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An Inner Path to a Truly “Lifelong” Learning:
Insight-Oriented Bodywork

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Introduction

As Aristotle noted long ago, by nature the human being “wants to know.” So we’re all “lifelong learners” already. But considering newly emergent meanings of the expression “lifelong learning” can open up wider issues of philosophical import. One important issue is the ways in which the nature of human “interiority” is given short shrift in our culture’s overemphasis on “exteriority,” in both formal and informal “lifelong learning.” By tradition, the highest form of human “interiority” is wisdom, a subject much neglected by modern philosophers, supposed “lovers of wisdom,” until a recent revival of academic interest in the subject among not only philosophers, but psychologists, and thinkers in various other fields of inquiry.

This paper’s later “Freudian twist” toward “insight-oriented bodywork” illustrates the importance of finding a twenty-first century form of “wisdom” focused upon “inner paths” to truly “lifelong” learning. For only thus can we begin to overcome psychologically, in practice, a disruptive and philosophically untenable theoretical split between “subjectivity” and “objectivity.” Nowhere is that split more evident than in the persistent “mind-body” problems that lie at the very heart of Western Civilization and modern thought. So it will be useful to begin our inquiry into education for truly lifelong learning with a reminder of some things central to the philosophical enterprise itself, where the mind-body split seems particularly acute today—as it also does also in many areas of brain science and psychotherapy.

Part One: A Problematic Usage of the Expression “Lifelong Learning”

A. An Emerging Movement in Higher Education

In America’s long romance with Education, the notion of “lifelong learning” has worthy historical forbears. It brings to mind a progressive American ideal that harks back to Colonial circuit riding preachers, antebellum Lyceum lecture assemblies, the later Chautauqua learning camps, the democratic expansion of practical education manifest in new Land Grant colleges “out West,” the spread of rural Farm Extension Centers under the Depression Era’s “New Deal,” the postwar G. I. Bill for technical certification as well as collegiate education, and the rapid growth of “junior colleges” into “comprehensive community colleges” able to meet

the quite varied needs of the postwar “Baby Boom” generation coming of age in the 1960s, along with numerous “consciousness-raising” groups since then.

In contemporary usage, “Lifelong Learning” has become a current academic “term of art.” It refers to everything from a mélange of “Adult Education” offerings outside regular curricular boundaries, to special interest “continuing education” offerings for adult learners, to ESL courses for immigrants seeking citizenship, to short-term “Career Education” retraining programs for “downsized” or otherwise “displaced” workers needing “updated job market skills,” and to modules for “infotainment” of retirees or “mental alertness” of faltering “senior citizens.”

These varied offerings may be offered everywhere from community colleges to public libraries or senior centers. Colleges and universities have offered empty summer dorm space as “Elderhostels” for older adult “Roads Scholars” who signed up elsewhere for travel to locally focused “learning experiences.” Commercial operators are now getting in on the action. Coffee houses have sponsored “Socrates Café” groups across the nation, while cruise lines offer on-board lectures by knowledgeable guides, in their advertised “packages” for cruise or tour customers.

As an entry in the online Wikipedia glossary site makes clear, these diverse strands of activity in Higher Education are beginning to coalesce into a formal “Lifelong Learning” *movement*. Professors and corporate “learning specialists” are in dialogue about a theoretic foundation for “Lifelong Learning” called “*heutagogy*.” Evidently they are trying to establish it as a respectable, and thus potentially remunerative, new field of inquiry within the area of Higher Education studies. Borrowing from traditional General Education curricula the notion of “learning to learn,” they speak of preparing students for “flexible self-management of learning styles,” to meet the rapidly changing needs of employers in Silicon Valley corporations, computerized government agencies, and Internet providers.

The Internet is already key to an international future for the “lifelong Learning” movement, in our globally emerging “Information Age.” Colleges and universities offer to educators edgy about employment, or hungry for exposure, a new Internet outlet: “Massive Open Online Learning Courses.” Called “MOOC” for short, these courses can be for fee or free. They will serve a wide variety of “distance learners” around the world, along with those who wish independent study.

In view of these developments, it seems clear that the higher education “establishment” is now moving ever more quickly to use the umbrella term “Lifelong Learning” as a powerful marketing tool, for an emerging movement firmly under academic control. In a time of budget crunch after the housing credit crash of 2008 and ensuing Great Recession, the term “Lifelong Learning” has powerful appeal in advertising academic offerings to financially edgy consumers. It suggests that persons worried about keeping pace with the dizzying pace of change in today’s “high-tech” world can find both understanding of what is going on and the information necessary to “upgrade skills” or find new “career paths” geared to

success in today's rapidly changing job market. Educational offerings for retirees and senior citizens faced with questions of personal meaning in later life suggest informal learning paths to personal fulfillment and "giving back" to society. In short, "Lifelong Learning" is used as an *honorific* term. It suggests that customers who enter today's market for informal adult learning are every bit as smart, ambitious and socially conscious as the illustrious American "go-getters" studied in K-12 history classes across the nation.

The foregoing account of the emergent Lifelong Learning movement is sufficient for purposes of the present inquiry. Let us sum it up. Offering a wide variety of courses to "non-traditional students," the Lifelong Learning *movement* helps immigrants to meet citizenships needs, enables adults out of school to cultivate special interests, offers hope of employment to workers who need to upgrade skills, and provides senior citizens with a sense of meaningful activity and a sense of belonging. In doing so, the new movement further extends Higher Education's role as the nationally recognized provider of certified formal and informal education.

Moreover, as the market for informal education continues to expand, political leaders recognize the potential value of a better-educated work force and a citizenry more up-to-date on issues pertaining to national and global problems of food supply, infrastructure, energy needs, and climate change. As politicians they see already the electoral appeal of policies for expanding educational opportunity. In a recent issue of *Time* magazine (10/26/16), President Obama asserts (page 36) that America's education establishment "must prepare every child and worker with education that lasts a lifetime." Clearly, the "Lifelong Learning" movement has arrived. However, there are philosophical grounds for unease.

B. A Problematic Paradox at the Heart of "Lifelong Learning"

The contemporary notion of "Lifelong Learning" presents a troubling paradox. Taken literally, the expression "lifelong learning" connotes a long-term individual learning that continues more or less continuously over a person's lifetime. The term suggests integrating personally meaningful interconnections thematically, into a wider or deeper learning about how to better live one's life. In current educational jargon, it suggests being "on a learning curve" of increasing knowledge. It seems almost synonymous with our everyday notion of gaining "experience," deepening understanding over time, perhaps even becoming "sadder but wiser" with age. Yet in current practice, "Lifelong Learning" as an educational "term of art" connotes a conglomeration of short-term modules, courses, seminars, programs, discussion groups or other "learning experiences" complete in themselves, with no necessary internal connection of meaning, sequential order, or other logical relationship. Moreover, commercially sponsored Internet "meet-ups" increasingly substitute for traditional "face-to-face" meetings in postsecondary classrooms at particular places.

No wonder academic enthusiasts of the Lifelong Learning movement are hard at work seeking a theoretical foundation to unify their new "field" of education! The

varied and variable units of “Lifelong Learning” described are simply what happen to appear on the educational market from time to time, designed, staged, or otherwise arranged by *others*. Rather than being an ongoing growth of personal experience, “Lifelong Learning” opportunities depend upon the scheduling choices of institutions or organizations, or persons with “their own agenda.” At best, educational marketers and other presenters of “Lifelong Learning” units pick up, from time to time, noteworthy themes or interests likely from participants’ typical earlier schooling, common leisure pursuits, hobbies, or current needs to qualify for available or projected future job slots of employers. At worst, “Lifelong Learning” amounts to just another form of “consumerism” aimed at persons who are idle, bored, or “shopping around” for “infotainment” or sociality. Either way, the new “Lifelong Learning” comes delivered to educational consumers by certified or authoritative providers. It is learning delivered by *others*.

C. Pursuing the Paradox to Its Origin: From “Outer” Back to “Inner” Learning

Philosophical discomfort with this contradiction between sporadically delivered and personally persistent learning suggests that we ask whether there might be something else today that better qualifies as truly individual “lifelong learning.” Going on from infancy, it would have to be something both personal and thematically consistent. For starters, two likely candidates are “learning about the world” and “learning about oneself.” But such a distinction is too simple. For each of these can, in turn, be approached from two distinctly different perspectives. There is the “outer” perspective of communication by others of their authoritative or certified learning, about people in general or about oneself in particular. But there is also the “inner” perspective of an individual actively engaged in solving problems of staying alive and creatively satisfying a wide spectrum of personal needs, in an often resistant or intrusive world. Indeed, not the least of our own “lifelong learning” is about ourselves, noticing the differences between how others see us and how we see or want to enact our own lives.

Pursuing inquiry into such varied meanings of “lifelong learning” leads further into very important contemporary questions about the nature of what we call “the self,” in regards to “the inner” and “the outer” aspects of a person’s life history, personality, character, and sense of personal identity. For human “experience” from birth, or even before, develops onward through life amidst the complexities of a human situation structured by early imitative socialization and acculturation, prior to any informal instruction or formal “schooling.” The infant’s very earliest learning is discovery of the difference between one’s bodily needful self and the gratifying motherly breast, of how to coordinate reach and grasp, cry and call, turn and crawl—in short, how to inhabit one’s body, discovering habitual ways to get the “inner” satisfied by the “outer.” For this reason, focus upon development of the more individual or “personal” forms of “lifelong learning” can shed light on the tangle of philosophical and psychological problems about human “interiority” traditionally grouped under our culture’s aegis of the “mind-body” relationship.

In modern Western Civilization, the relation between mind or “consciousness” and body is often seen as problematic, “the mind-body problem.” Or perhaps we should say “mind-body problems,” for there seem to be both epistemological and ontological quandaries, arising from our culture’s Cartesian “two worlds” dichotomy. The supposed “gap” between “material body and “conscious mind” arises from significant misunderstanding of the differences in function between scientific terminology and our “ordinary language” about minds and bodies. Only thus could we get philosophical questions such as the following. How could material bodies in “the external world” ever get into one’s immaterial “consciousness”? And how could one’s own immaterial consciousness possibly interact with one’s merely material body?

To unravel and dissolve these supposed mind-body problems, it helps greatly to see precisely how misinterpretations of “lifelong learning” in various strands of modern Western culture have shaped and defined the apparent “mind-body problems” and their manifold perplexities. The best place to begin is with the work of some more recent modern thinkers who have shown us the way to properly interpret the relationship between “ordinary language” and “scientific terminology,” in a philosophically non-dualistic way.

In the early 20th century “revolt against dualism,” several philosophers saw clearly that the place to begin was to display more accurately the fundamentally *interactive* nature of our “embodied” existence, always “embedded” within surroundings. Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre in Europe redefined the human individual as a “being-in-the-world.” The later Ludwig Wittgenstein and also Gilbert Ryle in England stressed the observable behavioral basis of “mental” as well as “physical” terms implicit in the logic of ordinary language and the “paradigm cases” of language acquisition. And in America, John Dewey interpreted our everyday term “experience” in an *interactive* way that did not give it the subjectivist twist that locked preceding “idealisms” into the Cartesian “egocentric predicament” at the heart of earlier mind-body dualisms.

Unfortunately, contemporary “philosophy of mind” and neurophysiological speculation have failed to adequately integrate the progress of this earlier non-dualist thought into their findings. Consequently many philosophers today still struggle with the difficulty of relating scientific and “ordinary” or “folk-language” uses of terms denoting “mental” and “physical” descriptions of the living human being. They mistakenly believe that there is still a core “hard problem” of relating “conscious mind” expressions in the “first-person perspective” to scientific terminology employed studies of the human being from a “third-person perspective.”

The error here is both linguistic and “phenomenological,” a failure to describe and display supposedly “private” experience in “consciousness” in a non-dualistic way. This paper will use ordinary language in a way that reminds us that we are each an indissoluble unity of “the mental” and “the physical,” as manifest in our everyday

interactions with other persons and an environing “world.” Properly describing this unity in our common experience of “lifelong learning” will provide a useful way to show that persistent “mind-body” dilemmas of Western thought are in fact *pseudo-problems* that need *dissolution*, not genuine problems needing solution. For example, a properly instrumentalist reinterpretation of scientific language and procedure can show that “mind-brain identity theories,” notions of “supervenience” of the mental on the physical, or other recent philosophical stratagems advanced to solve “mind-body problems” are simply unnecessary.

John Dewey based his philosophy of “empirical naturalism” on an evolutionary biological perspective, well integrated with a cultural anthropology of language and thought. He also grounded his work upon a thoroughgoing “instrumentalist” interpretation of scientific procedure and language, found also in writings of psychologist William James. Because Dewey’s fundamental notion of “experience” conforms well to our own everyday understandings, our inquiry will begin with an attempt to display his overall interpretation of the human being’s “experience” and “experiences” as a helpful corrective to current mind-body confusions.

Part Two: Everyday Experience as “Lifelong Learning”

A. The Intersecting “Interior” and “Exterior” Worlds of Individual “Experience”

1. The Human Being as a “History of Experience”

As John Dewey explained in his most important work, *Experience and Nature* (1925), the basic reality of each human life is being an ongoing lived “history” of “experience.” For Dewey, an American Pragmatist, that is fundamentally what we are. Each of us is an ongoing “history of experience.” Perhaps the easiest way to grasp this fundamental insight as a whole is to think of one’s life as a single long day lasting for years, punctuated by thousands of nightly naps called “sleep.” The distinctions between “organism” and “environment,” “self” and “world,” “present” and “past,” “interior” and “exterior,” “mind” and “body,” the “mental” and the “physical,” “conscious” and “unconscious” mentality, are all made by us later, within an ongoing and unfolding history of individual “experience.” In Dewey’s use, “experience” always denotes an *ongoing interaction* with surroundings, not a magical re-presentation in some isolated conscious mental “substance” or “substrate” of sensory qualities conveyed by purely physical excitations travelling from “external object” to a terminus somewhere in one’s brain.

So if it sounds strange to think of one’s life as a single unfolding history of interaction with various surroundings (Dewey’s view), like a single long day punctuated by naps (Sanborn’s simile), perhaps that is because we have accepted uncritically a prevalent but mistaken materialist *story* in our highly individualistic and materialistic society about what human beings “really are.” The “everyday version” of this story goes roughly as follows. What I am is basically a body, the human form I see in the mirror every morning. All the perceptions of persons and

places that mark the moments and hours of my day are fleeting bits of consciousness that wink out of existence as I turn my attention first to one thing, then another. But science tells me they get stored in my brain in case I later need to recall them. When I go to sleep at night, all my consciousness of the world shuts down, though stuff from everyday life may reappear in a weird way in my dreams. When I awake in the morning this daily pattern gets repeated.

As I age and get forgetful, science explains that my brain deteriorates and some of the memories stored there fade and eventually get destroyed. I can't believe that I will run out of tomorrows, so I wonder if religion could be right about a soul that survives death. "Out-of-body experiences" reported on TV suggest that my mind is sometimes separable from my body. But science fiction says maybe someday all the brain waves that store my memories could get downloaded into a sophisticated computer and my conscious mind could survive that way, even if my body is dead and gone. So perhaps my consciousness is really just a bunch of electronic circuits, like they show in pictures of lit-up brains during drug advertisements on TV, sort of like what doctors see going on in EEG's and MRIs.

Lurking behind this rather simple everyday story is a much more complex but equally mistaken version. Its "mind-body" dualism haunts philosophers and is accepted by theorizing neurophysiologists as a practical necessity, in trying to find correlations that will finally show "the physical basis" of thought and memory. Going back at least to the French philosopher Descartes (1596-1650), that "dualistic" story goes as follows. Each of us is primarily a three-dimensional body in space, with the brain coordinating bodily movements. "Secondary qualities" of sense, such as colors, smells, tastes, sounds, and touch, along with "tertiary qualities" such as meanings, are irrelevant to mechanistic laws of "physical science" explaining how the world "really" works. Those sensed qualities and meanings must be something "made up" inside us when excitation from outside the body arrives along nerve pathways at different spots in the brain, which integrates them into the "common sense" objects of everyday life found in one's "consciousness" of the world.

But examining a conscious patient's living brain in surgery, the neurosurgeon finds only "grey matter" and networks of "nerves," not these "secondary" and "tertiary qualities" of everyday "common sense" objects, nor the "images" of one's past experience or imagination, nor one's dreams, wishes, pains, etc. So all these "mental" things must be immaterial, experienced by the individual in a purely private "inner theater" of "consciousness," a kind of ghostly "mental substance" of a "self" not locatable within spatial coordinates of our common everyday world. Physicists, biologists and neuroscientists can study the correlations of brain and conscious experience, while psychologists can study things mental. Leave it to puzzled philosophers try to figure out how to explain the close correlation between seemingly separate "mental" and "physical" worlds, so obviously connected in everyday experience, yet seemingly incompatible in nature.

For John Dewey, however, “experience” does not name some immaterial consciousness separate from a material world. For Dewey, “mind” and “matter” are rough distinctions made later within “experience” by philosophers, to group certain aspects of experience together in a useful way. In “ordinary language” or “folk language,” we just as usefully speak of people, animals, trees and houses—the “common sense” terms most frequently used in everyday life, in modern Western civilization. For their purposes, scientists use the “materialistic” theoretical language of matter and energy, fields and atoms, excitations and stimuli. These concepts prove useful in reporting the results of experiments directed at instrumental prediction and control of whatever proves problematic in “experience.” Newly introduced theoretic terms provide links of “meaning” between what is discovered and programs of further research and observation in the laboratory.

But “pseudo-problems” arise when philosophers or scientists later try to force various experiences of our world into either one or the other of some mutually exclusive set of contraries, such as “mental” and “physical,” mistaking these modestly useful dualities of linguistic discrimination for pre-existing dualities in reality itself. For Dewey, this kind of mistake is “*the philosophical fallacy,*” underlying all formulations of supposed “mind-body problems” and their many putative “solutions.”

2. Experience and Nature

By “experience,” Dewey meant ongoing culturally mediated *interaction* with whatever natural or social environing events surround us as we move along life’s way. By “Nature,” Dewey meant the way in which our “world” or “universe,” or “cosmos,”—whatever it may be, as a unified *whole* “thing-in-itself,” of which we are but *parts*--can be discovered to really “work,” be amenable to our prediction and instrumentalities of control. As “conscious” human beings, we live both embodied and embedded within in a world of human “experience.”

However, as the French existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre stressed in *Being and Nothingness* (1956), we do not experience our bodies as primarily *objects*—for that is merely the perspective on “one’s body-as-it-is-for-others,” the form that I myself can only see fully in the mirror. My “eyes” (a concept used when looking at the other’s “visible” eyes) are not for me primarily observable pupils and retina, they are my “vision” or “sight” or “seeing”—literally, the “ensemble” or situational collection of present things that I “see,” or respond to “visually” in terms of color, shape, size, and personal meaning. And I “perceive” things within “events” of my “present situation,” my current *place* of ongoing lived “experience,” *interacting* with whatever is “out there” to be felt, seen, tasted, touched, heard, or otherwise “sensed.”

In short, each of us is primarily a *lived* body, though one’s eyes can take as “objects of perception” those parts of one’s own body available to the perspectival “field of

vision” permitted by placement of one’s visual organs, within the face that one can only “see” in a mirror. Our subsequent inquiry will begin with a distinction between the “interior” and “exterior” worlds of one’s own experience as a lived body, on a planetary “world” shared with others present at particular places along one’s own life history. For Dewey, that shared “world” would be what our culture has made or understood of this enviroing planet’s “Nature” to be predicted and controlled and used by us, to stay alive and live well.

If we ask of what kind of “stuff” experience is made, for Dewey the answer is that “experience” does not name some one special kind of “stuff” at all. In a sense, the answer is “all kinds of stuff.” Or rather, the experienced “things” or “happenings” or “activities” or “events” we talk about are all *discriminations* that we make within experience during our *interactions* of inquiry, discovery, invention, etc. in the course of *solving problems* met within our surroundings. “What’s there” depends first upon the potentialities of what we have subjected to inquiry, or “taken” as our “subject matter” for particular purposes; secondly, upon the means or *methods* by which we have examined or treated or penetrated into that subject matter; and finally upon the usefulness or satisfactions of whatever “turns up” as a result of trying to resolve “the problematic situation” motivating inquiry.

To the useful or satisfying findings of inquiry, we often give names or descriptions or prescriptions in our language. Shared widely, these findings may become part of that collection of problem-solving lore and tools called “culture,” that we pass on to those around us and save to help future generations. Indeed, for Dewey, the term “experience” is roughly equivalent to the term “culture.” For the “world” we see around us is very much determined by the expectations with which our ongoing experience has been imbued as a result of early upbringing, education, and our “lifelong learning” so far.

In a very real sense, then, our “world” is what we’ve made it, both in familial or wider social groups, or as individuals telling to ourselves or others stories about what we’ve learned. The most interesting questions arise when we run into something we’ve missed, the anomalous or new. Unfortunately, in “our modern world,” we’ve spent so much time on learning to predict, control, and further manipulate things in the “material world” around us, that we’ve given short shrift to things in our experience which are not so easily “handled,” but better “understood.” The follies of private life and the worldwide tragedies of political life today reveal a lack of the self-knowledge requisite for redirecting or remaking the biosocial history called “self,” that functions at the center of all one’s lifelong inquiries to solve problems of living with others.

3. The Interior and Exterior Worlds of Experience

As life *histories* of interaction with successive environments, we are each extended in time. We share some “times” together. But we each live simultaneously in two worlds, *interior* and *exterior*. One’s “exterior world” is made up of what is “present”

but only in part “presented,” to one in lone or shared “experiences,” as the figure/ground “focus,” of problem-solving “attention” that philosophers call “consciousness.” By *an* “experience” is meant perceptual or behavioral *interaction* at a particular “place” along a sequence of total of “life-experience.” We may call that totality of lived experience life’s “journey,” or one’s “lifetime.” For Dewey, *lived human time* reduces to the total sequence of places dwelled in or visited or recalled and reflected upon, in the course of total ongoing *interactive* “life experience.” That is quite literally “where you’re coming from” before “moving on,” to use expressions popular in the 1960s, still in current use.

For Dewey, lived human “time” *simply is* the sequence of experiential “situations” at the successive sites or “places” in one’s growing experience of a “world” traversed in common with others. Time and space are in reality one in “experience,” before their discrimination as distinct (but not separable!) coordinate systems useful in organizing group life, along both a “past-future” and a “here-there” continuum. There’s no time without a place and no place without a time, in ordinary experience no less than in the “space-time continuum” of Einstein’s Theory of Relativity. Whatever may have happened before the “Big Bang” of current scientific cosmology was “sometime before” and maybe “somewhere else.”

We know from repeated experience of *a place* that things or people in it may remain enough unchanged “to the eye” in its larger features that we call it “the same.” But we learn from changes in “familiar places” that the planet and its “places” have their own history of change, paralleling our own growth and changing perception. Changes in environing conditions can make it difficult to find “the same place” again, amidst shifting desert sands or changeable weather at sea. Seen again after long absence, one’s childhood home in “the same place” may look smaller than remembered, due to perspectival change in oneself, from smaller to taller. So one’s “interior world” is in part the growing history of experienced changes in the world’s “places” that one brings to the present situation. It is also a history of individual learning and change, amidst a world of changes in places and changing personal “situations,” even upon return to the “same place” on our culture’s common map.

B. Experience as the Unity of One’s Intersecting “Inner” and “Outer” Worlds

1. Experience as a Path of Life Through the World’s Places

“Getting to know someone” is thus learning what that individual’s *history* is, learning in more and more detail the other’s own “life story” of change and learning. To the extent that we have not shared other’s life journey, that history may seem “hidden” or “inner” or “private” or “subjective”—but is so only to the extent we were not along to share “experiences” with them, to observe or be told or infer the kind of *interactions* being had in the sequence of places where they’ve been. It does *not* mean that their experience was of some disembodied “mental” stuff or invisible “consciousness” or perishable “perceptions.” Rather, “the stuff” of one’s “interior world” is quite literally everything “experienced” or *interacted with* along the

observable *path* that one has taken lifelong through places in the world we share in common. Of course, the specific *way* one was responding may not always be evident to others present in some particular situation. That literal pathway through new or repeated places is one's personal "history" or "life" or "journey." If completed by death, it is one's "lifetime," though people of similar age or "generation" may speak of shared happenings in "our lifetime."

As the Russian poet Yevtushenko said in his mournful poem "People," when someone dies, "a world dies, it goes with" the dead person--one's "first snow...first kiss," all of it goes, from the single developing perspective of a unique personal history of experience. Death ends autobiography, though biography or history by others may continue to report on the life one had lived, discovering and discussing more about one's path of lived experience. But that lived path was itself a unity of experience, of *interactions* amidst the world's places. There are no metaphysical dualisms of the *lived* mind and body, in *lived* time and space, just one ongoing four-dimensional "history of experience."

The purely physiological, neurochemical human being of scientific textbooks is a necessary *fiction* of scientific reportage. It sums up what is known from prior experiences of observation and experiment and suggests what next needs research. As Dewey, Sartre, and the later Wittgenstein alike pointed out, each in their own way, that textbook model of the human being is a merely linguistic tool that is a part of ongoing inquiry only into the instrumental *means* of predicting and remediating the human condition. It works by us making useful discriminations among what is observed, then learning how to predict and control common bodily happenings essential to that functionally *interactive* relationship with our surroundings that we call "living" or "life."

The scientific textbook model is thus not a final report of fixed, ready-made, pre-existent, ultimate *ends* of research, but of *means* that we've discovered to predict and control or prevent abnormal happenings in body or behavior. That written and illustrated model reports the current state of learning, in a way that enables scientific researchers to improve the instrumental means used in their experiments of predicting and controlling bodily processes, for medical purposes. Scientific research is an ongoing *instrumental project*, not a "mirror of nature."

2. Acculturation, Time, and The Past in Learning

a. Acculturation

We must turn now to "memory" and "remembering," essential ingredients of learning, as viewed from a Deweyan pragmatic perspective. Partially available to memory, the stuff of one's "interior world" is given form by one's "nature and nurture," functioning inseparably together. That is, one's life experience, or sequential *interactions* with an enviroing world, has been shaped by the way "instinctive," or "genetically inherited" responses have been given form by various

particular kinds of “acculturation.” These formative influences include early upbringing, learning language, learning cultural habits of everyday “common sense” perception and response, finding out customary ways of loving and playing and striving, becoming familiar with ways to make a living, getting schooled, trained or educated, perhaps being taught to make scientific discriminations in laboratories, and so on.

These many forms of “outer” learning, or socially framed habit formation, are among the most common forms of learning in modern cultures, some of which may continue intermittently “lifelong.” In his later book *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), Wittgenstein termed the experiential origins of such learning the “paradigms’ of the sociocultural “language games” we learn to play in emulating traditional “forms of life,” insofar as we learn to report or speak of them to others (even about things learned silently by mere imitation or solitary experience, as in reporting dreams). Pursued as an abiding “interest” or ‘passion,” some habitually repeated activities may constitute distinct “outer paths” of “lifelong learning,” about “our world’ or “how we live” in it, customarily. What “inner paths” are, awaits discussion later.

b. Time, Times, One’s Past, and The Past

We need first to consider a more highly “individual” or “personal” form of “outer” learning, one that goes on continually throughout life. It is an everyday form of truly “lifelong learning” common to us all. As we grow up, we steadily widen the “interior world” of our experience, not merely by experiencing new situations in various places, but by “recall” or “remembrance” and reflection upon what we have experienced. “Growing up” includes the diverse learning experiences relating to socially shared “time” and “times,” along one’s continuous path of life. One learns that “being-in-the-world” is divisible in memory by recollected patterns of sleep and activity, days and nights, and the procession of seasons. We further learn our culture’s shared daily “clock time,” monthly “calendar time,” as well as the “historical time” of decades, eras, ages, epochs, and the like.

In short, we learn that one’s individual “past” is simply that numerically earlier part of one’s continuous life journey of *interactions* that is potentially present to the focus of individual consciousness or shared inquiry “right now,” in the presented situation. However, because different people have different histories, it is true that they might not always agree on how they define “present situation.” But in fact they share at least the *presence* of each other in some mutually “present situation” of evaluative regard, cooperation, conflict, approach or avoidance, and so forth.

C. The Continuing Existence of the Past in Experience

1. The Mistakenly Supposed “Vanishing” of One’s Past

Because “my past” is a noun expression, people seem tempted to think that noun names a kind of thing, an “event” perhaps, that can vanish, or go somewhere, or “wink out of existence.” Hence there arises, at the very heart of philosophy’s mind-body perplexities, a pseudo-problem about where the past has gone. The problem is not about “the past,” our shared history, recorded in story, song or dance, by inscription or writing, or available through resort to communications media (such as phonograph, film or microfilm, television, and Internet). That repository of information is common knowledge, an “outer learning” acquired by education. The supposed problem here is about one’s “lived past.” It is literally “not present,” so where is it “now”? One can “recollect” it, but where did it “go”? How could something “vanished” pop up again in memory, or be deliberately “remembered”?

2. One’s Past is Still “Back There” in One’s Experience, Not “Stored” in One’s Brain

The way out of this perplexity is linguistically simple. We notice that the “past” means quite literally that which one has “passed,” along one’s path of life experience. It hasn’t gone anywhere, it is always “there,” as part of the single unfolding path of life experience or “history” that one really is. It is “gone” only in the sense that one either has moved to a new place or else, staying in the same place, one has either redirected one’s gaze or else undergone a shift of attention, or perhaps gone to sleep.

The trouble arises only when one mistakenly thinks that the textbook model of one’s body as “really” neurochemical meat, muscle, organs and bone is what one “really is.” But that is just an *abstract story* told by scientists in terms of one’s “body-as-it-is-for-others,” the body observed by physicians and other healers. It is not the “lived body,” the ongoing “history of experience” that one really is. The misidentification going on here is perhaps an example of what Alfred North Whitehead termed “the fallacy of misplaced concreteness,” in the third chapter of his book *Science and the Modern World* (1925). What is concrete and *real* is what we *live*. All else is abstraction, story, imagination, and supposition.

Thus, one’s personal “past” is not some separate jumble of “mental images” from ephemeral vanished “perceptions” that are now “stored” in a bodily form, then reawakened in recall by emerging from “storage” into consciousness, by crossing some imputed mysterious “metaphysical gap.” Such mind-body “gaps” are mistaken *philosophical fictions*, for three main reasons.

First, there is failure to accept that the human body as studied by modern science is at every time merely an institutionally developing instrumental and symbolic medical construct, in some current picture-book or audiovisual report, rather than a final picture of an unchanging reality. “Atoms,” “electrons,” “electromagnetic excitations” and the like are terms that report the results of complex and ongoing streams of scientific experimentation. Such terms report the tentative results of research, not discovery of pre-existing, ready-made realities lying hidden in the heart of Nature. To put it another way, such terms report evidentially “inferred

entities” that exist only within a wider context of scientific theory and its “research programs,” carried out with the instrumental aid of laboratory devices big or small (ranging from “atom-smashers” to “encephalographic monitors”). In short, these “inferred entities” can be said to “exist” only within the context of instrumental measurements or “operations” by “detectors” that seem to “confirm” their theoretically predicted “existence.”

Second, there is a methodological failure to realize that the imputed bodily bases of perceiving (and later remembering), such as “brain processes,” are merely models of medically *necessary* intact conditions of normal experience, not in themselves sufficient conditions of such experience. The *sufficient* conditions must include the entire *interaction* with the *enviroming source* of perceptual “excitation.” To put this another way, the proper experimental “unit of analysis” for vision is of the perceiver perceiving something *already qualitatively perceived*. That proper unit of analysis does *not* begin at the retina or, worse, with final arrival at “Area 13” or some other “brain site” or “network,” of merely electrochemical excitation, supposedly laden with as yet unperceived qualities somehow tagging along ready to be mysteriously lit up in some “phenomenal glow” of perception. In short, one must start with the assumption that, for instance, the human subject properly reports discriminating a “red” apple (as opposed to “unripe” green or “over-ripe” brown). Only then can one reasonably ask what must normally be going on with light of that red wavelength in its transmission to the retinal cells and thence along “afferent” pathways in the brain, prior to “efferent activation” of neural pathways involved, for example, in reaching for the “ripe red” apple to eat.

And third, supposedly “purely mental” happenings such as visual after-images are not ineluctably “private” entities in some metaphysically isolated “mental space.” They are in fact *disturbances* in normal perception. As such, they are in principle “observable” by an ophthalmologist’s instrumentation capable of accurately charting roughly conical volumes of inaccurate response to items within one’s total “visual field.” In regard to “daydreams,” Sartre noted in *The Psychology of Imagination* (1956) that they seem to be “syntheses,” suggesting rapid alteration of attention between two or more particular past visual experiences of some specific kind, in accordance with one’s present intention. Ryle suggested in *The Concept of Mind* (1949) that some cases of perhaps dimmer visual imagination or recall may involve a subtly muscular felt readjustment of ocular focus that he termed “a readiness to respond,” in a way similar to seeing something of a kind previously seen, e.g., a looming or distant mountain. Recent work on “REM” (Rapid Eye Movement) in human night “dreams,” might support such suggestion, particularly if one has observed a sleeping cat jerkily moving its legs and mewing as though running away fearfully in a “bad dream.” To take one further example, a psychotherapy client’s dream report of being in “an enormous room” might stem from a significant infantile experience, back when this adult was tiny and rooms of the parental home seemed proportionately huge. What actual past experiences thematically converge in reported “dream images” can be discovered by careful use of the method of “free association” described by Sigmund Freud in his pioneering

work *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900 German, 1913 English translation). Freud's "psychoanalytic" interpretations were guided by extended and ongoing inquiry into the patient's "inner history" of neurotic life experience. His first psychoanalytic patient was himself, which means that the "analyst" or "therapeutic ego" in his case was his sternly objective "medical self," analyzing his neurotic everyday "social self."

Full elaboration of the three foregoing major points is of course far beyond the scope of our present inquiry into "lifelong learning." But stress on continuities and interactions within the ongoing history of one's experience, rather than distinctions and separations, may help to render initially plausible the unreality of philosophy's supposed "mind-body" problems. That these pseudo-problems require dissolution, rather than solution, will be argued more fully in a more extensive forthcoming work, written from a Pragmatic instrumentalist viewpoint.

3. Solving the Real Problem of Memory: Why Do We Forget So Much?

Suffice it to say here that *the real problem of memory* is not how one could possibly recall to mind a supposedly "vanished" past situation or event no longer present, but why we humans so easily "forget" or "relegate to memory" so much of our past experience in the first place. For this latter question, science has a perfectly respectable answer, in the Darwinian theory of biological evolution. If our hominid ancestors had spent too much time remembering past experience, they would have lost focus upon vital needs of survival in the immediate present. The human species might never have evolved. Sabre-toothed tigers and the like could have wiped out our distracted ancestors, who might also have missed seeing presented opportunities for food, sex, shelter, etc. A Proust, lost in "Remembrance of Things Past," would never have made it, back in prehistoric times.

The humans who survived evolutionary perils did so by focusing attention sharply on present needs and opportunities, limiting remembrance to techniques and strategies of immediate survival. Those who lost present focus became victims in the struggle for survival. The lucky survivors passed on their genes. But the shift from hunting-gathering to farming and herding in guarded settlements, villages, and modern cities began to allow sufficient time for the additional "reflection" required to discover and invent crafts, arts, and sciences devoted to not only life, but a good life.

It remains true, however, that by genetic inheritance we remain sharply focused *primarily* upon only the past experience most relevant to satisfying our present vital needs. So our common cultural inheritance around the globe is education in techniques and instrumentalities directly conducive to survival first, then enjoyment, reflection, and creative endeavor. Many experiences unrelated to present survival focus seem not to remain within the ambience of remembrance. That seems so partly by genetic mechanisms that shape or hone our brains and bodies to sharply present focus, partly by universal cultural necessity to focus

mainly upon learn how make a living from what the earth and society presently offer, while also seeking a “good life.” Doing all that truly requires “lifelong learning,” everywhere on Earth!

4. What Brain Science Really Does in Studying Perception and Memory

We may note in passing that what brain science actually does is to discover the *necessary* conditions of normal perceptual and sensory motor functioning. Neuroscience first locates and then remediates the sources of disturbances in normal cognitive functions (such as memory or regulation of other bodily functions and behavior). As regards visual memory, neuroscience is discovering the *means* or “switching mechanisms,” if you will, that make possible the shift of attention that brings “memorable” past experience back into the focus of “present consciousness.” It is *not* discovering some hidden mentality mysteriously stuffed into cranial “grey matter,” awaiting some magical metaphysical transition from bare electrochemical existence in brain cells into some kind of purely “mental” consciousness of formerly perceived qualities of shape and color.

In this regard it is instructive to consider one early attempt to discover the actual “locale” of particular memories in the brain. We begin by noting that cortical “grey matter” does not have pain receptors. So opening the skull of a conscious patient and probing it with an electrical stimulus does not produce pain. Probing specific discolored and electrical “spike-producing” areas in the cortex of his patients, Canadian neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield found that they produced particular memories associated with the “auras” they experienced before epileptic attacks. So Penfield decided to identify the exact extent of diseased cortical matter to be excised surgically by continued probing around those areas. He discovered that specific probed areas repeatedly produced the same memory-auras, seeming to support a theory of “localization” of memories within the brain.

Unfortunately for the theory, subsequent probing in non-epileptic brains of conscious patients did not produce any particular memories at specific places in cortex. Though contemporary neurology implicates “neural networks” linking different areas of the brain in accounting for the emotional and cognitive aspects of memory, reproduction of specific memories in humans is still unexplained. What Penfield’s two different sets of experimental results actually suggest is that what the brain does is not to “store” particular memories for recall, but to “switch attention” from the place of present experiential focus to a particular past “place” within the patient’s experience-as-a-whole. Empirical support for this “switching” interpretation of brain, during remembrance of past experience, might be gleaned from some future longitudinal MRI or EEG study of brain function of emergent voluntary recall during a particular child’s normal development (currently said to begin at around five years of age, perhaps in association with development of speech). [Wilder Penfield, *The Excitable Cortex in Conscious Man* (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1958) describes the cortical probes and their “psychical responses,” complete with brain photographs and diagrams. The

disappointing follow-up study was by Penfield and Theodore Rasmussen, reported in a journal article.]

5. The Growth of One's Intersecting Interior and Exterior Worlds of Experience

What is most important to note about memory of past experience at this point is that today each of us, in our own way, is growing ever more aware that we are parts of successively larger wholes—from family, to neighborhood, to village or clan or community, to region or state or world, or even to solar system and galaxy, finally to the environing universe as a whole, back to its murky beginnings in a cosmic “Big Bang,” or some repeating cycle thereof. In a way that would astonish our ancestors, modern communications help us envisage daily what's newly discovered about our place in human history, both around the world and in the world's evolution as discovered by science.

As we try to integrate today's spoken and pictured “news” linguistically with what we already know, we may struggle with ultimate questions. We can reflect upon our own human nature and how best to live, in the light of both personal and common “lifelong learning” about one's own individual small niche in “the human situation.” We are each widening our learning about the “exterior” world outside our own individual, somewhat overlapping, and growing “interior world” of life experience—a natural and socially vital “lifelong learning” based upon reflection. Such experiences may become for us the starting points of personal *philosophical* “reflection,” perhaps encouraged by learning from others, who teach us.

Part Three: Philosophy as a Specialized Path of “Lifelong Learning”

A. Athenian Rationalism

Philosophy gets its name from the ancient Greek term *philosophia*, meaning literally “the love of wisdom.” By *philia* or “love,” Athenian philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle did not mean some temporary passion. From the example of their lives, we see that “loving” wisdom meant a wholehearted pursuit of it, a commitment to greater rationality and learning throughout one's life. The wisdom they sought was knowledge of the first principles most essential to living the best possible life, the life of personal virtue and political justice (for Aristotle, supplemented by aesthetic and scientific accomplishment). In their view, such wisdom was not a state suddenly attained once and forever. There might be moments of insight or enlightenment in life. But ancient Athenian philosophers believed, as we generally do, that if wisdom comes at all, it begins to come with age--after sustained “lifelong learning” in persistent dialogue or discussion with others met along life's way.

For theirs was a philosophy to be pursued publically, in the Agora (marketplace, or public assembly), or at the Academy (Plato's gathering-place of students), or the Lyceum (Aristotle's school, at an Athenian “gymnasium”). They found a widening

audience of aristocratic young followers interested in politics and education for positions of leadership. Philosophers offered the idealistic young a more principled approach to public life than the Sophists, paid professionals promising merely personal advantage through fancy use of words in rhetorical debate. Philosophical argument appealed more to reason than rhetorical persuasion by emotional appeal. Philosophy had substance. It sought first principles as the foundation of public discussion or political debate.

B. Delphic Initiatory Mysticism

However, the ancient Greeks did not agree upon the nature of wisdom or how to attain it. The sharpest difference was not between individual public philosophers in Athens or elsewhere, but between the notion of philosophy as rational public converse, and a more ancient mystical tradition. Carved atop a wall fronting the temple of Apollo at Delphi were the words of wisdom, "Know thyself." We find suggested here that the temple is a place of self-knowledge, that there might be "a way" one could follow to attain knowledge of self. For "the many," that meant visiting the temple priestess, presumed wise, who in trance would offer riddles in response to personal inquiries about the future. Indeed, Greek legends have it that one might receive from a priest at Delphi oracular insight into personal tendencies predictive of future unhappiness, as in Sophocles' drama about the vicious failures in virtue that led King Oedipus into personal disaster. But the dramatic dialogue between Delphic priest and suppliant in such legends seems to have been brief, akin to mind-provoking paradox or prophesy.

The ancient Greek "few," however, would know that some temples of Apollo were also centers of an esoteric spiritual tradition. There were "mystery cults" of initiation at some temples of Apollo, supposed to offer valuable personal insight into divine truths. After a period of esoteric preparation, spiritual aspirants at the temple would undergo initiation in a nearby cave, or in an underground temple room. These dark places were understood in Hellenic times to be portals for entering into to an "underworld" realm of mysterious divinities. Under guidance of a priest, the carefully prepared candidate would be led to lie in the utter stillness of inky darkness for a few days in trance, awaiting divine insight in dreams.

Identified by the British scholar/mystic Peter Kingsley as "incubation," the days-long, trance-like initiatory process would involve visionary reincarnation in this life, "dying before dying," and arising to the world spiritually reborn. The priest would offer religiously couched interpretation of the mysterious vision finally dreamt, in an allegorical fashion appropriate both to the gist of Greek religion and to Orphic or Pythagorean mysticism. Spiritually enlightened, the newly initiated one would arise and ascend to lead a new life more in accord with universal divine laws, now seeing the need to help others to do so as well.

From careful reinterpretation of passages in their few extant writings, Kingsley infers that supposedly mundane philosophers such as Parmenides, Empedocles, and

also Gorgias were actually participants in this mystical tradition. It had been carried westward to Greece and Sicily along the Silk Road from India, Tibet, and Mongolia, from its origins in Siberian shamanism. He traces its continuation on through traditions of Alchemy and Sufi mystical practice to the present day. Kingsley finds historical hints that both enlightening access to dreams, exercises in breathwork and seeing through “the veils” of ordinary perception gave initiates unusual insights into human behavior. So extraordinary was this learning, that initiates’ rhetorical powers of influence over others at crucial times might seem “magical” to the uninitiated.

From a modern secular perspective, it is extremely difficult to discern what in ancient magical practice might have “really worked” and how. Speculations about erotic influence, rhetorical suggestion, hypnotic power, or religious “charisma” in a society of strong belief are all suggestive. But for our present purposes, it is sufficient to note here that initiation into the mystical tradition described was only a beginning. It was an experience to be further deepened through continued practical exercise in service of divine ends, refined through “lifelong learning,” in “magical practice.” [On the origins and nature of this ancient mystical tradition, see four books by Peter Kingsley: *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition* (1995, 1996 pb); *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* (1999); *Reality* (2003); and *A Story Waiting to Pierce You* (2010). See also: Donald H. Sanborn, “Peter Kingsley’s Philosophical Mysticism and Mystical Philosophy” in *Sacred Web: A Journal of Tradition and Modernity* (Vancouver, B. C., Canada: Issue 25, pp. 89-125, June, 2010).

C. The Useful but Costly Triumph of Athenian Rationalism

1. Athenian Subversion of Delphic Mystical Wisdom Tradition

In sustained scholarly inquiry, Peter Kingsley argues convincingly that Plato sought at various points in his dialogues to disparage this secret spiritual “father-son” (or master-disciple) initiatory tradition of mystical learning, hoping to replace it with the open practice of philosophy in discussions at his own Academy in Athens. Plato would be trying to replace a lived dialectic of personal transformation with a merely linguistic method of intellectual dialogue. The Socratic dialectic, as presented in Plato’s dialogues, aimed to overcome paradoxes of common belief by merely verbal insight into more comprehensive formulations of ideal truths, at a higher level of abstract reasoning. Kingsley thus identifies two quite different forms taken by human rationality in seeking wisdom, the highest form of human learning.

As an example of Plato’s alleged subversion of mystical tradition, one might point to his famous “Allegory of the Cave” (in Book Seven of *The Republic*). In that allegory, Plato reverses the philosophical import of experience to be found in the darkness of a cave. One seeing only flickering shadows cast upon the walls by insubstantial idols of common experience might find a way outside and be blinded by suddenly seeing the world truly illuminated by the sun. The one thus “enlightened” would feel

morally obligated to descend back down into the cave, trying to turn others around “to see the light” of truth and exit the dark realm of ignorance and superstition. For Plato, escape from the darkness of ignorance is attained by the insights attained through dialectical dialogue by those who are unenlightened, not by subterranean initiation into “divine mysteries” in a process of mystical rebirth called “incubation”

It does seem true, however, that in each of these opposed philosophical paths great insights exact a lifetime moral commitment, to discover the theory and practice requisite to embody and live out, with others, the truth that the seer has seen. For in Plato’s Socratic dialectic, the Beauties of Truth are dialectically one with that which is ultimately found Good. And betrayed by painful lies and deception, most people can be brought to agree that it would be better to live under obligation to seek what is true for all, rather than risk living by the falsity of unexamined opinion. So in Plato’s famous dialogue *The Apology*, we find Socrates defending the life of philosophy against charges of impiously questioning the supposed verities of common belief.

To the assembled jurors Socrates courageously argues, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” That is a principle for which Socrates is willing to die, rather than give up his lifelong quest to improve Athenian life by teaching young to question in public the uncritically held beliefs common among their elders. Thus, despite Plato’s differences with mystical tradition, he and his Delphic philosophical opposites might seem to agree upon one thing: the quest of a seeker after wisdom entails a lifetime moral commitment, to find in everyday life the theory and practice requisite to embody and live out, and thus exemplify for others, the truths progressively discovered in the philosophic quest for enlightenment.

For purposes of our inquiry however, it is of most importance to note Kingsley’s critical observation that Plato and his school nevertheless effectively downgraded the importance of exploring the inner world of trance, dreams and visions as a respectable model of philosophic inquiry. For instance, at the beginning of Book Nine in *The Republic*, Plato presents that side of our nature as an “irrational” realm of beastly impulses, needing stern subjection by intellect and amenable strong emotion, a cultural inheritance further intensified by later centuries of Christian elevation of divine soul over sinful body, with all its beastly or “animal impulses.”

Implicit in Plato’s position is the assumption that even guidance by a priest skilled in allegorical interpretation of dreams according to a comprehensive esoteric view of a cosmos cannot be rational. Plato seems make that assumption because, first, the realm of dreams is itself beastly and hence irrational; and secondly, because the priestly esoteric cosmos itself is partly an allegorical reinterpretation of an inconsistent conglomeration of polytheistic myths about gods and goddesses at the heart of traditional Hellenic religion. However, Plato himself portrays Socrates cautiously making similar use of religious tradition upon occasion, for rhetorically effective acceptance of his own creative mythologizing (as in the *Timaeus* dialogue).

2. The Fateful Split: Outer Learning is Rational, Inner Learning is Not

For Kingsley, then, we find a fateful split between “inner” and “outer” learning at the very heart of the Western philosophical tradition. In terms of the present inquiry, “outer learning” about one’s self is based upon observational or biographical knowledge supplied by or elicited from others, in one’s “exterior world” of ongoing life experience. “Inner learning” involves lone or guided exploration of the historical interconnections, organization, and structure of one’s “interior world,” in today’s world a subject of psychological investigation. As noted earlier, one’s “interior world” extends back from the place and mode of one’s present experiencing back along one’s entire “history” of lived experiential *interactions* with surroundings.

One might say that “inner learning” plumbs the “vertical depths” of one’s life history, rather than the “horizontal plane” of presently ongoing situational interactions with people or things. One’s “present” occurs “someplace” in that portion of our common enviroing world that we have termed one’s personally perspectival “exterior world.” The deepest “vertical depths” of self in one’s ongoing life history of experience would today include dimensions of remembrance much later classified by Sigmund Freud in terms of what is conscious, preconscious, or unconscious. The Freudian “unconscious” includes the visual realm of dreams, that Freud thought amenable to rational interpretation in purely secular terms by psychoanalysis.

But after the Athenian subversion of Delphic initiatory practice as worthless in the quest for wisdom, delving into the “subjective” or “inner” realm typified by “irrational” dreams and visionary experience became seen as an esoteric curiosity, distracting Western thought from rational advancement of human learning. Aristotle’s methodical investigation of not only the basis of ethical, political, and aesthetic arts, but also the metaphysics underlying discrimination of the various branches of scientific inquiry, provided a powerful alternative model of worthwhile scholarly inquiry. It had a widespread impact upon the curriculum of medieval university learning in Europe, adapted from Aristotle by St. Thomas Aquinas.

That systematic body of medieval arts and sciences helped to set the stage for the Scientific Revolution that began to emerge after the ensuing European periods of Humanism, Renaissance, and Enlightenment. Intellectual advances during these periods were encouraged by arrival of retranslations from Arabic versions of ancient Greek philosophy and mathematics from the ancient library learning center at Alexandria, brought across Northern Africa from Egypt by Arabs, then up into Spain during the Moorish invasion.

The victory of Athenian rationalism and its consequent relegation of Delphic mystical tradition to intellectual irrelevance started Western Civilization down the path to valuable “outer” learning in the Roman “*artes liberales*,” developing after The

Enlightenment period into modern variants of the liberal arts and sciences, such as our newer “general education” curricula. Widening greatly its influence by remaining at the heart of modern university and technical college learning curricula, the tradition of liberal arts and sciences undergirds the revolutionary intellectual discoveries of our own times in medicine, engineering, industry, and technology. From a spiritual perspective, however, that extraordinary material “progress” increasingly appears dangerously out of balance.

3. The Price Modernity Pays for the Ancient Suppression of Inner Learning

The overwhelming dominance of “outer learning” in modern culture has come with a price. We see today a massive failure of self-knowledge that has contributed to the terrors of worldwide wars, to threatening social instabilities of global injustice and inequality, and threats to the habitability and very existence of our planet. Nuclear war is threatening, also potentially disastrous climate change, due to worldwide industrial pollution in heedless pursuit of unconstrained “economic growth.”

It is commonly acknowledged that we have mastered secrets of the outer world, but not the inner world. We have not learned how to live wisely, in peace and harmony with each other, because we have not learned how to find that peace and harmony within ourselves. Indeed, the manifold global miseries of our time make a mockery of Modernity’s vaunted ideal of “Progress.” Wisdom seems in short supply globally, amidst international political collapse manifest in worldwide strife, fueled by economic inequality and injustice.

Summing up, we have seen thus far how the path to wisdom at home and abroad requires a commitment to “lifelong learning,” shared along the way with others, for the good of all. Both the tradition of liberal arts and sciences and the more mystical path of philosophy seek to deepen their own ways of integrating new learning within a deepening framework of sustained reflection and related action within society. But the Athenian “outer path” of learning and the Delphic “inner path” require quite different forms of human rationality.

Western Civilization’s lopsided neglect of “inner paths” in formal education is sadly evident in today’s paradoxical appropriation of the term “Lifelong Learning” by the Higher Education establishment, to name a conglomeration of fragmentary and sporadic “learning experiences” by the educational establishment. Increasingly dominant within this collection of disparate offerings are short-term job training curricula, that seem closely geared to the economic requirements of the very institutions that continue to put our “globalizing” technological civilization in such turmoil and peril, visible every night on local, national, and world news reports. Perhaps it is time to reconsider seriously the educational and social importance attached to more truly “lifelong” paths of “inner learning,” leading to the manifestly effective self-knowledge that in everyday life we call “wisdom.”

Part Four: The Modern Basis of Outer and Inner Selfhood

A. Serious Lacks in Dominant Educational Models of “Outer Learning “ About Self

From the start, others may care for and help us, but we are learning to perceive and do as the other humans around us “teach” by example of behavior, gesture, and words. In short, we undergo “acculturation,” learning the ways of living in and sharing a particular cultural inheritance, with its distinctive set of lessons about surviving and satisfying vital needs by interacting with distinguishable others, objects, and happenings. So in that sense, of course, we are all “lifelong learners.” As infants and children we are learning “how” to use language, do things for ourselves, and be part of a family, neighborhood, or community. But from forms of “acculturation” such as parental upbringing, stories, books and mass media, religion and schooling, we are also learning “what” the larger world is like, “where” we are in larger schemes of things, and “how” to deal with that larger world as we encounter it in daily life.

As life goes on, school and religion sharpen our learning, with explanation of the moral, historical, and scientific “why” of things. Formal education from K-12, through college or university, and forms of postgraduate instruction, offer everything from liberal education for life to professional education or semi-professional training for work. Academic counselors use statistically grounded “multiphasic personality tests” and “interest assessments” to give us insight into the kind of occupational areas that “professionals” think we might best fit. But like all the rest, this is “outer learning” about ourselves, from the perspective of *others*. Their interest is producing learners formed to fit smoothly into employment slots offered by technological society’s dominant industries, professions, and businesses.

The overall aim of modernity’s educational project is to keep running smoothly a global industrial machine that views “Progress” in terms of the endless wasteful “economic growth” that underlie major global problems: worldwide resource depletion, international resource wars, massive inequalities of global “development,” and the destabilizing effects of deforestation, desertification, rising sea levels and other threatening effect of planetary climate change in our Age of Carbon Consumption. Rising political rebellions against injustice around the world suggest public recognition of a widespread lack of wisdom amongst the world’s greedy leaders and their sycophants, a sickness at the very heart of modern civilization.

B. Revolutionary Change in Education, for a Radically Changed Society

The revolutionary change needed for wise transition to a radically different way of life requires much than different leaders or tinkering with currently opposed policy options. Radical sociocultural change is needed, but useless without the wisdom to identify and guide fundamental change for the good of all. Need for a new form of mass education is evident, to prepare for wise leadership and citizens with sufficient

wisdom to recognize and follow it. But what thread or theme might connect all our currently fragmented learning into a complete and consistent whole capable of ensuring pursuit of wise ends?

Scholars redesigning general education curricula always run up against this difficult question. For students and their parents will ask, how does all this general knowledge connect with us personally? Helping the student to form a personally consistent philosophy of life by “learning to learn” is not a bad scholarly answer. But academic agreement upon a sound educational basis for such philosophic learning is rare, and may be controversial in public institutions, often the target of religious, ethnic, or racial critique. The deeper problem, as we have seen, is to renew valuation of the ancient search for wisdom, but wisdom adequate to the needs of today’s emergent but faltering global civilization.

Urgently needed is an “inner learning” to humanize the “outer learning” driving an irrationally expansive technological and commercial order that produces worldwide conflict, rather than the international cooperation necessary for global survival in a dangerous nuclear age. The currently dominant model of “outer learning” about self and world needs reorganization, centered upon a lifelong “inner learning” supportive of ethical character virtues aimed ultimately at compassion, universal justice, and global peace. There is thus a strong need for educational curricula redesigned to enable the wise choices that fit that urgently needed global redirection of purpose. We need a 21st century general education for wisdom.

C. Need to Re-Center General Education Upon “Inner Paths” of Personal Learning

The best answer to the cry for a personally meaningful general education follows a path not often openly trod in academe, because of social pressures to fit students into the available occupational slots in dominant institutions, as approved by recognized professional or governmental authorities. So we need a public movement to lift up acquisition of wisdom as a guiding ideal. As we have seen, ancient experience shows that wisdom rests upon “inner learning” centered on cooperation rather than conflict, service rather than greed, liberation rather than domination, respect of freedom rather than power.

The education needed must be based upon providing “inner paths” conducive to outer wisdom in our “exterior worlds,” in the environing sociocultural world that we share with others on our planet. To circumvent the irrational choices producing global problems, we need to enable students to choose more rationally. That means preparing students to better identify irrational personal or sociocultural tendencies at work in their very own acculturation and education. For a more rational choice of future paths requires “inner work” to deal with the powerful emotions associated with our universally “unconscious” imitation of accepted ways. It is some of those uncritically accepted ways that need stern subjection to rational scrutiny and then deliberate personal change of unthinking habitual response.

In short, the urgently needed new approach to education must be based upon showing learners how to understand in personally useful terms the formative influences that have shaped their personal life histories thus far and thereby informed their vision of possible and desirable futures for themselves, in family, community, nation and in other overlapping and interconnected groupings. For in contemporary culture, one's adult personality typically has several deep "layers" of habits: beginning with idiosyncratic familial habits formed in imitative response to parental methods of upbringing, along with family interactions of speech, love, and play; overlaid with early moral and religious habits of impulse control, formative of conscience; then acquisition of the secular "line up, take turns" morality and learning habits of school socialization; along with familial and media-influenced consumer habits of an acquisitive materialistic society; competitive habits of school sports and sexual rivalries; induction into age-group courtship norms; shaping of work, civic and political habits, and so on.

Unsurprisingly, these often-conflicting sets of "virtues" from earlier and later stages of development are imbued with emotional "loyalties" that may make needed personal change itself a source of inner conflict, needing rational examination. So the seeker after wisdom needs insight into the ways in which one's "social self" may in fact be full of conflicting tendencies, requiring resolution before an integrity of self conducive to ethically effective change is possible. In today's world, the "self-knowledge" conducive to wise change of adult behavior requires something like deliberate and determined "archeology" (as Freud put it) to discover the deeper "layers" of self irrationally blocking the "harmony" of motivation necessary for the "inner peace" requisite for ethically effective behavioral change.

The classroom can provide a general introduction to this notion of "inner learning," but the "grit" of interpersonal support in pursuit of the "inner way" of self-transformation is not easily found without serious reduction in class size. As we have seen, an important ancient model for such learning is lengthy participation in a certain kind of initiatory dialogue, requiring individualized impersonal guidance onto and along the difficult "inner path" to be followed. Small groups carefully selected for mutually supportive interaction over an extended period are probably the best that current institutional arrangements and budgetary constraints might allow, for pursuit of "inner learning" in contemporary settings of formal education. It remains to be seen whether the Internet could provide small online "meet-up" groups conducive to the regularity, privacy, and free expression required for the serious "inner work" of personally effective self-knowledge, conducive to wisdom in the long run.

D. The Starting Point of Inner Learning

Though such "inner paths" have been many in history, all aim at a kind of inner *freedom* of some sort. Needed in our crowded world today are paths to freedom from both irrational inner coercion and from irrational expression of unconsidered impulse, couched in terms of guidance appropriate to the times. And these paths

typically begin with what we already have been struggling daily, learning to perceive others accurately and respond appropriately.

We sometimes speak ruefully about “growing older and wiser,” from very personal lessons learned through the many trials and sad errors of daily life experience. Grown older, we may offer personal advice to our children or younger friends about ways to avoid similar errors in their own lives. Might we find in such dialogue, a model for a more sustained personal relationship that offers something like a helpful path to deeper knowledge of self? Might someone wiser offer, to one who seeks it, a helpful start down a “path” of self-knowledge, that one might follow throughout the rest of life? And if so, how might this “inner path” of lifelong learning find connection with what one already knows?

Pondering these questions, we shall find it useful to consider what it is that from ancient times has rendered certain forms of dialogue particularly helpful to individuals seeking to find a rational procedure or “method” of learning to avoid making or repeating self-destructive mistakes thereby to live a more fulfilling life. As the term “method” implies (derived as it is from the Greek word “hodos,” for “road” and meaning “a road that leads by reason”), such a path or procedure must be a matter of reasoned inquiry, along a path of truly “lifelong learning.” As indicated earlier, the best method seems to be an “inner path” travelled in a search for wisdom grounded in a successively deeper exploration of one’s own “history of experience.”

To put it another way, *wisdom* is not a state once and forever attained, it is a *process* of repeated self-discovery and self-repair or remaking of self, in pursuit always of a still better way of living, until one’s final days. Indeed, following a methodical path of lifelong inner learning is arguably the best way to prepare for life’s ultimate end, for a graceful death rather than an ugly one full of “unfinished business,” as regards dealing with inhibited impulses from perennially experienced unresolved personal conflicts rooted in the “depths” of life experience. Seeking one last chance at open expression, such impulses can erupt in a manner self-destructive of a gracious exit amidst warmth from significant others in one’s life. To die well at a natural ending of life requires wisdom.

And it turns out that the most powerful quest for personal wisdom begins with participation in a persistent dialogue with an insightful guide. Even in a “therapy group” one needs a teacher who can help one to learn over time a method of inner inquiry that can become the beginning of a persistent inner dialogue of insightful and personally effective learning over one’s entire life. “Learning to learn” how to follow an “inner path” in this way is a necessary start toward the truly “lifelong learning” that we call “wisdom.”

Despite our earlier report of Peter Kingsley’s critique of Platonic success in subverting an important initiatory tradition of personally spiritual transformation, it is nonetheless true that the victorious Athenian tradition of rationally pursuing

wisdom through intellectual dialogue did in fact help to open up in Western thought the possibility of rationally investigating “the depths” of a person’s lived “history of experience. Though the path from Delphi or other temple of Apollo to modern psychoanalytic dialogue is a long one, there is something very important to be learned from examination of the way in which Socratic dialectic helps us to understand that the “inner space” of personal “reflection” upon the past is not a metaphysically private realm. It is a place full of “voices,” inner voices from particular times--and therefore “places” that we share with others in the situational overlapping of our “exterior worlds,” when we meet somewhere on the planet where we all dwell. And those places can be recalled, if we take the time to do so.

Part Five: Times, Places, and Voices of Silent Reflection in Socratic Dialogue

A. The Inner Space of Reflection is Full of Voices Really Back There, in “Experience”

To the Socrates of Plato’s dialogues, self-knowledge meant continuing critique of the varying opinions found in the public mind, and hence in ourselves, on topics so basic as personal goodness and communal justice. For Socrates, truth was much more likely to be found through interpersonal dialogue than in the heated rhetoric of public debate between unquestioned partisan positions, uncritically acquired. Socratic discussion aimed at wholehearted pursuit of truth, rather than clever or forceful persuasion. Socrates preferred dialectic to rhetoric.

A skilled interlocutor, Socrates sought to help a seeker after truth to question common beliefs uncritically accepted and work toward a more rationally grounded view of the truth (e. g., about what justice is). Through sustained dialogue one might discover how both one’s own opinion and one contrary or even seemingly contradictory to it might both be merely partial glimpses of a larger, wider or “higher” truth. In this way, Socratic dialogue might lead to dialectical assimilation of both opinions on a topic to a more comprehensive view of the truth as a whole. The view of truth thus reached might be sufficient to meet the situational need (e. g., about what would be just in some particular case) that gave rise to the discussion, though not yet be the ultimate truth. Since we ourselves are each very small parts of a much bigger whole, quite limited in personal viewpoint, need for further dialectic on an important topic might well arise again soon and, indeed, throughout one’s life.

B. Past Emotions are Back There Too, Along the Actual Path of Life Experience

Engaging in dialectics, participants were led to see that not only beliefs arising from personal experience, but also internalized family and community moral norms or laws could be subjected to critical examination. Socrates was opening a doorway to our modern notion of “objectivity,” what his pupil Plato mistakenly saw as some impersonal realm of “Ideas” grounded in pre-existing ultimate truth. More importantly, dialectical dialogue in fact also widened awareness of one’s own mind as an individual linguistic “place” of reflection upon experience.

That “inner” place was full of competing voices from family and community sources, both diverse and capable of critical examination, rather than unthinking repetition. And to speak of a mental “place” here is not mere metaphor, for we humans by nature are normally highly visual beings, operating always somewhere at a particular “place,” in a space shared or shareable by others. So remembrance of a conversation or dialogue takes us back at least implicitly, and often explicitly, to a particular time and place in earlier experience, recollecting the faces seen, voices heard, scene encountered, and the associated feelings or emotions had or noticed. Freud’s method of relaxation for free association is helpful in recollecting more vividly the particular voices, persons, and “scenes” (seen places) underlying the quick recall at work in ongoing dialectical examination of longstanding beliefs, acquired from others in one’s past experience.

It bears repeating that a remembered “time” is simply one in a series of recollected scenes or events at successive “places” in an unfolding life history of experience, whether individual or shared. That specific time is a particular place in the successive places visited along the journey that is one’s unfolding “life experience.” Though a “place” can be defined by geographical coordinates on a map, its spatial extent in a particular experience is defined very much by the intention, interest, and focus that brings the person to that general area and guides *interaction* with whoever or whatever is perceived to be in the person’s “situation.””

Again, what we really are is essentially one long day punctuated by thousands of naps called “sleep,” a unitary “history of experience.” The overlaid procession of days and regular seasons that we recall helps to more accurately identify the position of a remembered scene or event, in this more basic memory sequence. Reduced to basic terms, lived human time is simply the series of places one has been, a sequence of perspectival experiences that may not always be remembered fully or accurately. Sundial, church bell, and clock time gets added in only later, as a communal technique required for greater accuracy in sharing memories with others in one’s group. But as we have just noticed, this brief explication of lived human time is way too simple. It leaves out voices, feelings, and emotions.

C. One’s Speech in Quiet Reflection is Subvocalization, Not Ethereally “Mental”

Let us return to the Socratic dialectic. Reflecting later upon a recent dialogue, a participant in dialectic might continue the dialogue internally, without speaking aloud. We call that “reflection.” But one is not born with this ability: it is learned. Let us recall here our own experience in teaching children to read. We first help them to read aloud, as listeners first and then readers, eventually teaching each of them to read silently, “without moving your lips.” In the same way, one might discuss with others what was said earlier to or by others in dialectical discourse, then learn to focus silently upon remembrance of what was said earlier, without actually speaking aloud what was said. Though we could and sometimes do “talk to ourselves” out loud, in recall of what was said by ourselves and others in prior

conversation, we need not, especially if emotional privacy or concern for quietude around resting others is a concern.

Thus is born what we often mean by “reflection,” silently rehearsing in recollection the words that we or others spoke earlier when together. In this way, inhibition of recalled speech becomes “conscious” without ordinarily detectable outward signs, though “a distracted look” may give one away. But that unseen conscious remembrance of speech is called by 20th century psychologists “subvocalization,” an inhibitory bodily process the neurophysiologist could study in further detail. But possibility of a deep phenomenological investigation here is possible also.

Suppose we ask where a person’s words were before they were spoken. The Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky answered that in the child, having learned to think without speaking aloud, there may well be some kind of inner personal “shorthand” going on in silent reflection, abbreviating the sentences of inner dialogue. The present writer, attentive to the personal meaning of dreams, was once surprised to discover upon waking suddenly that, in addition to a visual dream sequence, there was also going on a seemingly unrelated stream of heard speech. Whether this might connect with Vygotsky’s suggestion of an “inner shortcut” available to introspection in silent reflection is intriguing, but uncertain. However, the crucial point here is that this interior “consciousness” has bodily roots both in speech previously heard and in the silence of one’s learned inhibition verbalizing that speech aloud in present reflection.

So reflection is not a “metaphysically private” process, of some purely “mental” kind. It is “subvocalization,” a bodily inhibition of speech, in principle available “intersubjectively” to public investigation and research, and to discussion of introspective experiences of what goes on when one thinks silently sitting before a keyboard composing an essay, or for that matter, perhaps before a piano keyboard composing music. [For a lucid overview and bibliography relevant to development of inner speech, see the 2009 online paper “Private Speech: Cornerstone of Vygotsky’s Theory of the Development of Higher Psychological Processes,” by Peter Feigenbaum, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.]

To sum up, what an attentive listener may learn from a Socrates is to become aware in later reflection not only that one’s own opinion in a recollected dialogue differed from the other person’s, but that one’s own expressed belief had its roots in prior listening to the voiced opinions of family, friends, or political allies. Internalizing the prior dialogue with Socrates in this way, a participant may then enter reflectively into criticism of beliefs earlier voiced by authoritative others earlier in life—exactly what got Socrates in trouble, leading to his trial and death on charges of impiously questioning accepted beliefs. What we have discovered in the dialectical logic of Socratic critique is a model that might be later adapted to the dramatic dialogue between a psychotherapist and a patient, one who needs to look critically at unconscious accepted early beliefs about self and others acquired during infancy, childhood and later upbringing-- beliefs often accompanied by strong emotions that

enforce continued unconscious acquiescence or overt loyalty to others who inculcated them.

D. The Selves of Inner Dialogue: Who's in Charge?

But who, then, was the inner questioner of the remembered voices whose earlier speech was later being questioned during reflection upon prior dialectical dialogue? What participants learned from a dialogue with Socrates was not only a method of questioning, but to identify a part of one's remembering "social self" as a critical thinker, a seeker motivated to seek truth by examination of beliefs, in the same spirit as Socrates. (The "social self" is defined by the ongoing "story" bodily evident in a person's actions and appearance and habits, linguistically reportable from time to time, in the lifetime of lived choices of "direction" in life, by which others learn to identify one as a unique individual.) We might call this inner seeker of truth a mini-self, a sub-self, or in today's Freudian terms, a newly arising "therapeutic ego," aimed at freeing one from acting rashly upon untenable beliefs on important societal topics. But due to the strong emotions of loyalty to family, clan, or city associated with the clamor of inner voices struggling to guide one's behavior, this newly questioning self might not always have an easy time of it. One might feel shame or guilt, for questioning adult authority and commonly accepted ways.

Indeed, entry into the realm of silent inner speech might arise long before one is of age for dialectic, simply from fear of punishment or loss of love for openly challenging or disobeying a parental or other adult person. One might learn to strangle angry speech or emotional outburst, from fear of punishment or loss of love. But that act of "subvocal" inhibition would always remain a part of one's experience, remembered or not. It could become a lifelong bodily habit, until brought to awareness and subjected to critical examination. For each of us is in reality an embodied, ongoing history of experience, or *interaction* with others and the world. Because others are often unaware of one's history, there is added temptation to think of that unknown experience as something essentially "inner," or even completely "private," because hidden from view--at least until that explicit choice of self-disclosure we call "getting to know each other."

E. "Deeper Dimensions" of Reflection Are the Less Easy to Discern and Report

It is thus the case that there are other, more "primitive" *dimensions* of inner learning and slowly "deepening" reflection as we grow up. Harder to discern clearly, those individual dimensions dimly available to "self" are concerned less with topics of public discourse than with exploration of the inner emotional life we each have. That "inwardness" is clearly evident in our internal conflicts about how to live, relate to particular people, or respond to specific situations. In such moments we may reason things out, or under emotional stress actually talk to ourselves aloud. But our inwardness also emerges in the more intensely individual realm of less consciously formed hopes of love and fears of rejection, of imagination or fantasy, of creative expression, and of vivid or vaguely recollected dreams while asleep. But all

of these are of a piece with people heard in places seen, heard and responded to in some past situation or situations of that lived ongoing interaction we term “experience.”

We should note, and perhaps try to become more aware, that all of these realms of inner selfhood have voices and images of significant others associated with them, whether or not one can recall easily the who, when, what, how and why occasions of their present influence. Early influences can be very strong, associated with powerful and primal emotions—but few can recall much of their own infancy and childhood. Lacking insight into these influences, we may find their unhelpful emergence or unsuspected malign effect upon our present behavior “irrational”, hence “symptomatic” of an inner split between what the everyday self believes about its own reasonableness and the reality of one’s own behavior. “Good grief,” we may ask ourselves later, “why did I do that?” And thus we find a mind-body dichotomy right within our own experience.

And so, like the ancient seekers of wisdom at Delphi, we may come to realize that we do not really “know ourselves” fully. Even worse, the difference between expectation of self and what we actually did may point us toward a source of behavior lodged somewhere in a badly behaving body, out of conscious control, hence deemed “irrational.” Unaware of the behavior’s source in a conflicted personal past, we may find it reasonable to speak of “unconscious motivations,” or of “psychosomatic symptoms” such as unwanted blushing, stammering, sweating, “going dead,” or other bodily embarrassments.

One’s consciousness may then appear “out of touch” with its very own body, seeming to lend support to the philosophical notion of a “mind-body problem.” One may then theorize about the relation of “inner consciousness” to its body, a body already mistakenly characterized as the purely mechanical process of textbook science, rather than felt embodiment in a surrounding “world” of culturally shaped interaction with others. But to deal in practice with this absence of conscious self-regulation, one may seek help in dialogue with a trained therapeutic expert. Today we call such dialogue psychoanalytic psychotherapy. But it was not always so.

Part Six: The Many Forms of Therapeutic Inner Dialogue

There appear to be a variety of ancient traditions, Eastern and Western, dealing with destructive intrusions of this less rational inner realm of life experience, sometimes thought “demonic.” Perhaps the earliest therapeutic tradition constituted a kind of healing dialogue between shamanic healer and the person to be healed, full of shared tribal ritual and sacred song or dance, and use of herbal remedies, shared incense, or drugs, to exorcise “evil spirits”—without pinning the blame on family or tribal persons whose threat to the suffering one might, in some cases, be suspected but not evident to the individual or associates. Unawareness of personal history may make one’s behavior seem “mysterious,” hence subject to fearful speculation

about invisible outer sources, in a separate “spirit world,” taking “possession” of a poorly behaving person’s body.

Subsequent forms of dialogue aimed inward came to take the form of practice in mindfulness between priest, spiritual master or “guru,” and spiritual aspirant to “holiness” or disciple seeking “enlightenment.” Students became disciples of Stoic philosophers in “schools of thought” offering sound ethical guidance for living a truly good life. Privacy of the darkened Catholic confessional box is a later version of ritualized yet private inward moral dialogue between priest and member of the faith, as are regular personal prayer directed to internalized common image of deity, or certain dialogues between superiors and novices under monastic “rule,” or perhaps sustained personal attempts at “conversion” to a faith.

However, many people today are disaffected from not only the formal and authoritarian mainline religious traditions of their childhood, but also the self-centered and amoral materialism of our adult commercial culture. Alienated from both prescriptive religion and omnipresent hedonism urged by the marketplace, they seek a more authentic way of life—freely chosen rather than customary. Because their very minds have been shaped by these two dominant influences of Western culture, an anxious sense of spiritual void drives them towards greater inwardness.

Voicing a search for “the meaning of life,” they find the ancient adage to “know thyself” to be a live option. For to change fundamentally requires coming to terms with all those inner voices and familial strictures in the depths of a now rejected past, before new values can take hold and replace the old. And for this task, the ancient model of dialogue between spiritual guide and seeker has proved of enduring value in the task of understanding and remaking the self.

Purveyors of New Age spiritualism find a receptive market for those seeking a more authentic “meaning of life,” in cults advertising initiation into secret wisdom, or alluring promises of occult practice to awaken latent magical powers. Esoteric Eastern practices such as Zen Buddhism and Yoga perennially appeal to those in the West in search of inner meanings, beyond contemporary amoral materialism and what our modern institutional and highly regulated forms of public and communal life offer. Common to these quite varied practices is firm commitment to following some inner path or “way” of awakening and giving new form to “the inner life.” But the quest for inner knowledge most prominent in today’s America today is found in the various secular psychologies derivative from Freudian psychoanalysis.

Part Six: Sigmund Freud’s Rise, Fall, and Current Return from Critical Exile

A. Freudianism in the History of American Psychotherapeutic Culture

Since the 1930s, Freudian plot “twists” or psychoanalytic revelations have become commonplace in recent fiction, drama, and the newer mass media of film, TV, and

Internet, as well as in jury trials and law enforcement “profiling.” But during the 1980s, prior critique of Freudianism by competing schools of psychoanalytic psychology (Jungian, Adlerian, Ego-oriented, Gestalt, Existential, Rogerian, Transactional, etc.) was increasingly replaced by outright rejection of both its theory and practice. Newer approaches derivative from movements such as Comparative Psychology, Behaviorism, Cognitive Psychology, Evolutionary Biopsychology, Feminist Theory, Attachment Theory, and Structuralism tended to replace insight into past causes of current neuroses with various forms of short-term behavioral analysis. These more “cognitive” therapies aimed more simply at identifying self-destructive behavior patterns and replacing them with more adaptive situational behavior modifications, or finding more supportive life situations altogether.

Both rising insurance concerns about cost of lengthy psychotherapy and the advent of new drugs capable of alleviating symptoms of anxiety and depression have led to pressure for quicker forms of treatment, to which some of these newer approaches were better adapted. With rapid advances in neurophysiology and brain science, aided by new instrumentation for study of brain activity, and experiments purporting to show that consciousness reported rather caused brain activity, there seemed promise of a purely materialistic brain psychology. Perhaps dreams had no personal significance, were simply the brain discharging the day’s unused excitation. Maybe newly discovered drugs and short-term behavioral advice could replace the time-consuming process of psychoanalysis. Perhaps prescriptions might even be tailored to fit the increasingly affordable information of individual genetic heritage.

Ironically, however, very recent work in brain research is now finding it plausible that there may be brain processes that support Freudian claims about specific unconscious psychological processes. With the advent of “real-time” knowledge of brain function from EEG, MRI and other instrumentation, researchers can study not only afferent perceptual and cognitive processes but also their associated emotional arousal and the jointly efferent behavioral output. There is optimism that at last we are on the verge of bridging the infamous theoretical “gap” between conscious mind and physical body. There is hope that discovering in practice a set of correlations that permit a combination of chemical treatment and behavioral adjustments capable of dealing with the full spectrum of psychological disorders, from anxiety and depression to psychosomatic illness and psychosis. [Kat McGowan, “The Second Coming of Sigmund Freud” (*Discover*, April 2014, pp. 54-61); Casey Schwarz, “Tell It About Your Mother: Can brain-scanning help save Freudian psychoanalysis?” (*The New York Times Magazine*, June 28, 2015, pp. 38-43, 69, 71, 73, and also, Peter Andrey Smith, “Gut Feelings: How the rich array of bacteria in our intestines may be affecting our mood,” pp. 44-49, 68); Moises Velasquez-Manoff, “When the Body Attacks the Mind” (*The Atlantic*, July/Aug. 2016, pp. 88-92.)

Unfortunately, both the adaptive behavioral therapies and the drug-oriented neurological approach to psychological maladies share a crucial lack of attention to the lived body. That lack is also a major shortcoming of traditional psychoanalytic therapies, which overemphasize dialogue over more extended periods of time. The

common remedy requires renewed attention to Freud's key concept in the etiology of mental disturbance or illness: repression. Cathartic talk, situational behavior modification, and medical therapies all need something more to be most effective in the quest for inner freedom from long-repressed conflicts. The need is for insight-oriented bodywork, as an essential component of the lifelong learning required for true inner freedom from the neurotic distortions of perception and response that continually disturb personal relations and public behavior. Making this thesis plausible requires a more formal, theoretical approach, to the kind of "inner" lifelong learning under discussion. But first it is necessary to recall briefly what Freudian psychoanalysis is all about.

B. Brief Sketch of the Development of Freudian Psychoanalysis

1. Origins of Freudian Psychoanalytic Technique

Founding psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud discovered from self-analysis based upon "free association" that interpretation of dreams was "the royal road" to healing neurotic tendencies. Lying quietly on a couch in a darkened room, a patient would report dreams for Freud to interpret in the context of the patient's reported history of neurotic difficulties in everyday relationships. Over an extended period of time, running in some cases to years, the patient would acquire insightful self-knowledge about long-standing patterns of personally self-destructive behavior. In a successful psychoanalysis, the intertwined insights attained over time would enable the patient to avoid repeating those patterns and find ways to engage in more pleasurable relationships.

For Freud, a Viennese physician, the new life to be thus enabled would best be characterized as "*lieben und arbeiten*," to love appropriately and also to work. In the best case, the patient would find ways to help self and others find more pleasure and less pain in life. In his later years, Freud pondered the possibility of psychoanalysis being "terminable and interminable," continuing throughout a patient's life, as it had in his. Perhaps after working with a psychoanalyst for a few years, one could become a self-analyst. The patient, or "analysand," might use an internalized psychoanalytic framework over a lifetime, becoming a self-analyst as Freud himself did. The patient would continue learning how to see and react to others as they are, freely and without perception distorted by old grievances from very early in life. Acquiring and refining highly personal knowledge of this "inner" kind through the years would be a form of "lifelong learning" truly worth pursuing.

2. The Theoretical Basis of Psychoanalytic Procedure

The fundamental insight underlying Freudian psychoanalysis is that most important sequences of human remembrance exhibit themes of emotionally charged events, entwined with memories of interacting with successive "significant others," loved or hated. These themes or emotional patterns he found associated with crucial early traumas or other events much earlier in one's ongoing emotional development,

emerging repeatedly as life goes on. Freud used the term “complexes” for these psychological themes arising from “constellations” of significant others in early family life. An analyst might discover these complex habits of emotional interaction operating in later neurosis, by inference from analytic observations to the particular “mechanisms of defense” employed by a patient.

Often formed so early in experience as to be beyond the reach of voluntary adult recall, these so-called “unconscious” psychological mechanisms defended against powerful emotions felt too overwhelming, threatening, or dangerous to be given conscious expression, in conflict-ridden situations experience back during infancy or childhood. Felt self-destructive of pleasurable relationships, recurrent manifestations of these inhibitory “mechanisms of defense” against old feelings of emotional conflict in similar situations might be reported to the psychoanalyst as neurotic “symptoms” needing therapy.

As Freud noted concisely in his little book *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930) our civilized living has its own “discontents,” from both outer and inner conflicts. Some of our inner conflicts as adults are unusually severe versions of a “universal neurosis” arising from developmental conflicts during infancy and childhood. For living together in all cultural groups requires that the young learn early to “renounce” some bodily possibilities of expressing aggression and erotic impulses, during successive “stages” of civilized development.

Briefly, the Freudian stages of instinctual renunciation in Western culture are weaning, toilet training, and giving up wishful competition with the parent of the same sex for exclusive erotic possession of the parent of the opposite sex (the male Oedipus Complex and female Electra Complex). For the young must learn habits of independence, cleanliness, and cooperation requisite for continued harmonious survival of successive generations together within society. Idiosyncracies in acquiring the requisite but resented instinctual renunciations may lead some, amidst the later tumult of adolescent maturation or young adulthood, to relive early conflicts in “symptomatic” way painfully disturbing personal relationships essential to adult maturity within society. In our culture, these “neurotic” persons may find need and opportunity to embark upon “inner paths” of “lifelong learning,” such as those of psychoanalytic psychotherapies.

For those inclined to philosophical dualism, the Freudian notion of defensive “repression” of infantile or childhood conflicts into an unobservable “unconscious” realm of continued psychological disturbance may appear as living evidence of a “mind-body problem.” Unavailable to preconscious or conscious recall, these hidden disruptors must seem to inhabit some location of banishment within the physical brain, awaiting inexplicable crossing of a supposed metaphysical gap back into mental “consciousness.” To deal with this problem requires a theoretical discussion that focuses upon a serious problem with psychoanalytic theory itself. It fails to take account of an evident bodily basis of psychological “repression” outside of the brain itself.

Part Seven: Bridging the Mind-body gap in Therapeutic Practice

A. Two Opposite Approaches in Psychotherapy

The most important question in psychological theory is how people change. The most important question in psychological practice is how to facilitate therapeutic personal change. Consistent with the two dominant opposing positions of idealism and materialism in Western philosophy, one may find in psychological practice a corresponding polar opposition between two main kinds of therapy for the client with symptomatic behavior correctly diagnosable as psychological rather than medical. We may call these two opposite approaches the psychodynamic and the physiological. (In physics, dynamics is the study of forces putting material things in motion, whereas psychodynamics is the study of inner forces that move the individual person to behave in one way rather than another.)

B. The Psychodynamic Approach

Freudian psychoanalysis and various psychotherapies (those of Jung, Adler, Erikson, Rogers etc.) are recent paradigms of the psychodynamic approach. As forms of “talk therapy,” their aim is inner freedom through analytic “insight.” By analysis in dialogue with the client, one assists that person to become aware of unrecognized conflicting forces that underlie bodily expression of symptomatic behavior. Once brought to awareness, these previously “unconscious” motives become subject to conscious control, through formation of new habits of response in situations of the kind that have been giving rise to symptoms. As Freud said, “Where Id was, there shall Ego be.” We may recall here an ancient form of the psychodynamic approach found in the relationship between a spiritual master and a candidate for initiation, seeking insightful “enlightenment” that will free the spiritual aspirant from attachment to those everyday ways of seeing the world that limit action to merely selfish aims.

C. The Physiological Approach

Chiropractic, Osteopathy, and other postural therapies (Alexander Method, Structural Integration, etc.) are recent paradigms of the physiological approach. While client talk may guide the practitioner to focus upon particular areas of client physiology felt problematic, the aim is not insight but corrective manipulation or guided readjustment of the client’s body by the therapist. One assists the client to achieve a posture that permits more “normal” function, free of muscular rigidities or postural distortions that inhibit “natural” movement that is comfortable or graceful. Yoga, Tai Chi, hypnosis, and “charismatic cures” are more traditional forms of this approach, in which guided activity or the power of suggestion renders readjustment of one’s bodily attitude or function subject to the authoritative direction of another. The corrective is from “outside,” without necessity of “inner insight.” Most ancient of all these physiological approaches is massage, or “loving touch,” for comfort,

relief, or relaxation from stress. A mother's soothing care of her infant is the archaic model here.

D. The Respectively Opposite Flaws of These Two Limited Approaches

Both psychodynamic therapies and physiological therapies are limited in effectiveness because they are partial, rather than wholistic ("holistic," today). In psychoanalytic "talk therapies," Freud's notion of "the unconscious" lends itself all too easily to the mistaken notion of a central mental process of impulse "repression" located "in the head." A practitioner may then assume that insightful dialogue alone can complete the emotional catharsis and abatement of symptomatic expressions of inner conflict. Absent here is recognition that childhood "repression" of emotions in threatening situations involves localized bodily inhibition of impulses to cry, yell, scream, bite, hit, kick, excrete, or touch erotically. A single traumatic situation may be enough for a bodily habit of repression to form in infancy, long before there is a social self or "ego" sufficiently aware of what is happening to enable later voluntary recall and verbalization of what occurred. Hence years of insightful Freudian dialogue may be of little use in undoing the characteristic bodily tensions, rigidities, or postural distortions that can result from such early experiences. In short, psychodynamic therapy fails to focus on specific measures able to undo the localized bodily tensions arising from long unconscious inhibition ("repression") of emotions or impulses initially felt overwhelmingly threatening.

Physiological therapies aimed at relief of aches and pains from bodily tensions or misalignment suffer from the exactly opposite flaw. Using hands-on manipulation or guided exercises directed at releasing tensions identified at particular places in the client's body, physiological techniques tend to ignore the history of long-standing conflicts indicated by any underlying emotions or feelings that may surface during or after the therapeutic session. As a result, such therapies may miss completely the deeper origin of bodily discomfort, in unaware habits inhibiting emotion or impulses long ago found threatening. Lost thereby is the chance of understanding clearly the highly charged emotional situation that originally gave rise to a client's characteristically clenched jaw, constricted breathing, pelvic rigidity, or warped posture. Lacking insight into the reasons why bodily therapy has released tensions or ameliorated anxiety, the joyful client will likely discover that the relief achieved is only temporary, as old postural habits unconsciously reassert themselves amidst the habitual tensions that may arise again in recurrent conflict-ridden situations of daily life.

E. Accidental but Merely Temporary Success Possible in Both Kinds of Therapy

To be sure, an unusually inquisitive or empathetic physiological therapist may "pick up on" the deeper emotional meanings of feelings expressed by a client in the immediate or following therapeutic situation, and perhaps communicate to the client about these. But without formal commitment to helping the client place these embodied meanings within the framework of an ongoing narrative aimed at insight

into what is going on emotionally, symptomatic relief will likely be episodic and temporary.

Similarly, a gifted psychotherapist may note and mention bodily tensing or other inhibition observed during report or discussion of a client's ongoing history of emotional problems. But without techniques of deliberate intervention to release the deeper muscular blockages of function, insightful talk alone is unlikely to bring about anything more than passing release of tension or relief of anxiety from the emotional conflict underlying symptomatic behavior. Truly "working through" the conflict requires something more than alertness to situational cues that trigger problem-ridden responses of long habit.

Given that the psychodynamic and physiological approaches to therapy of embodied symptoms each lack what the other can provide, the obvious move is to combine them. Regrettably, the dominant approach currently is for insurers to minimize reimbursements for treatment by limiting the number of covered visits and making the therapist into a pill prescriber. Recent studies show that many of the pills prescribed are little better than placebo in merely relieving symptoms of anxiety or depression, making the client into a "pill junkie" profitable to the drug-makers.

However, the more important underlying issue here is about short-term symptomatic relief, rather than attempts at more lasting cure. To be sure, there is something to be said in favor of "triage for the walking wounded," in providing temporary relief. But there is a fundamental difference in principle between providing a profitable "quick fix" pleasing to the therapist's self-esteem and to insurers, as opposed to working on deeper issues of more lasting satisfaction to the patient client.

This being so, the following discussion proceeds on the assumption that if a practitioner is to see a client for some number of sessions, however limited, the best hope for lasting relief of symptoms is a synthesis of the psychodynamic and physiological approaches. We may call this combined approach "insight-oriented bodywork," or "insightful bodywork" for short.

F. A Sketch of The Theoretical Framework of Insight-Oriented Bodywork

Sigmund Freud analyzed "transference" to the psychoanalyst of the client's unconscious attitudes towards parental authority figures of infancy and very early childhood. Freud's maverick disciple Wilhelm Reich focused analysis more upon the defensive bodily "character armor" by which the client was "repressing" those infantile attitudes. But it was Reich's disciple Alexander Lowen, MD whose "Bioenergetics" psychotherapy made the decisive turn toward an "insightful bodywork" based fully upon analysis of all the muscular tensions in various bodily areas (face, mouth, jaw, throat, diaphragm, abdomen pelvic region, gait, posture, etc.). These tensions can reveal how the client stifles meaningful present "contact" in a way symptomatic of emotional or mental illness. Lowen's works describe how

not only how illnesses such as schizophrenia and depression, but also more common maladies such as lower back pain, arthritis, and postural deformities, may be rooted in habitual inhibition of impulses felt unacceptable by loved or feared authority figures during infancy and childhood. [See for example: A. Lowen, *The Betrayal of the Body* (1967), *Depression and the Body: The Biological Basis of Faith and Reality* (1972), and *Bioenergetics* (1975), among other works.]

Emphasizing the way in which healthful “contact” with people and world was typified by unconstructed organic pulsations (heartbeat, breathing, etc.), and by corresponding freely streaming “waves of excitation” throughout the body, gave Lowen’s techniques a grounding in the biology of bodily energy flow—hence his term “bioenergetics.” Lowen could then describe mental or psychological illness in terms of the bodily locations and muscular means by which this free flow of excitation had become constricted, rendering the client “out of touch’ and “dispirited.” Therapeutic technique then centered upon interpretive dialogue and correlative bodily exercises designed to restore “vibrant” situational “contact” and the grace of a spirit free to respond, in harmony with all that surrounds.

Part Eight: The Educational Task Ahead

Those who come to psychoanalytic therapies often do so in early adulthood, free of the “dysfunctional” childhood home and family in which the seeds of later neurotic conflict were planted, blossoming forth again in fumbling adolescent relationships and in repeated experience finally becoming sufficiently troublesome to warrant the time and cost of treatment. But ideally, the ability to become more “inward” should begin in childhood, with parents psychoanalytically aware enough to encourage more openness and understanding about feelings and emotions than many of us encountered in our families of origin. Young children still have the naïve honesty of expression and curiosity to begin habits of candid discussion that could lay an early foundation for inwardly analytic reflection and participation in later therapeutic group disclosure and discussion. Moreover, their relatively free and playful bodily expression of emotions could be encouraged in a way preparatory for the exercises in bodily recovery of forgotten feelings described in the “bioenergetics” books of Alexander Lowen and other practitioners of “insight-oriented bodywork.”

Unfortunately, many parents today are totally focused upon preparing young children to be precocious learners who will have “outer learning” skills so superior that they will be guaranteed acceptance in elite college programs upon graduation from high school, thence made ready for induction into the limited number of interesting and well-paid employments still available in our rigidly competitive, “dog-eat-dog” economy. The only remedy is a deliberate public attempt to educate parents about the pressing need to bring up a new generation with the inner harmony and peace to participate in public affairs with wisdom, to make the more cooperative choices necessary to ensure a more harmonious and peaceful world in the long run. Because the need is worldwide and the Internet provides one possible

means, such a program of “consciousness raising” could and should become truly international.

But that effort to lift up wisdom as the global aim of a reformed educational system, compatible with more thoughtful and ethically aware guidance of technological society’s major institutions, depends upon first having worked out a new set of “wisdom “virtues” consistent with a central focus upon making the quest for self-knowledge one’s “second nature.” For this purpose, Tom Lombardo’s new book on an integrated set wisdom virtues formative of ethical and practical “future consciousness” seems a ready-made starting point. [Thomas Lombardo, *Future Consciousness: The Path to Purposeful Evolution* (Winchester, UK: Hunt Publishing Co., Changemaker Books, due in early 2017). Accepted for publication in the Fall 2016 *World Future Review*, Lombardo’s short paper summarizing the book’s argument is available now in the Oct.16, 2016 online edition of his “Wisdom and the Future” website of “The Center For Future Consciousness & The Wisdom Page.”]

Lombardo’s emphasis on becoming aware of how we construct and can reconstruct the implicitly future-oriented “inner stories” by which we live is one logical point of connection with the therapeutic method of “insight-oriented bodywork” described above. For the unrecognized self-destructive elements in one’s innermost “story” of “social self” are often at odds with the “official story” by which one dramatizes oneself in everyday interactions with others. Only by becoming aware of the bodily emotional inhibitions underlying “inner stories” destructive of one’s freedom to make rational choices among possible future paths can one become free to engage in behavior more conducive to an optimistic future for self and society.

Finally, there is need to work out the actual curriculum and instructional techniques appropriate to a truly “inward” educational process. This work must include methods of selecting students compatible for small group “inner work” parallel to ordinary general education coursework. In addition, there is need to find a college or Internet venue willing to restructure four or more years of learning and support services adequate for a “trial run” or “demonstration project” of the kind needed. Lastly, there is need to think through in detail the selection and appropriate preparation of faculty and discussion leaders with suitable qualifications for this vision of an thoroughly reformed general education, reorganized around the ideal of a truly “inner lifelong learning,” that keeps mind and body working together harmoniously, in a quest for inner and outer peace, worldwide.

