of companionship care facilitates the development of the right hemisphere, which is scheduled to grow more rapidly than the left in the first years of life (Schore, 2019). Right hemisphere functioning, which develops properly in early life with nested care, allows for not only various forms of self-regulation and social connection but also self-transcendence and higher consciousness. The right hemisphere “plays a significant part in imagination, creativity, the capacity for religious awe, music, dance, poetry, art, love of nature, a moral sense, a sense of humour and the ability to change our minds” (McGilchrist, 2021, pp. 98-99). As part of the evolved nest, children are surrounded by stories, role models and daily rituals showing what being a good member of an earth-respecting community looks like (Cajete, 2001). To raise a good person, you let them make their own choices and honor their unique spirit (MacPherson & Rabb, 2011). Integrated into community life, children grow into their uniqueness and into goodness when scaffolded with such practices. The evolved nest is designed for this.

As noted earlier, the personality and community characteristics of adults from communities providing the evolved nest, primarily nomadic foragers, puzzled western visitors. The adults in these societies on average display(ed) high cooperation, generosity, autonomy and communality, and they construct(ed) egalitarian communities that meet everyone’s basic needs (Ingold, 2005; Narvaez, 2013). Moral egoism is not tolerated, apart from very young children learning autonomy (reviewed in Narvaez, 2013). Native/First Nation Peoples traditionally understand reality to be multifaceted and each person sovereign; they are able to take multiple perspectives as a matter of course (Descola, 2013). Life was spent in polysemy, dedifferentiation of self and other, shapeshifting into different identities, aware of the dynamism of Spirit.

Although specific spiritual practices vary by community and individual, among foragers and early settled societies, polytheism is/was the norm. Spirit and spirits are everywhere.

When needed, persons move into the problem-solving mindscape of univocity—linear logical thinking helpful for solving a particular problem. Although traditional Indigenous Peoples use both mindspaces, polysemy and univocity, with the rise of civilizations, there was a shift toward spending most time in univocity, the problem-solving space brought on by the stresses of civilized life (Bram, 1998). Impairment in polysemy, spirituality and cooperation are rooted in early undercare and lack of nestedness, the suppression of multiperspectivalism, coercive relationships and schooling. Thus, unnested childhoods look quite different from the nestedness that is humanity’s heritage, as do their related outcomes. Unfortunately, the evolved nest has been degraded across the world.

Seeds of Disorder: Colonization of Childhood

Efforts to decolonize minds and hearts have been ongoing in educational circles for some time (e.g., Four Arrows, 2011). European colonialization has affected not only nearly all bodies on the planet but also mind-brains. Bodies and psyches have been traumatized and starved of their basic needs, minds genocidally cleansed and torn from wild mind consciousness, and all have been disabled in their individual and cultural diversity (Adams, 2020; Davis, 2007; Hinton, 2022; Narvaez, 2014; de Sousa Santos, 2018).

When we think of what the colonizers did and still do, we think mostly of what they take away or tried to take away—e.g., cultural and spiritual practices, communal sharing, respect for elders, self-respect, and ecological intelligence (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014; Trafzer, Keller & Sisquoc, 2006). We don’t typically think of the legacy they *gave* everyone, a legacy that still haunts us all. The unwelcome gift from settlers and colonizers was *trauma*. Many of them brought their own inherited neurobiologically embedded experiences of trauma from millennia-old European practices of mistreating children, women and the unfortunate (Buck, 2019; deMause, 1995; Greven, 1977, 1991; Scott, 1968). Treating others as Its, as objects, rather than as Thous, as sacred beings, accompanied the behavior of conquistadores and settler-colonizers. Then, with *wétiko* cruelty (Forbes, 2008), they passed the trauma to all they met outside their homelands, implanting it in bodies and minds. These bodies and minds, prevented from using traditional

healing practices, often passed the trauma to the next generations (Menakem, 2017). As interdisciplinary research has demonstrated, one of the strongest forms of trauma transmission occurs in babyhood and childhood (Garner et al., 2021; Lanius, Vermetten & Pain, 2010).

Early settler recollections indicated astonishment that Native Peoples did not punish their children. Settlers brought their harsh parenting practices to the “new world,” shocking Native Peoples, who would step in to take the punishment when the settlers tried to whip children (Greer, 2000). Anthropologist Marshall Sahlins (2008) noted: “...all round the world, other peoples know no such idea of children as innate monsters and no such necessity of domesticating their bestial instincts” (p. 100).

Settler-colonizers took a European pattern of unnested care (e.g., denial of pleasure, infliction of pain through corporal punishment and emotional abuse, nature distrust and denigration) and spread it around the world. Settler-colonizing child raising practices are flavored with ideas of original sin (Jacobs, 2001)—that babies have sinful dispositions and must be coerced to be good. Babies are coerced into schedules for eating and sleeping and even spanked “for their own good” (Lee, Grogan-Kaylor & Berger, 2014; Miller, 1990). At the same time, babies’ needs are minimized (‘they are resilient’). Babies spend a great deal of time physically isolated (not in arms), and if they cry, it is often ignored because it is considered ‘what babies do.’

By nature, babies have a built-in compass that indicates good or bad feeling. When needed support is not provided, a stress response is triggered. Babies initially indicate discomfort with a grimace or gesture. Crying is a late signal of distress. However, in settler-colonizer child-raising babies are often left to cry. Instead of meeting the needs of babies, babies are often held in contempt, as if they are manipulators of adults, as if meeting their needs will “spoil” them. Adults believe they have to win a power contest or the child will be a terror. Neuroscience and clinical studies show us that the opposite is the case.

Neuroscientific studies now show us the mechanisms of how trauma affects child brain development in the short and long term. Leaving a baby in distress creates a toxic bath for developing brain systems (Murgatroyd & Spengler, 2011) and psychosocial development (Moloney, 1949; Ribble, 1943; Winnicott, 1987). When babies are distressed too long, intensely, or routinely, brain development is thwarted by the overproduction of cortisol, killing brain cells and their connections (McEwen, 2017; Murgatroyd & Spengler, 2011). Unsupportive care

enhances survival systems in the brain, and these spawn self-protectionist social attitudes and behavior, making self-breakdown or oppositionalism more likely to become part of the personality than cooperation (Narvaez, 2014; Schore, 2003). Free will is curtailed because implanted threat reactivity is easily triggered, shifting blood flow away from higher-order thinking in preparation for flight or fight; stress makes the individual “stupid” and self-oriented (Sapolsky, 2004).

Self-protectionist defensive systems lead to bracing against life and Spirit (Bourgeault, 2003). Instant subliminal neuroception of a situation is biased toward threat, which inhibits growth, resulting in impaired sociality and self-awareness (Porges, 2011). Without the satisfaction of smooth and satisfying social interactions, the individual can be drawn to “making a mark” through aggression (Fromm, 1974). Instead of finding joy in biophilia and attuned relations with living forms, the impaired individual may find satisfaction in necrophilia, the love static, controllable things. Spirituality is misdirected toward scripted power and fear-based ideologies (Narvaez, 2014).

Today’s dominant culture toxically stresses young children, enhancing innate survival systems (e.g., stress response; Lanius et al., 2010). Without species-typical support, the human mind can be underdeveloped, notably impairing right hemisphere functions that underlie an integrated brain associated with polysemy, paradox, and other capacities found in earthcentric societies. Individualized development of intuition and spirit is not encouraged, nor are children guided in spiritual heartmindedness and earthcentric knowhow, capacities fundamental to being human in Indigenous societies (Tope & Narvaez, 2022). Instead, schooling typically emphasizes a left-hemisphere worldview of linear analysis, categorization and control, the learning of cunning without heart connectedness.

The Eroded Nest and Wrecking of Human Nature and Spirituality

Scholars have puzzled over the shift from the Nature-centric, egalitarian ways of foraging communities, representing at least 95% of human history, to the life-destroying, inequalitarian ways of hierarchical static states (Engels, 1891; Marx, 1977; Scott, 2017). The shift was gradual, occurring over thousands of years in different parts of the world, although foraging communities were approximately one-third of societies until a few years ago (they also still exist worldwide),

resisting the intense labor and curtailed freedom that civilization demands for most members (Scott, 2009). We've been told that farming is easier than hunting and gathering, but this is not the case. In some analyses, hunter-gatherers spend on average only a few hours a day obtaining food, with a great deal of time otherwise spent in leisure (e.g., Sahlins, 1998; Gowdy, 1998). Why then would some people settle down to the hard work of cultivating crops and herding animals, which resulted in decreased physical and psychological wellbeing (Cohen & Crane-Kramer, 2007; Larsen, 2006)?

Scholars do not agree on causes, some pointing to climate change (Gowdy, 2020), others to the fear that Nature would no longer provide (Martin, 1999). Historically, when newly settled communities faced food depletion, they moved to raiding and eventually to advanced technology (Harman, 2017). Advanced agricultural technology (e.g., plowing, dams, irrigation ditches) led to surpluses that had to be guarded, the beginnings of inequality. The buildings holding the surpluses became temples and their supervisor priests (Maisel, 1993). Religion developed to rationalize and support the status quo. Writing developed to keep track of stores, along with armies to enforce the status quo. Writing and literacy changed consciousness (Bram, 2002; Ong, 2002). With the rise of self-reflective consciousness, settlement into enclaves separated from the landscape fostered detached, instrumentalist relations with the rest of the natural world. Alphabetic writing completed the transformation by making it seem like written words were permanent, creating an illusion of a timeless, changeless mental world. Dualism emerged, dividing the world into spirit/body and heaven/earth. During these shifts, patriarchy arose with its enclosure and control of women, undermining the cooperative child raising and cooperative breeding of human ancestry (Hrdy, 2009). Class divisions emerged, with forced labor (debt, slave or wage) coerced by armed men, where the hierarchy of power (and benefits) trickled upward, features not characteristic of nonstate communities (Gowdy, 1998; Harman, 2017; Scott, 2017). Lewis Mumford (1961) noted that city-states developed multiple harsh methods of domination and servitude, including sadism, the "passion for unlimited, godlike control over men and things" (Fromm, 1973, p. 191), associated with necrophilia (love of the nonliving). These system characteristics became part of the personalities of the people subjected to government domination. In the last millennium, the takeover of the European commons by the wealthy elite ("the great transformation," Polanyi, 2001) and the absconding of the commons around the world

by colonization forced most everyone else into poverty, homelessness, starvation, slavery, migration, or wage labor.

Most significantly, cultural shifts also undermined the polytheistic, animistic, participatory spirituality of our ancestors (Bram, 2002, 2018). According to the analysis by John Lamb Lash (2006), prior to the rise of Rome and Roman Christianity, the Native Peoples of Europe (Europeans) were “Pagan,” meaning that their sense of life was a sacred ecology, a culture rooted in Nature and connectedness to Spirit. Roman Christianity violently eradicated Paganism over centuries, promoting a very different form of religio-spirituality, a fall-redemption, salvationist religion. Salvationism promised liberation for the immortal soul, contrasting with the Pagan religion that offered liberation from selfhood using ecstatic immersion in the life force Eros.¹ In fact, regular ecstatic experiences are characteristic of extant ancient cultures that hold humanity’s genetic heritage (Katz, 2017; Katz, Biesele & St. Denis, 1997).

Salvationist Christianity promises redemption from the woundedness that it and patriarchy generally inflict on children. In actuality, salvationist Christianity promotes a victim-perpetrator syndrome, with the redeemer complex² as a religious cover for perpetration. Belief in the redemptive value of suffering glorifies the victim-perpetrator bond, encouraging lives of violent control and conquest. Divine authority sanctions violence, infusing violent action, even genocide, with a sense of duty (‘you are either with us or against us;’ ‘those who are evil are dangerous and must be eradicated’). Supporting salvationist Christianity, the notion of original sin was invented four centuries after the life of Jesus (Augustine, 400 CE), justifying maltreatment. “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Because everyone is a sinner, individuals are encouraged to feel that any harm that comes to them is deserved. They (the victims) are punished for their own good, for failing to follow God’s plan. The perpetrators of the punishment are righteously upholding God’s plan. According to the dynamics of the victim-perpetrator bond, belief in the redemptive power of suffering encourages the infliction of suffering as a purifying device. Divine retribution became a potent weapon of

¹ An alternative Christianity is called creation spirituality which emphasizes orientations similar to Paganism (Fox, 2000).

² According to Lash (2006), the Redeemer Complex has four aspects (Jews accept all these too but not Jesus): (1) The world was created by a father god independent of a female counterpart. (2) The chosen people will go through trials and testing. (3) The creator’s son will save the world. (4) A final apocalyptic judgment will be delivered by the father god and son. The Roman Church adopted the Redeemer Complex from the Jews and made it universal.

mass destruction “aimed for centuries to come at Pagan Europe, and after that at the Americas, and after that at the entire planet” (Lash, 2006, p. 40). This form of annihilation theology is based on the extremism of a minor Hebraic sect, the Zaddikim. Lash calls St. Paul a theological genius for turning the Zaddikim schizophrenic mind-set into condoning both roles of the victim-perpetrator game. The father god redeems the suffering of the perpetrator and victim, but only for “believers.”

European Paganism was brutally eradicated to preserve the singular dominance of salvationist Roman Christianity. Although most Gnostic writings, hymns, and practices were destroyed, there is enough left to document how Gnosticism criticized Christianity for its violent destructive assumptions (Lash, 2006). Gnostics argued that Christianity’s victim-perpetrator bond was disguised as a love connection. “Cut off from their Pagan roots, denied the pleasure bond, and morally desperate, early Christian converts hysterically denied themselves what they no longer had in the first place: Empathic connection to the earth and the realm of the senses” With a primal connection to the body, they desired release from embodiment (Lash, 2006, p. 37). The Pagans of Europa and the Near East viewed salvationist Christianity as a plague on the world. The Christian need to castigate the flesh and deny pleasure was insane and a sign of religious narcissism, excessively egotistic, emerging from an oppositional worldview.

The salvationist Christian settler-colonizers took their trauma with them around the world. “The brutal impact of salvationist conditioning destroyed the sense of life in Europeans and that is why they behaved as they did when they encountered their distant mirror in the Indigenous tribes of the Americas. The Europeans envied what they saw, and destroyed what they could not truly have, that is, could not reclaim as part of themselves, but only possess, steal, plunder” (Lash, 2006, p. 259).

The missionary colonizers preached kindness but practiced cruelty. To Natives Peoples, Jesus sounded like a psychic healer, like the shamans they knew. However, then they determined that he was a cruel vengeful god who sanctioned their punishment when they did not follow the rules of the missionaries. Because oral cultures are based in honesty—consistency of word and action—Native Peoples initially could not see that those promising salvation were the destroyers of their lifeways. “By the time the indigenous peoples realized that the soft-core Jesus came with a bizarre set of rules and an alien agenda of transmudane provenance, the die had been cast, and a ruthless social control system had been set in place” (Lash, 2006, p. 89).

Where We Are Today

Modern culture has undermined full human capacities for connecting to the earth and perceiving the sentience of the rest of nature by having degraded our species' evolved nest. Wherever it has been imposed, patriarchy-colonialism-industrialization-globalization have extensively impaired the provision of the evolved nest, wounding body, mind and spirit while undermining skilled connectedness (to humans and other than humans).

Trauma-informed science now understands that early life stress can bring about a self-preoccupied brain biology due to unresolved body-based trauma (van der Kolk, 2014). We know now that spanking and other forms of corporal punishment result in the same kinds of long-term harm that physical abuse has (Gershoff, 2013; Gershoff et al., 2012; Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). Wherever young children are punished, moral egoism can take root as self-protectionist actions, such as lying, becoming a form of self-defense against more punishment (Narvaez, 2014). Individuals who are easily triggered from unresolved trauma (most everyone in the USA today) are necessarily self-preoccupied. When the stress response is activated, blood flow is altered to enable flight-fight, impairing higher-order and other-oriented thinking (Arnsten, 2009; Sapolsky, 2004). Consequently, it is no surprise that psychosocial and spiritual deficits are widespread today in the most economically rich nation, the USA.

The resulting predominant life cycle in the dominant culture has been called “postconquest” or posttraumatic, in contrast to the earthcentric, species-typical life cycle called “preconquest” (Sorenson, 1998). These life cycles foster different psyches and spirits, different dispositions, different habitual mindsets, and different affordances for life. Whereas human potential for relaxed joy and implicit connectedness is characteristic of preconquest societies, postconquest societies reside in disconnection and desires for control (to alleviate deeply rooted anxiety). A great deal of human potential has been lost in the postconquest life cycle, starting with the community as a layered supportive context for development, the species-typical evolved nest. Instead of life-enhancing early care, most children experience early toxic stress, undermining the health of their bodies, minds and spirits in multiple ways. When the nest is not provided, the individual is only partially developed and more inclined to reside in innate survival systems (fear, panic, rage), inviting spirits of resentment, shame and violence (Narvaez, 2014). Early undercare and trauma lead to poorly functioning psychosocial neurobiology with illbeing

the result in adulthood, from ill physiology to self-focused sociality (Narvaez, 2014). Because adults in these societies are overwhelmed, distracted, and overcontrolling of others as well as dissociated from their authenticity, they create and/or support a society of increased competition and emotional and relational detachment. Correspondingly, with religious fervor driven by anxiety, capitalist globalization has been forced on societies worldwide by hegemonists. With market exchange emphasized in a “sacred money and markets” narrative (Korten, 2015), most people in high-income nations view money and technology as sacrosanct, not the wellbeing of the biocommunity on which their lives truly depend.

Lost Spirituality: Intellect over Spirit, Machines over Life

The Western, globalized, dominant worldview has been taken over by the left hemisphere of the brain—ego consciousness and intellect (McGilchrist, 2009). In studies where one side of the brain is numbed or disconnected from the other, distinctive orientations emerge. The left brain is oriented to nonliving things, things that can be categorized, classified, and controlled. Fearful of the future and death, it gravitates toward machines, technology and grotesquery. It ridicules emotion and does not understand living relationships. Among major religions, the thinking mind is typically considered dangerous (Bourgeault, 2003). Because it is relationally and emotionally detached from life, governed by left-brain logical abstraction, thinking can lead to various forms of destruction based on its abstractions and ideals (Easterly, 2007; Scott, 2009).

Left-brain dominance in modern culture is not a surprise when factoring in the widespread unnested child raising practices known to impair right brain development, ecological knowhow and the individual’s connection to Spirit. The integrated brain found among Native/First Nation Peoples is largely missing. With the underdevelopment and suppression of right hemisphere capacities throughout childhood and their treatment as suspect thereafter, left-brain governed functioning becomes normative. However, it is also fueled by dysregulated survival systems (fear, panic, anger) from early life undercare that lead to vicious control. Dysregulation is assumed to be part of human nature, creating the vicious cycle of undercaring for babies whose dysregulation is an indicator of ‘original sin.’

Modernist thought, governed by a calculating left brain desire for control over Nature, including human nature, perceives the natural world as inert or dumb and in need of ordering. Instead of anthropomorphism (projecting human traits onto animals), the problem of recent centuries is *mechanomorphism*—projecting mechanical functions onto living beings, human and other than human (Buhner, 2014). We can attribute this in part to the lack of empathy and social knowhow from undercare and the cultural adoption of Enlightenment left-brain functioning as normal and desirable.

We can see this in the explorer-colonizer-settlers. Instead of appreciating and fostering the natural abundance, sharing and health found among most preconquest Native American communities, the settler-colonizers were exterminators. One of Blackhawk's Wintu sisters described what happened:

“The white people never cared for land or deer or bear. When we Indians kill meat, we eat it all. When we dig roots, we make little holes. When we build houses, we make little holes. When we burn grass for grasshoppers, we don't ruin things. We shake down acorns and pine nuts. We don't chop down the trees. We only use dead wood. But the White people plow up the ground, pull down the trees, kill everything. The tree says, “Don't. I am sore. Don't hurt me!” But they chop it down and cut it up. The spirit of the land hates them. They blast out trees and stir it up to its depths. They saw up the trees. That hurts them. The Indians never hurt anything, but the White people destroy all. They blast rocks and scatter them on the ground. The rock says, “Don't. You are hurting me!” But the White people pay no attention. When the Indians use rocks, they take little round ones for their cooking...How can the spirit of the earth like the White man?...

Everywhere the White man has touched the earth, it is sore.” (McLuhan, 1971, p. 15)

High modernist thought is exhibited in government and corporate social engineering, which are most harmful when characterized by a combination of four elements: (1) a simplified ordering of Nature and society that (2) displays “a strong, one might even say muscle-bound, version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature), and above all, the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws” (Scott, 1998, p. 4). An “uncritical, unskeptical, and thus unscientifically optimistic about the possibilities for the comprehensive planning of human

settlement and production” (ibid p. 4) with an emphasis on a visual aesthetic, a *look* of order. When large-scale efforts fail, high modernists retreat to miniaturization, or models, of their ideals. Aligning with the interests of state officials, the aims are utopian living patterns, work habits and moral conduct. (3) The third element is an authoritarian state willing to coerce high-modernist designs onto society and Nature. The past and its traditions are repudiated by elites ready to revolutionize society. (4) The last element is a civil society unable to resist the plans, usually weakened from colonization, economic collapse, revolution, or war. We can add that unnested and traumatizing childhoods lay the foundations for a weakened society.

Bureaucracies mesmerized by technology and desirous of control institute new technologies, procedures and practices, minimizing discussion of the harmful effects (Mander, 1978). The professionalization of community relations supersedes the normal workings of a healthy community and creates counterfeit structures that only superficially meet the needs of community members (McKnight, 1995). In fact, many modern service technologies create social deserts. They take a great deal of monetary resources, instigate the loss of local knowledge, disempower citizens to make them into clients, and often create the inverse of stated goals—e.g., crime-creating corrections system (McKnight, 1995).

Although high modernists and technologists are always promising a golden future ahead, the result of Western technologies by and large has not been a wonderland but an ecological and social wasteland (Berry, 1988). Multiple ecological crises have resulted from rapacious, extracting, polluting, technologized culture, for example, massive species extinction; global warming; toxification of soil, water, air and our bodies; and atmospheric degradation (Kolbert, 2014; Wilson, 1991). Around the world, colonization and capitalist globalization have eradicated cultures, languages and local sustainable ways of living; economic wealth for the few has come at the expense of the cultural and ecological wealth of everyone else (Korten, 2015).

Conclusion: Reaching for the Alternative

To be fully human in a species-normal manner means to be a communal, earth-respecting organism, socially skilled, and spiritually connected to one another and the Earth. This requires today a decolonization of the minds and spirits of today’s human beings and a restoration of

humanity's ancestral ways to flourish, from a Nature-centered worldview to evolved nestedness (Tope & Narvaez, 2022).

What steps should be taken to move back to an earth-respecting, wellness-promoting creation-spiritual pathway? First, we must support traditional ecological knowledge practices in the extant Native/First Nation communities around the world that guard most of the biodiversity left on the planet (Brondizio et al., 2019).

Second, to prevent further colonization and trauma, we must abandon colonizing, trauma-inducing child-raising practices and return to the wellness-promoting practices of our ancestors (Narvaez, 2022; Gleason & Narvaez, 2019). Giving full nested support while standing back to let the individual unfold promotes spiritual development. See Table 1 for a contrast between traditional Indigenous and European-colonizing child-raising practices. The evolved nest must be restored to babies and children in particular but also to adults, as maintaining our original human nature requires nestedness.

Third, we can examine our spirituality. The alternative to salvationist Christianity is creation spirituality, which characterizes ancient and contemporary Native/First Nation spiritualities and the older wisdom tradition found in Biblical texts (Fox, 2000). Creation spirituality, Indigenous and Pagan practices behold divinity immanent in this world, affirming the sacredness of the earth apart from human use. Spirituality is devoted to increasing knowledge and connection with heightened perception and understanding. Self-transcendence through trance and ceremony or through psychotropics promotes polysemy, the ability to merge with multiple others, human and nonhuman, through dedifferentiation (Bram, 1998). As with the use of psychotropics by Indigenous shamans, the goal of gnosis was transience: "In sentient immersion we do not merely live *in relation to* all life, connected *with* nature and the cosmos, but we live *through* all life, and all life lives through us" (Lash, 2006, p. 141). Daily immersion in a polysemous culture that practices transpersonal ceremonies supports a sense of oneness with others, a holistic spirituality, including the other-than-human, with ancestors and with a dynamic, fluctuating universe (e.g., Descola, 2013; Katz, 2017). The goal is to keep creation and one's community thriving, with infinite play, rather than aiming to win a competition (Carse, 1986), such as getting to an Earth-denying heaven.

Table 1. Contrasting Traditional Indigenous Child Raising with Colonizing Child Raising Practices Today.

Traditional Indigenous Child Raising	Colonizing Child Raising Practices Today
Children are central to community life.	Children are peripheral to community life.
Welcome, enjoy and enhance the wellbeing of babies and children (from gestation on).	Put up with the annoyance of children by controlling them as much as possible (from birth on).
Meet children's needs with generosity.	Minimize attention to children's needs so as not to bother adults too much.
Offer breastmilk on request as baby's first medicine.	Artificial laboratory "food" is good enough for baby, as are other processed "foods" in childhood.
Surround the baby and child with several safe, supportive, stable relationships.	Isolate the baby/child with one parent most of the time or send the baby/child to a daycare with rotating staff.
Provide positive touch and no negative touch 24/7.	Isolation: Keep children in their own space (playpen, carrier, crib, bassinet).
Respond to playful signals from babies; let children direct their own social play throughout childhood.	Focus on physical needs primarily; schedule play dates; focus on object (toy) play
Immerse the child in the wild natural world to build ecological intelligence and attachment.	Create distrust in the natural world; limit outdoor freedom to keep child 'safe.'
Nip in the bud baby distress by offering immediate comfort and suckling.	Assume that crying is normal and don't worry about it too much.
No imposed distress	Impose distress 'for child's own good' (e.g., isolation, sleeping alone, spanking, denial of suckling, touch, inclusion).
No coercion	Apply coercion throughout childhood to make children do what adults prefer. Label them (and drug them) if they do not comply.
No punishment	Use corporal and emotional punishment routinely.
Freedom to follow unique path	Teach child to suppress their true interests so they learn to obey in order to manage enforced learning (school) and work (wage labor).
Child is integrated into community life, which is multigenerational.	Child is kept away from the adult world so adults can do their work.

Fourth, correspondingly, adults can learn to use their deliberative minds to shape their own attention and mindset in each situation. We can learn to spend life more in polysemy, dedifferentiation, shapeshifting, and awareness of the dynamism of Spirit. That is, we pay attention to the attitude and mindset we bring to a situation—one of openness to beauty and connection rather than objectification and categorization. Spirit is multiple and inherent in the implicate order. If we are stuck in an explicate order of the manifest, in the ego or LH orientation, we not only categorize and separate delusionally, we are not tuned into the awareness of the dynamism of life. We then grasp abstract ideals and try to make them happen. Our ego latches onto a particular identity, particular outcomes and expectations, which causes a lot of suffering. A scripted, left-brain directed attitude forces itself on the world, perceiving more narrowly, more rigidly, dualistically, competitively. We lose egalitarian flexible responsiveness.

Fifth, we can adopt and practice the Indigenous worldview (Tope & Narvaez, 2022). To humble ourselves to the wisdom of the more than human will enable us to learn the ways of responsible Earth community membership.

Sixth, to enable mind shifting in worldview and spirituality, healing interventions may be needed. This will enable adults to enjoyably provide the evolved nest and release their own spirituality, thereby cultivating humanity's innate cooperative nature. We can restore spirit through individual and group ceremony (Macy & Brown, 2014), self-hypnosis techniques (Four Arrows, 2016), and guided psychotropics (Buhner, 2014). Meditation that breaks down the sense of self-identity and replaces it with a cosmic identity (wild mind) may be necessary for the global transformation needed (Hinton, 2022).

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