

A New Cortesian Worldview

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The changes which are sweeping over Earth can no longer go unnoticed, for what the world is witnessing is the unfolding of a significant and dramatic historical event --- a cultural transformation affecting all of Earth. Indeed, the rapidity in which change is sweeping over Earth boggles the consciousness and leaves one grasping for some reference point from which to comprehend it all. But the fact is, both humanity and nature appears to be caught in some sort of limbo while the fate of Earth is being weighed in the balance of an obvious worldview shift.

My intent in this essay is to do something which has been cleverly, if not unconsciously, overlooked by every "new age" thinker, be they philosopher, scientist, educator, statesperson, or lay citizen. My task is to give our impending new worldview a name and to validate the premise for this name by comparing what I call its "essence" with some of the progressive thoughts and research of a number of scientists, social philosophers, among other well-established new age proponents. Admittedly, I have a personal bias towards the name of our new worldview, not because it is a name discovered in history which resonates deeply within me, but because it reflects the intense yearning over a number of years of my life, beginning with the inner turmoil and discontent over existing worldview beliefs and finding relief through years of contemplation, meditation, exhaustive research, and finally practical application of its underlying principles.

But the urgency at hand, if not the absolute necessity, to reify our new worldview goes far beyond any personal need. The fact is, over the past twenty years a host of revelatory new insights about life has created somewhat of a skeletal framework for a whole new belief system, while standing right next to it is the entrenched, expansive infrastructure of an old familiar worldview, that of the Cartesian model which, for better or worse, is being shaken-up down to its very foundation. Like dedicated sub-contractors working on a huge project, hosts of scientists, environmentalists, philosophers, social theorists, psychologists, and concerned citizens are bringing their materials to the building site of this new worldview, but my gut feeling is that each one is silently asking themselves the same question: "But what do we call this thing?"

Speaker after speaker at conference after conference express their excitement at the emergence of a whole new way to view life, but they never name that view. Over and over again there is talk about the old Cartesian model of male-dominance, exploitation of nature, women, and cultures, the mechanistic interpretation of life, the glorification of the rational, and the separation of mind from matter at the expense of the spirit, but this old model is not put into perspective by naming the new model. There is the familiar hailing of a new age of peace, cooperation, equality, wholeness, spirituality, and ecological responsibility all of which seem to be rising up out of the midst of disdain for rabid technology, greed, insensitivity, and over consumption, but there does not appear to be one word which embraces and enfolds these new age characteristics. Finally, we are presented with

concepts like Deep Ecology, the Gaia Hypothesis, Ecofeminism, the Green Movement, Chaos and General Systems Theory, Bioregionalism, among many others. But my sense is that these important and viable concepts are like code words which allow the master planners of our new worldview to talk among themselves, periodically recruiting the acceptance of many millions of new age people who are predictably starved for a common reference point upon which to base their devotion. The fact is, as architects and builders of this beautiful new worldview, we have done a splendid job of *not* naming it, and thus have unwittingly shown to those entrenched Cartesian holdouts --- military leaders, totalitarian leaders, corporate leaders, abusive males, the technological purists --- that, as a bunch of idealists "in process," we are simply another historical resurgence of an old familiar pacifist, effeminate energy which will ultimately settle down into the mediocre pattern of cultural evolution after we momentarily whine about not getting our fair share.

The truth, however, and we all know it, is that something *is* afoot in the minds and hearts of millions of people, and that something is much greater and more powerful than we, or even any Cartesian holdouts, can ever imagine. That something is more than a worldview, it is a new ***Earthview***. It is more than a self-serving view, it is a *compassionate Lifeview*. It is more than the common view of the common person. It is a ***noble view*** of the nobility within every species on this planet. In short, that something-afoot is a view from within the wisdom of our conscience, the knowing that the existence of every piece of matter on this Earth is important, and for that reason, and that reason alone, built into the infrastructure of every relationship must be the necessity of respect .

OUT OF OUR WOUNDEDNESS

As a psychologist, I cannot deny the pain I feel in others. As a human being, I cannot deny the pain I feel within myself. This is the only age in history in which the wounds of women, children, animals, the natural environment, and native cultures are not only owned by themselves, but are brought into the consciousness, and thus ownership, of every person who has access to the well of media technology, or to the heart of their conscience. The co-ownership of what Gandhi calls the "seven ills of society" has created a radical shake-up of global consciousness and conscience. There can be none other than a feeling of pain *and* outrage when viewing the immoral form of commerce at work in the deforestation of the Earth's tropical and temperate rainforests, or in the "business as usual" attitude of oil spills or toxic waste dumps. There can be none other than a feeling of pain *and* outrage when viewing the unprincipled practice of politics which allows the homeless, single-parent women, and starving people/children of third world countries to become pawns in military/male dominating societies. And on and on and on.

Clearly, it would appear that the intense amount of energy being generated within the development of a new worldview has a lot to do with these personal and intrapersonal perceptions of unwarranted woundedness and righteous anger. As Marilyn Ferguson so aptly put it a decade ago in her **Aquarian Conspiracy**, people are attempting to seize "the control panel of change," and thus, living in the "change of change," are literally taking to heart Thoreau's charge, "Let your life be a friction against the machine." But at the heart of woundedness, amongst the pain, anger, rage, shame, denial, blame, and ultimately, personal ownership of it all, must come an overall strategy for healing. And if anything, our new worldview is more about healing common wounds than it is about creating vicious ways to lash out at and subvert those aspects of the Cartesian worldview we disdain. In 1980 Marilyn Ferguson suggested that the movement afoot at the time was apparently leaderless, without a master blueprint for emergence, and had not a single universal strategy. At the dawn of the 90's now, even though wonderful concepts such as Deep Ecology, the Gaia Hypothesis, the Green Movement, among others have brought more focus to the issues at hand, Ferguson's insights may still be relatively valid.

Obviously, the most outspoken strategy at hand seems to be centered around building, but building what beyond the fact that we know it to be a better worldview? Concerning this question or task, Maria Montessori has written: "What are we going to do? Will no one sound the trumpet to awaken man who is lying asleep on the ground while the earth is making ready to engulf him? We must prepare men for the new world which is spontaneously building around us as a phenomena of evolution; we must make them conscious of the new life which is coming about, in order that they work for it." In a more focused edict, the poet and outspoken environmentalist, Gary Snyder has stated, "Master the archaic and the primitive models of basic nature-related cultures---as well as the most imaginative extensions of science---and build a community where these two vectors cross." And the respected naturalist-philosopher, Loren Eiseley has suggested that by successfully re-entering nature this time from humanity's cultural world, perhaps man/woman will create a third world dream which combines elements of the original two and which brings closer the responsibilities and nobleness of character.

Perhaps one of the major characteristics of our new worldview, then, would appear to be an emphasis on building qualities related to interrelatedness, interdependency, interconnectedness, and partnership at all levels of existence. More than anything beyond the obvious exercise of our greed and unchecked technology, the 80's taught us that we are all in this thing on Earth together. Thus, we have become acutely aware of the ramifications of our "global" village lifestyle, politics, economics, and any corresponding effects on other cultures including, most importantly, the natural environment which makes up the totality of the living organism Earth (Gaia). Part of the deep need, therefore, to heal the incredible sense of woundedness which surrounds Earth's cultures, natural environment, and other species is to come into right relationship. M.C. Richards has been able to state this need for deep interconnectedness beautifully in her book, **The Crossing Point**, in which she says, "One of the

truths of our time is this hunger deep in people all over the planet for coming into relationship with each other. People are hungering and thirsting after experience that feels true to them on the inside, after so much hard work mapping the outer spaces of the physical world. They are gaining courage to ask for what they need: living interconnections, a sense of individual worth, shared opportunities . . ."

I have a passion for our new worldview, and I have a deep compassion for knowing that its underlying foundation or essence brings this wounded Earth back into connectedness. Surely, it is this need for interconnectedness, or what Riane Eisler calls "partnership," which bonds people to this new Earthview. But meaningful relationship in and of itself just does not happen as a matter of chance. Rather it is a choice, and it is a choice that must come from a clear vision, not merely within the mind, but from within the heart. As the Greek novelist, Nikos Kazantzakis suggests, "The new earth exists only in the heart." It is thus that people's deep yearning today is to find heart-felt reflective meaning in life that restores a sense of dignity to it, and they want to discover this dignity in a new vision of Earth --- beneath the skin of nature, beneath the mind of humanity.

I know of no better word to describe this deep sense of desirable respect than that of **reverence**. It is in reverence that people want to inhabit this "new earth." They want to feel it breathe and to inhale its breath; touch its countenance and be touched in return. They want to know that life, be it man, woman, child, animal, plant, mineral, in whatever form, is given a chance to feel and inhale its own breath-like existence, and touch and be touched by the compassion of others. In short, people want to bond to life in a way deeper than any experienced before on Earth. They want to bond to life in a noble way which embraces respect, courtesy, and life-affirming reverence.

It is in owning the pain and anger of our woundedness within the old Cartesian worldview that we have founded the basis of a new worldview. This was the profound message Jesus gave in saying: "If you bring forth what is within you, what is within you will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what is within you will destroy you." (The Gnostic Gospels) Accordingly, people are discovering a missing part of their wounded selves, a part that wisely knows that in changing ourselves through compassionate means we are mirroring (and must mirror) a noble conduct of respect and reverence, the foundation upon which we desire a new worldview to be built.

We may talk about a theory of cultural transformation, one that helps us to wade through the waves of confusion which overtake long-established belief systems at a historical paradigm shift. But underlying any sense of transformation we can perceive happening outside ourselves, we must awaken to the fact that it is ultimately our personal transformation, as painful as it always seems to be, which leads us to the shores of an increased inner consciousness and conscience. What I am trying to say is that if we are to talk about any new worldview, we cannot objectively do so as if it were some sort of commodity invented outside of our control or desire.

Like our name, our personal worldview gives meaning to our overall sense of self, thus it is something we own within and use to shape our life. It is my feeling that ownership *is* control. The problem, as Eisler has so poignantly pointed out in her book, **The Chalice and the Blade**, is that a five thousand year old male-dominant model, exemplified by the most recent 400 year old Cartesian worldview, was not owned by the people, nor was it reasonably for and of the people. We now know the Cartesian worldview for what it really is, the product and promotion of a controlling few (almost exclusively males) using the highly developed rational/deterministic/mechanistic ideologies of science, economics, politics, and religion to shape the desires of the masses. The ultimate strategy of such a worldview is to instill in the minds of people the notion that everything they desire, whether materially or spiritually, can be found outside oneself. And the measure of success of this strategy is essentially how little control people have in their lives, whether they know it or not.

Our new worldview must be perceived to be owned by, for, and of the people, because its underlying driving force lies within each person. It is only in this sense that we can personally feel control in the healing and regeneration of our lives. I have suggested that this great healing and regenerative force has something to do with noble respect and reverence, and this is a great start for naming our new worldview. For I, too, like Sy Safransky, the editor of **Sun** magazine, have experienced a deeply personal and potent process of inner awakening which can only be put in his words: "I began the long, slow drift away from the radical mainstream towards shores for which I've yet to find a name." There are many of us now standing on the shores of this new worldview. In one sense, we have been like midwives who have given birth to a beautiful new "beingness," and this new Earthview (worldview) deserves to have a worthy name that reflects the full embodiment of our venerable spirit.

A NEW CORTESIAN EARTHVIEW ANDLIFEVIEW

The record of history and contemporary yearning has shown there to be a common thread interwoven in the linked manifest of humans with each other, humanity with nature, and humanity with the Divine. Often called the perennial philosophy, this thread of consciousness embraces a unified vision and voice about life, not in the androcratic way we have come to know in which life is controlled or taken away by force or domination by a ranking half of humanity (males), but in a life-affirming, life-enhancing, and life-giving way characterized by peace, equality, cooperation, and profound respect within a linking of all species to an overarching divine principle.

I know of no better way to describe this recurring historical need for interconnected respect among individuals, cultures, and species of nature/Earth, than to use the beautiful ancient French word, **Cortesia** (pronounced *cortesia*). The immediate response the reader or

listener may have upon seeing or hearing about a **Cortesian** worldview (or what I prefer to call Earthview or Lifeview) is that 1) it surely must be a typographical error or mispronunciation of that all too familiar Cartesian worldview, and/or 2) I must be crazy to consider proposing a word which has such similar spelling and pronunciation to Cartesian that it will indeed confuse any prospective dialogues which are yet to follow in the wake of finally getting these two worldviews within the same arena of inquiry. Of course, my intent in this essay has not been to offer some mindless dribble to the equation of paradigm shifts. I assure the reader that I am quite sincere in my efforts here to name a new worldview, and even I, upon first discovering **Cortesia**, had to take a second look at its possibility as a qualifying name before its underlying essence finally hit me in one of those "a-ha" insights as to the incredibly clever reason our **Cortesian Earthview** must stand, and qualifiably so, right next to its intimidating rival, the infamous Cartesian hypothesis. As it has been said, our search for God/dess must begin exactly where we lost him/her. Similarly, perhaps our **Cortesian** journey must begin (or continue, as the historical record shows) exactly where we lost it within the shadows of the Cartesian monolith.

I am reminded presently of an appropriate statement by the Cambridge professor, W.I.B. Beveridge, which emits hope in accepting our new Earthview's name. He said, "It is easier to drop the old hypothesis if one can find a new one to replace it. The feeling of disappointment too will then vanish." I am convinced, therefore, that our emergent **Cortesian Earthview/Lifeview** may well represent, in Susanne Langer's terms, "a new key in philosophy" in which the old Cartesian hypothesis is finally rejected as having served its usefulness in creating paradoxes which now clog the need for new forms of thinking. As Langer suggests, "If we would have new knowledge, we must get us a whole world of new questions." I am also convinced that our new **Cortesian Earthview**, although yet another product of human intelligence, must mirror hope for all of Earth's species and natural environment, not just for humanity. Therefore, **Cortesia** may fulfill the need, which John Passmore speaks about, for "a new metaphysics which is genuinely not anthropocentric, (therefore) . . . the emergence of new moral attitudes to nature is bound-up with the emergence of a more realistic philosophy of nature."

Cortesia is an ancient French word meaning manners, or specifically the behavior and etiquette expected of one who serves at a noble court (demonstrated, for example, by Chaucer's noble knight in **Canterbury Tales**). The most obvious English translation for **Cortesia** is "courtesy," but courtesy today has a more superficial meaning than it did about a thousand years ago. The original use of the word *cortesia* was to describe nobility of character and conduct, and at its deepest philosophical point *cortesia* described the recognition of rights, duties, gifts, and privileges as they exist in reciprocal relationship.

Historically speaking, few people are aware that *cortesia* may have been the embracing philosophy of Saint Francis of Assisi, often revered as the patron saint of nature and loving kindness. If this is true, then for Saint Francis *cortesia* extended not only to human relations but to all creation in nature; it brought forth his enduring veneration in addressing every form of life

as Brother or Sister. As a doctrine of belief, **Cortesian** respect can lay claim to a deep sense of personal integrity, and history (or at the least, myth) shows this to be exactly the noble quality of character St. Francis emitted. Romano Guardini, described St. Francis as chivalrous --- *cortese*. "This word cannot be translated, because 'courteous' has another meaning now. In its original sense, the word bespoke a form of life, that of noble behavior. With Francis this noble behavior assumed a deep, inner sweetness, giving it a bell-like character of clarity and beauty."

G.K. Chesterton, in referring to Saint Francis, said, "It is a rare poet who remembers his poetry at a moment of agony or crisis." The event towards which Chesterton ascribes these words was at that moment when the doctor brought the white-hot cauterizing iron towards Francis to treat his diseased eyes. Saint Francis bravely spoke: "I pray you, Brother Fire, be courteous to me." Truly, Saint Francis's model was not mere fraternity, it was one of reverential respect and unconditional courtesy within a deep knowing of the interconnectedness of all life. So keen was Francis's awareness of this divine covenant between humanity, nature, and God, that he preached "courtesy is one of the properties of God, who of His courtesy, gives His sun and rain to the just and the unjust: and courtesy is the sister of charity by which hatred is extinguished and love is cherished." In his inspiring book, **The Compassionate Universe**, Eknath Easwaran dives beneath the surface connection between Saint Francis and **Cortesia**. "If you want to understand Francis's power," Easwaran states, "I would answer, don't look in history books; and you needn't go to Assisi or learn Italian or study ancient manuscripts. His secret lies not in history but in the present. It lies, in fact, deep within your own heart and mind. The source of Francis's tremendous impact was nothing other than his unswerving loyalty to the still, small voice within him --- the same voice that is at this moment speaking in the depths of your own consciousness." And I would add within the depths of the consciousness of nature and Gaia.

What we are talking about, then, in this one word, **Cortesia**, is something deeply perennial and deeply personal. We are talking about a heart-felt feeling and a mental attitude of deep respect, courtesy, love, awe and wonder. Thomas Berry has suggested that "we have lost our sense of courtesy toward the earth and its inhabitants, our sense of gratitude, our willingness to recognize the sacred character of habitat, our capacity for the awesome, for the numinous quality of every earthly reality." I believe that it is in **Cortesia** that we can call up that gesture of noble courtesy which allows us in a simple, humble, and conscious act to praise and give thanks to that which we revere. And here we are again embracing that noble conduct of respect that can only be described in one appropriate word: reverence. So intertwined are the meanings of *cortesia* and reverence (in fact, ancient French dictionaries speak of *cortesia* in terms of reverence), that for all practical purposes they are one and the same and may be spoken of in terms of a **Cortesian Consciousness**. I must profess to knowing only a smattering of information about our new **Cortesian Lifeview**. But I have carefully charted enough the course of recent history to know this: at once its basic concepts are both ancient and new, for they have been forged in the fire of history and hope. The more we open ourselves to experiencing the

myths, dreams, lore, science, philosophy, ecology, ethics, psychology, theology of this new earthview---this inner landscape of human consciousness---the more we will find ourselves bonding to and revering its representative aspects in our outer world, including all the diverse species of nature and culture. And only then will we begin to understand the underlying perennial driving force of many compassionate historical figures and cultures of whom, by Eisler's important historic contribution, represent a gynanic rather than androcratic relationship toward life.

THE CORTESIAN - CARTESIAN CONNECTION

The first reverential act the Cortesian newcomer engages in is a contemplative listening to the soul's questioning: "What is the purpose of my existence on Earth? What am I doing to show that I am aware of and consciously fulfilling my venerable mission on this planet?" Such questioning is the work of the heart, work that has been mirrored by conscientious beings and cultures throughout prehistory and history. Such questioning is a process Rudolf Steiner has called "heart thinking:" witnessing the joining of one's head wisdom with heart feeling. It is a process in which we commit ourselves (here we are talking about human individuals and cultures) to building a bridge between what we think and what we can do so that we think, feel, and act out of our full sense of compassion.

Indeed, in order to come to grips with our heart's sense of place, with our soul's personal sense of importance within the ecological "Earth Household," there is suddenly placed a significant weight on the idea of personal and collective responsibility within reciprocal relationships. And what we realize is that the new **Cortesian Earthview** belongs to all cultures, all people, all species, and all aspects of nature. It is a **Lifeview** of deeply personal and collective consciousness and conscience. By contrast, as we so well know, the old Cartesian worldview has been a highly anthropocentric (homocentric) ideology representing the primarily patriarchal/androcratic accomplishments within cultural ruling forces such as science, technology, politics, economics, and religion. This mechanistic and highly rational-oriented Cartesian worldview has merely de-personalized the responsibilities of the individual and the masses, inducing people to simply fill their role as necessary cogs, or, in the case of women, as reproductive systems, within the machinery of society.

Cortesian Consciousness, therefore, reminds us that Cartesian methodology has been our teacher and its eye of reason has given us an image and instrumental understanding/use of nature, matter, and culture which we should not deny. For example, the Cartesian "great machine" perception of life is what has allowed us to experience incomprehensible technological progress. Technology as such is not what is wrong with the Cartesian model; it is how we have come to use technology to dominate and control others and nature that is the fatal flaw of the

Cartesian worldview. The **Cortesian** steward is not out to destroy the concept of technology; they are out to reshape and enhance its use in reverent ways.

Cortesia, therefore, is not a worldview which denies the utility of Cartesian ideology, *if it is directed reverently*. In fact, the very likeness of the two words may be more ironical than we think, a historical testimony to both the dramatic and subtle change possible in consciousness and conscience, and thus a testimony to the changing course of history on Earth. Indeed, the mere changing of an "a" to an "o" in these two words must constantly be a reminder of the difference between an army of soldiers or an army of sages, between the darkness of our ignorance and the light of our wisdom, between the interplay of duality---hate and love, greed and selflessness, power and compassion, abuse and respect---and the lack of understanding which has always hounded the motives of humanity.

It is truly the shift in symbolic context of these two words, Cartesian and **Cortesian**, which will continue to provide dramatic proof of their bipolar content. For example, the Cartesian position of human mastery and dominance over nature gives way to a **Cortesian** stewardship promoting an interconnected and reciprocal relationship between cultures and nature. A Cartesian instrumental rationalism/interpretation of life gives way to a **Cortesian** heightening of intuition and reason both of which lead one to live life with a sense of discriminative wisdom. A Cartesian mechanistic assumption gives way to a **Cortesian** organic/biocentric systems perspective. A Cartesian patriarchal and male-God dominance gives way to a **Cortesian** gylanic (male-female) linking and perennial God-Goddess/Father-Mother divinity. A Cartesian split in mind and body gives way to a **Cortesian** integration of bodymind bonded by the forces of spirit.

Notice that I have freely used the idea of the Cartesian worldview *giving way to* a new **Cortesian Earthview**. Obviously this is not a mutual surrender between worldviews that we are talking about. The fact is, there is paradoxical conflict emerging and intensifying between these two models which will continue for decades to come, even as one (the Cartesian) is destined to *breakdown* and the other (**Cortesian**) is destined to *breakthrough* the past 5,000 year historical detour of androcracy. We presently are witnessing, for example, the intense efforts of mega-corporations and governments attempting to use Earth's natural resources on an infinite yield assumption at the same time thousands of conservation groups worldwide are intensifying their efforts to save nature's finite diversity and to find acceptable sustainable use and limits. In "first world" countries there is an intense integration of high-technology in the workplace and home, while many people are attempting to promote living more simply, artistically, and thrift-like by choice. There continues a preoccupation with nuclear force and deterrence by superpower nations, while intense counter efforts are waged by scientists, lay public, artists and celebrities for total disarmament and peace. And the examples are boundless, with the bottom line being the simple recognition of the Janus power of humanity. In this era of cultural transformation, where Cartesian meets **Cortesian** within the arena of conscience, cultures and nature are caught in a paradox of behaviors. This is an age of endings and beginnings, the passing of old

"gods" and the entrance of new or re-emerging ones. It is self-destructive yet curiously self-preserving, reactionary yet curiously innovative, exploitive yet curiously compassionate, hate and anger discharging yet marvelously and bravely peace and love filling.

As we become enmeshed with our own conscious sorting out of these two worldviews, we must be aware that only four options generally present themselves in terms of their (and our) present struggle. These options must be analyzed in the same way every worldview is discriminatively scrutinized. They must be weighed against a culture's **behavior** contents (technologies, social institutions, architecture, artistry, and skills, etc.), its **beliefs** (myths, values, laws, symbols, collective unconscious assumptions), and any relationship to both the surrounding natural and social/cultural **environments**. Accordingly, in a first option there may be a reactionary and revitalized effort to seek even higher-level technological breakthroughs inspite of recognizing the ecological limits of human expansion on Earth. In a second option there may be witnessed a massive destruction of nature and cultures, either by nuclear war or by continued and intensified indiscriminate exploitation of the natural environment. In a third option there may be a recessionary period of stagnation of any worldview direction/shift, the control of which obviously would be maintained by already existing androcratic, male-dominating systems which would continue to repress the masses. In a fourth option an innovative cultural worldview shift may occur which promotes harmony and balance between all of Earth's cultural and natural systems.

Clearly, to some degree all of these options are being explored today. But the first three are not progressive toward a new worldview, and in fact continue to promote the anthropocentricity of an old Cartesian worldview and androcratic model which have dominated cultures and nature for hundreds and thousands of years respectively. The historian, Jacob Needleman has written about Western civilization (and I would add the whole world) finding itself between two dreams: the old Cartesian worldview and a new visionary one. With reference to the old he states: "The crisis of ecology, the threat of atomic war, the disruption of the patterns of human life by advanced technology have resulted in the fact that the lullaby of scientific progress, the dream of manipulating nature to suit our egoistic purposes, is ended." It would not take a major brain operation, therefore, to realize and admit that woundedness pervades every cultural and natural system on Earth today. This sweeping illness, as Stanley Diamond puts it, "comes from the very center of civilization, not from too much knowledge, but from too little wisdom." Or as Albert Einstein suggested, "Our problem is not the atom bomb but the hearts of people." Once again, Steiner's "thinking heart" seems to be our best course of action, for certainly, if we can take the best aspects of the Cartesian model, the most highly valued knowledge gained from its period of rule, and transform them into reverent action, then the resulting new worldview would allow us not only to remake the world from without but also from within ourselves. Therefore, it is only the fourth option which provides hope for this new worldview to emerge, and if we are to name that worldview let us reify it as **Cortesia**.

Early in this essay, I appeared to liken our building of this **Cortesian Earthview** to that of some huge new project rising up next to the vast and familiar complex of Cartesian ideology. By all accounts it is inaccurate to characterize this **Cortesian** framework as some large monolithic structure, for its central qualities are not based upon ranking or hierarchy, upon territorial or imperialistic imperatives, upon power and force, upon centralization and subordination. These are the characteristics of a worldview that is not owned by, of, and for the people and Earth/nature, but rather by a few ruling individuals, corporations, or governments. Instead, the **Cortesian** project is about creating a network of interlinking compassionate systems, with the individual and nature at the very nucleus. It is what Riane Eisler has described as a partnership model that draws its power, or empowerment, from diversity, artistry, respect, courtesy, bioregionalism, cooperation, and love. It idealizes not the life-taking Blade of domination but the life-affirming Chalice of reverence.

The very acceptance itself of the necessity to foster and maintain a **Cortesian** relationship/ethic awakens within the devoted human a *consciousness of reverence*. It is within this reverential consciousness that truly the hope of Earth/nature and its cultures lies. Reverence awakens the inner eye of intuition and wisdom and allows one to see each and every form and aspect of nature and culture as an integral organism bonded and linked to every other form and aspect on the Earthstage of birth, life, and death. When we are discourteous and insensitive to any one thing, we are that to everything else simply because we do not bring a consciousness of reverence to our actions. As the historian Theodore Rozak has said, "The world has enough for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed." I would suggest, therefore, that there exists basic *Laws of Reverence*, and these laws are embedded in ancient wisdom and permeate all native cultures. But, they are not absolute and therefore give rise to the discovery of further reverential laws dependent upon humanity's evolution of consciousness in relationship to all other species. In short, the laws which guide a **Cortesian Earthview**, must be renewed from the wisdom of our ancestors, and must always be newly discovered within the wisdom of our unfolding actions and reverent beliefs, even as we see them emerging now out of the old patterns of Cartesian beliefs and edicts. They must not be laws discovered, owned, and propogated by limited scientific, economic, political, and religious conspiracies. Rather they must come from an interlinked webwork of diverse cultural, natural, and metaphysical insights whose truths stem not only from scientific observation but from intuitive understanding. The rest of this essay will now share a few of the emerging constructs which I believe point to a validation of our new **Cortesian Earthview**.

EXPLORING THE NEW CORTESIAN LANDSCAPE

Peace cannot exist in a vacuum. It can only exist as a result of relationship, whether it be on the inner plane of consciousness as in one feeling peaceful within the psychological or

spiritual relationship they have with themselves, or whether it be in harmony with something outside one's encapsulated self. But a peaceful relationship still cannot just happen, for it must be the result of some effort of perception. What perception is it, therefore, that allows one to finally come into harmony, balance, and unity with an aspect of oneself or an aspect of another's beingness? As history shows, and as our inner voice tells us, peace is not possible within a perception of conflict, abuse, domination, usurping power, and external control. Peace is not possible when walls, be they psychological, spiritual, physical, or boundaries of ignorance, prevent access to the inner and outer workings of life. Peace is only possible within a clear perception of life-affirming identification --- within oneself, within the self of another. And this life-affirming identification, I am convinced, can only be perceived with an **eye for reverence**, that is, an envisioning of the deep respect necessary to sustain the integrity of that organism or ideal which we behold, whether it be ourselves, another human, some species of nature, our whole planet/universe, or some Divine principle.

Cortesias, or courtesy of a noble kind, shows itself as reciprocal respect, good manners, sincerity, depth of affection, empathy, and knowledge and understanding of the principles of right relationship. Just a simple review of both the technical and trade literature of the 1980's shows a geometrically progressive use of several key words and concepts aligned with a **Cortesias Lifeview**: interconnectedness and interdependency, peace, cooperation, holism, love, respect, and an especially significant increase in the last few years of the word reverence. The question needs to be asked, "Are these **Cortesias** concepts merely a sentimental expression of the effeminate side of human nature, a side which has continuously reappeared throughout the course of the last 5000 year androcratic detour in history and is once again making its scheduled appearance, or is there some sense of scholarly and intuitive proof (I admittedly hedge at using the term scientific as a blanket justification for proof of any kind) to demonstrate that as a new view into life, the underlying venerating qualities of **Cortesias** have at least face validity?" The answer to this question is the subject of a series of specific essays and, predictably so, a book to follow in the next couple of years by this author. Presently, however, let me share just a smattering of concepts being explored by others which I believe idealize the type of **Cortesias Lifeview** and **Earthview** I have been proposing.

The Gaia Hypothesis

Perhaps the most evident hypothesis sweeping scholarly circles today is that of the Gaia Hypothesis of James Lovelock. At a purely scientific level, Lovelock's theory and research has proposed Earth to be a cybernetic self-regulating, self-sustaining system, continually adjusting its chemical, physical, and biological processes in order to support life and its continuing evolution. Obviously, such a hypothesis is an attempt to re-personalize humanity's relationship with Earth, causing a shift in consciousness whereby nature is not perceived in the Cartesian eye as a machine, but in a life-affirming vision as a living organism. From a modern historical perspective,

none of this is new, for philosophers like Whitehead, Spencer, and before them Spinoza and Hegel saw nature in exactly this organismic way. And scientists/ecologists such as Frederick Clements (his climax community as an organism), W.M. Wheeler, and the ecology group at the University of Chicago in the 30s and 40s were distinctly organismic. However, any *re-humanization* with Earth must recognize not merely a homocentric but rather a biotic relationship among all species systems. As Lovelock suggests: "Gaia subsists in the changes and relationships of species and ecosystems. Her stability is not that of unchanging emptiness; different kinds play their parts and depart, and we have no guarantee that the human species has any different sort of lease."

Nevertheless, Gaia is not only much like an organism, but in her personification she can be perceived very much like a physical person herself, an integrated being attempting to monitor and adjust life-giving states. Clearly, such an organismic orientation has significant implications for worldview change. As we have seen, our old Cartesian separation of mind and matter has led us to set ourselves over and above the material world, to think of nature as merely the backdrop to the human drama. But such utilitarian scientific and philosophical percepts do not appear to be accurate, merely because, for certain "cosmic" reasons not yet entirely understood, Earth is infused with meaning, with a creative evolutionary ability to transform its conditions by some unexplained type of awareness or consciousness not unlike the human mind. From the perspective of Gaian consciousness, therefore, Earth is not composed of simple inanimate matter or energy separate from the realms of spirit and consciousness. Earth consists of biotic, not merely homocentric, communities the consciousness of each which we are only beginning to understand.

It is my perception that the concept of Gaian consciousness is fully shrouded in the idea of relationship, and in this relationship is something strongly binding, unifying, and ethical. If for a moment we take the noble position of **Cortesian** thinking, then we realize that what unifies is respect, a system of behaviors which recognize the rights, duties, and privileges within the reciprocity of relationship. Accordingly, if Gaia/nature is supposed to be enough *like* a person, then she is certainly entitled to the same sort of respect as individual humans. And that is exactly the central argument in today's awakening to our (meaning nature and humans) impending environmental crisis; in our Cartesian arrogance we have assumed nature to be the booty for our intelligence, and now all of life is suffering the price. It has been suggested that humans are the consciousness of Gaia waking up to her own self, sort of like the evolutionary new grey or reasoning matter of the brain which separates us from our instincts. Within Gaia's "global brain," as Peter Russell suggests, humanity's search for knowledge could be Gaia's way of knowing more about herself and the universe in which she lives. This suggestive reciprocal relationship, inspite of what appears to be an anthropocentric position, points to an elemental truism: as human beings we exist *in* this earth not just *on* it, therefore, we live *in relationship with* nature and that in and of itself is worthy of fulfilling our part in a **covenant of reverence**.

Cortesian Reverence perceives a cooperative, symbiotic relationship happening in this planet and universe. There is a meaningful creative play going on in spite of human folly and intervention. Eliot Deutsch speaks about a "natural reverence" which must permeate our collective consciousness: "the attitude, the awareness, of belonging together of man and nature in freedom --- in such a way that allows for a meaningful, creative play in that relationship . . . (Such a relationship) thus allows one to be freely with nature and at the same time to be obedient to its needs." Similarly, Easwaran suggests that the human-nature relationship should be founded on trusteeship, where as trustees we 1) work in cooperation with nature's restorative processes, characterized by her cooperation, thrift, artistry, and compassion in relating to all other forces, human or otherwise, and 2) develop the restorative powers within our own humanness characterized by intelligence, discrimination, will, judgement, and love. Finally, David Abram suggests that, from the perspective of Gaian consciousness, "human perception is a form of communication, a unified interaction between the individual and the whole earth organism that amounts to a reciprocal exchange of meaning, value, and purpose."

Perhaps nowhere is the **Cortesian** concept of noble respect or reverence more aligned with contemporary new worldview inquiry than in the idea of communication or interaction. Indeed, **Cortesia** may be the new epistemology which many have been arguing for, for within it is housed a new appreciation of the interactive nature of "knowing" and the role of ritual, meditation, prayer, and ceremony in re-linking our awe and wonder at our body and spirit with the body and spirit of Earth. The shift from Cartesian to **Cortesian** consciousness, from deterministic gathering of so-called "objective" information to true communion, and from knowledge to wisdom, has fostered the support of an increasing number of scientists, philosophers, and venerable nature lovers.

For in this new analysis of interactive systems, as I see it, perception *is* communication, communication *is* relationship, and the quality of relationship *is* dependent upon the presence or lack of respect given to another's value, purpose, and meaning. As an area of inquiry, the concept of perception has been the foundation of dramatic scientific, philosophical, and theological shifts. It has formed the basis of quantum physics, process philosophy and psychology, and ecological theology. In this essay I shall only explore a couple of implications for our **Cortesian Earthview**.

Perception as Communion

In its most stripped down version, perception may be described as a constant communion between ourselves and the living world (Gaia) that encompasses us. As we have seen, the Gaia hypothesis has shifted the locus of creativity from the human intellect to the enveloping world itself. As humans we are part of a coherent community of biotic forms in which there is a constant reciprocal interaction following a logic that at best can only be described as inhuman. David Abram, in talking about this interaction, suggests that "what is important is that we

describe it *as an exchange*, no longer a one-way transfer of random data from an inert world into the human mind but a reciprocal interaction between two living presences---my own body and the vast body of the biosphere. The works of the perceptual psychologist J.J. Gibson and the phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty have tried to provide an alternative understanding of perception not as some cerebral event but some sort of sensuous immersion. Thus, Merleau-Ponty's concept of *reversibility* allows us to understand the double or reciprocal aspect inherent in all perception: surely I am experiencing the world, yet I can just as well say that I am being experienced *by* the world. To *see* is at one and the same time to feel oneself *seen*; to touch the world is also to be touched *by* the world. The recognition of this second, inverted perspective, when added to the first, leads to the realization of reversibility: "I am part of a world that is experiencing itself," or even, "I am the world experiencing itself through this body."

This concept of fluid permeable relationships has been exemplified in the work of Nobel laureate Barbara McClintock, who pioneered discoveries in gene transposition through years of work with corn plants. The carefully observing and analytical scientist as she is, McClintock reveals a reverential "participatory" relationship to her scientific inquiries that embrace deep intuitive sensitivity and perception, the hallmarks of **Cortesian** awe and wonder. In sharing her participatory methodology, McClintock talks about "hearing what the material has to say to you," about fostering an openness to "let it come to you," and above all, to have a "feeling for the organism:" its uniqueness as an individual, its mystique as an "otherness," and its value as a "fellow subject." Such is the sensitivity and respect that permeates her work, that McClintock says: "Every time I walk on grass I feel sorry because I know the grass is screaming at me." Clearly, McClintock exemplifies the very notions of Theodore Rozak's *rhapsodic intellect* and Morris Berman's *reenchantment* with the world. In her words: "I found the more I worked with them (the corn cells), the bigger and bigger the chromosomes got and when I was really working with them I wasn't outside. I was part of the system . . . it surprised me because I actually felt as if I was right down there and these were my friends . . . As you look at these things they become a part of you."

It may be said that every being has interests if it has needs, and it may be said to have needs if it is seeking to maintain or realize its own existence---it needs those things which contribute to its self-maintenance or self-realization. Spinoza identified this process as the "effort by which each thing endeavours to persist in its own being." Medieval philosophers referred to it as the "conatus." When we look at these life-affirming processes from a **Cortesian** perspective, we come to realize the value of a consciousness of noble courtesy, respect, and reverence in the perceptual interdependent relationship of species and Earth. When one's sense of self is diminished, then our sense that the self is worth preserving must also diminish. "A strong conatus," as Mathews puts it, "requires a strong, rich sense of self, which means a self encompassing the widest possible circles of being. The stronger our conatus, the greater our contribution to the flourishing of the ecosystem."

The interconnectedness of all life on this planet is an idea both steeped in prehistory and history, and in the urgent awareness of the troubling conditions existing on Earth today as a result of just one species (the human) dominating all others. Perhaps when viewed in the long history of this planet and the intensity and surety in which we have dissipated Earth's natural resources, humans represent a bifurcation point within the equilibrium of evolution that aligns well with the ideas of Chaos Theory and its developers, Prigogine and Stengers in chemistry and general systems, Shaw and Feigenbaum in physics, and Maturana, Varela, Csanyi, and Kampis in biology.

It is my strong sense, and I am sure the feeling of other optimistic worldview visionaries, that a profound newly emerging, if not re-emerging, collective conatus is reshaping (or reacquainting) our perception of and relationship with a central perennial Force that is holding all this Earth drama together with a tremendous amount of love and grace. So evident is this collective feeling that no field of endeavor, be it scientifically, socially, ecologically, philosophically, psychologically, or spiritually inclined, is immune from interlinking its knowledge with others around the possibility that some cosmic force is actually in charge.

The fact that we humans hold an important role in the unfolding new Earth consciousness, only because we are the only species on this planet that can reflect on the use of our free will, points to the necessity of adopting a new worldview name such as **Cortesia** which best exemplifies intercommunion of species based upon abiding respect, or what I call reverence. Why this is so important a concept to embrace is because perception and the need for interconnectedness are first and foremost a personal experience that can only be shared by an openness, a permeability, a humble privilege to peer into the world of another's beingness --- their history, presence, and future --- with an eye for reverence. And it does not matter if one is a gifted scientist such as Barbara McClintock or the person who delivers my mail each day. Loren Eiseley, as usual, exemplifies this **Cortesian** sentiment in his **The Firmament of Time**: "Man has a belief in seen and unseen nature. He is both pragmatist and mystic. . . I shall want to look at this world from both the empirical point of view and from one which also takes into account that sense of awe and marvel which is part of man's primitive heritage, and without which man would not be man." Albert Einstein, perhaps the most significant historical figure to undermine the very foundations of the Cartesian-Newtonian mechanical worldview and open wide the doors, at least in my estimation, to a new **Cortesian** worldview, echoed this very belief of transcendent wisdom: "The most beautiful emotion we can experience is the mystical. It is the sower of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger is as good as dead."

Communion in the world of cultures and nature has spiritualized and ultimately is changing the face of science, including such earth sciences as anthropology and archeology, as best exemplified by the breath-taking discoveries of peaceful Paleolithic and Neolithic gylanic/Goddess cultures by Marija Gimbutas. But behind any mask of scientific inquiry must peer out the individual, and it is in fact the personal transformations of certain scientists like

Capra, Bentov, Bohm, Pribram, among many others who have survived androcratic peer scrutiny in order to promote their eclectic analytical-intuitive discoveries, that inspire an awe-inspiring new spiritual direction in science. But science, as Eisely and Einstein above point out, is only one source of verification for interconnectedness. If we are truly to understand the power of **Cortesian Reverence**, we must come into relationship and communion with our world through the heart of spirit, as this universal life force strives to break into our consciousness through ritual, meditation, prayer, ceremony, and the artistry of devoted effort.

Carnation of the Sacred

We have seen how the Gaia Hypothesis has re-conceptualized, or rather re-perceptualized, the notion of a living organism such as Earth as the personified Mother of all Earth species, including humans. We have talked freely about how this profound Being has a type of consciousness that is mirrored in all life forms, sort of like a "mindfulness." But the Gaia Hypothesis, as a theoretical premise, has one major criticism as I see it: it simply does little to re-spiritualize our relationship to the bodymind connection, and thus, to the holism of life. The fact is, its major proponent, James Lovelock, has taken great pains to demonstrate that Earth is somewhat of an impersonal and indifferent Being simply going about her regulatory business. Recently, however, Lovelock has tried to invoke a sense of "religion" into his thinking ("Life itself is a religious experience"), but this appears to be in reaction to discovering that two-thirds of the letters he receives are about the meaning of Gaia in the context of religious faith. "For the present, my belief in God rests at the stage of a positive agnosticism," Lovelock writes in his recent book, **The Ages of Gaia** (in fact, in a stimulating chapter titled "God and Gaia"). I am not intending to discredit Lovelock's sincerity toward Gaia, for he goes to great length to discuss his spiritual thoughts, such as stating that "you also interact individually in a spiritual manner through a sense of wonder about the natural world and from feeling a part of it." And in a beautiful sentiment he concludes his chapter on God and Gaia with this: "When that great and good man Pope John Paul travels around the world, he, in an act of great humility and respect for the Mother or Father Land, bends down and kisses the airport tarmac. I sometimes imagine him walking those few steps beyond the dead concrete to kiss the living grass; part of our true Mother and of ourselves."

The truth may very well be that Earth/Gaia and nature, perhaps even humans, lack a type of spirit which envelopes the very functions of our body and mind. But *this* hypothesis sounds too familiar within its Cartesian premise. As we well know, the history of this planet, as far as humans are concerned, is steeped in a rich lore of perennial wisdom. And this esoteric perennial wisdom, like some deep underlying flow of consciousness, has surfaced and resurfaced again and again amongst the exoteric religious ideologies and practices throughout history. Yes, Gaia, the Greek Goddess Mother of Earth, does invoke a rich imagery of spiritual history and prehistory, especially regarding the thousands and thousands of years of cultural bonding to this

Goddess-Mother perception. Charlene Spretnak even suggests that "using Gaia's name in its full sense is an efficacious conceptual model for spiritual reasons. Thomas Berry . . . speaks of the 'biospiritual,' of 'cosmogogenesis,' of 'the unbreakable bond of relatedness' that constitutes the universe. What more accurate image could there be for the unbreakable bond than that of the mother-child?"

I hold no argument that Gaia, nor any of the thousands of names of Goddesses over history which cultures have used to symbolize their relationship to the womb of their existence, invokes the feeling of a necessary unbreakable bond. My concern, however, is one which Patrick Murphy holds and explores in an excellent essay on sex-typing the planet. Murphy says, "The use of Gaia imagery and the envisioning of the Earth as a sacred female may have been and may remain a necessary step to get people moving toward a higher consciousness, but it cannot serve as the right stride for the path of planet-human harmony." Similarly, David Spangler asks, "If there is a true Spirit of Earth (Gaia), a Planetary Logos, is it hierarchically superior to humanity? That is, does it stand somewhere between ourselves and God? Does Gaia become a substitute for God?" My own thesis is not the bond itself by any name we give to it, but the essence of devotion which holds that bond together. It is this esoteric essence which has had to share space with all the Goddesses and Gods of exoteric religious history in order that the bond between mortality and immortality, between species and species, between dust mote and universe, does *not* break. And that devotional essence repeats itself over and over again in history as one word: **reverence**. It is no wonder today that there is a geometrically parallel increase in the use of the Goddess (or Gaia) imagery and the word reverence to denote what David Spangler calls the "carnation of the sacred," whereby humanity is integrated with Gaia (Earth) and both are integrated with the Divine Force of the universe. After all, the task of all esoteric and exoteric spiritual ritual, prayer, ceremony, and allegiance stems from a need or desire to reverently commune with both the Creation **and** the Creator, by whatever name we give to these concepts.

The **essential bond**, as I characterize our desire to dwell within the heart of creation with awe and wonder, adoration and respect, appears to be at its very core a **Cortesian** quest, not simply a Gaian one. That we have to sex-type our planet in the context of woman is a critical aspect of this **Cortesian** quest, to be sure, if not only because the plight of this full one half of humanity, and the nature she represents, has been one of disrespect and total subservience over the past 5000 years. Reverence and respect call forth the carnation of sacred sovereignty and autonomy, but such sovereignty cannot be seen to be limited only to what we call the female person, but rather must be seen as part of the sacred female *psyche or essence* of life itself which must by nature bond with the sacred male *psyche or essence* in every being. This psychic female essence has correctly been associated with nurturance, nourishment, birth, kindness, peace, compassion, gentleness, and the like, and it is exactly these qualities of conduct which are so crucial in our contemporary quest for a new worldview. The **Cortesian** worldview

quest, therefore, is not unlike the symbolic quest for the holy Grail which formed the basis of Arthurian legend. But the only way the power of the Grail (or as Eisler would say, the Chalice) can be discovered (ironically, the quest and discovery had to symbolically be one stemming from the male persona) is by openly questioning with the heart of one's conscience every and any external rule of behavior. And the revealing questions must ask, "What ails you?" "What is the meaning of this act?" "Whom or what does this behavior or action serve?" and "How does it serve the sovereignty of life?" My contention is that in a **Cortesian Lifeview** our motives can only be noble ones which pour forth out of a deep sense of reciprocal courtesy, respect, adoration, and overarching reverence.

We have seen a literal explosion of interest in calling up our ancestral perennial wisdom of reverence. It does not matter if we use terms such as deep ecology, ecofeminism, process theology, neo-Christian spirituality, or theosophy. We are more aware than we have ever been before, because we *want* to be more aware than we have ever been before, that throughout thistory reverence has been the life-affirming essence that has enriched one's perception of life. We call upon our ancestral past, in which the practice among native people, including the American Indians, was to acknowledge *with respect and reverence* the organic coherence and interrelatedness of humanity with all of nature through prayer, ritual, celebration, and artistry. Whether we call it by the original Jain concept, *ahimsa* (nonviolence, non-harming), or by the Chinese-Buddhist, *wu-wei* (nonaggression and letting be), or by the ancient Vedic concept of *rta* (respect for the underlying order and reciprocal purposefulness of natural phenomena); whether we describe it within the Aboriginal sense of Dreamtime, the Buddhist metaphor of the interconnected and interreflective Jeweled Net of Indra, or the sacred Hoop of the Navajo; whether we call it in Paul's term of "putting on the mind of God," or Brother Lawrence's idea of "practicing the presence of God" --- the wisdom within our united heart and mind tells us that to touch and be touched by the sacredness of life, in whatever form that sacredness shows itself, and in whatever scientific, technological, and artistic way we wish to interpret it, is a profound expression within a reciprocal **covenant of reverence**. And for all these reasons, I consider **Cortesia** to be a worthy Chalice to pour forth our heart-felt affirmation of hope for humanity and all of nature.

SMALL ACTS OF GREAT LOVE

Mother Theresa states: "We cannot do great things in life; we can only do small things with great love." The very nature of **Cortesia** is personal ownership. **Cortesia** is not owned by a corporation, its board of directors, its investors, or its bylaws; it is owned by each person who is drawn to that corporation because its motives have the highest interests of human beings, cultures, and the natural environment in mind. **Cortesia** is not owned by politicians,

governments, or military leaders; it is owned by every person who is drawn into public service because the highest principles of the people and the environment are perceived to be at the forefront of service. **Cortesía** is not exclusively owned by a man or woman, a race or culture, a particular field of inquiry; it is owned by every species in the total biotic community that has the ability or opportunity to touch and be touched out of a gesture of awe and wonder and respect. Our present crises on Earth, therefore, are not so much the outcome of an impersonal worldview gone awry, they are the result of unbridled personal desires gone wild in the face of misguided technology, politics, economics, and religion which we have come to put too much trust in. As Easwaran puts it: "We bear responsibility for the accomplishments of science, since we all support it --- financially, with our purchases and taxes, and in our mental habits, where we depend on technology for profit, prestige, and convenience." Since **Cortesian Reverence** is founded on humility, there is the belief in unified, interconnected personal noble thoughts and behaviors --- the small devotional expressions of common courtesy and respect --- within the larger collective conatus.

Such small devotional offerings of reverence form the base of **Cortesian** stewardship and trusteeship. They are the motivation behind vision quests in wilderness settings, organic gardening in an urban plot and regenerative agriculture in the fields; living with voluntary simplicity and composting, recycling, and precycling. They are the incentive behind visiting cathedral forests or sacred geographic locations and establishing a land trust as a service primarily for nature itself; putting one's body on earth between bulldozer and forest as protest, and creating ceremony and ritual in replenishing and reseeded the land. Small reverential pieces of our **Cortesian Earthview/Lifeview** group around sustainable culture and its possibility for the future. Bioregionalism speaks to the holographic interconnectedness and interdependency of Earth life where concentric sizes of biotic communities, human and otherwise, are enmeshed in a unique life-affirming quest. **Cortesian** concepts such as networking, synergy, cooperation, decentralization, governance, and mediation attempt to sustain the bioregional persona, as do the noble goals and objectives of the Green Movement.

On certain levels, people are traversing across the old mental intellect which said "I am protecting myself." Many millions of people are now projecting their compassion by thinking and saying, "I am protecting, I want to help protect . . . the rainforest, the homeless, the starving, the endangered, the underprivileged, the next generations of children." But such thinking must go one step deeper into the heart, a step that places one directly in the reverential core of **Cortesía**. Such a **Cortesian** steward/trustee would peer into life with a thinking heart and a deeper noetic knowing and say, to paraphrase John Seed: "I am part of the rainforest, the homeless, the starving, the endangered, the underprivileged, the future generations of children *protecting myself*. I am that part of Gaia recently emerged into reverent consciousness." It is not enough to intellectually witness, from the safe distance of a television screen with T.V. dinner in hand, the swollen bellies of starving children. The **Cortesian** trustee *feels* the starving masses' pain within

the belly of his/her own conscience, and s/he reaches out in compassionate thought by saying, to borrow from Easwaran's beautiful affirmation, "I want an Earth that is healthy, a world at peace, and a heart filled with love. I want my life and every life to count. How can I serve to this end?" Any other thought submits to only one other reality, one of a world of inequality and self-centeredness, where we are all starving --- the poor for food and hope, the rich for heart-felt compassion.

It is my belief that if we but name our new worldview we will do the most compassionate act imaginable for the orphaned pieces of history, and those many individuals, cultures, and species of nature who cannot, and will never, find a home in the Cartesian paradigm. Otherwise, if but one person is needlessly hungry, if but one tree is needlessly downed, if but one woman or child is needlessly abused, if but one atomic warhead is needlessly manufactured, and if but one precious enriching cultural bit of history is erased from the record books, then the potential for individual and global self-realization of Earth's species is limited and the notion of survival will continue to be the rule in a world run by a few ideological masters at the Cartesian ideological machine.

In the final analysis, perhaps it can be said that the vision of humanity has always been a vision of hope. The question is, In what context has this hope been placed? Who have we perceived this hope to serve? I believe that humanity's perennial intuition and wisdom has always been an archtypal knowing beyond that of the "innocent savage" of Paleolithic and Neolithic history, and the "noble savage" of the last 400 years. Interwoven throughout history has been a vision that within man and woman is his/her true Self on Earth: that of the **Noble Sage**. Motivated by a consciousness of reverence, the Noble Sage seeks a new **Earthview/Lifeview**, one of united heartmindspirit, in which s/he can serve in noble stewardship.

I am reminded once again of Sy Safransky's dilemma at coming to the shores of this new "no name" worldview. The fact is, Sy's courage to swim away from the radical mainstream of world thought was a tremendous inspiration in my own courageous breaking away. But in breaking away, I found myself actually breaking *through* the old worldview, living as it were *in* the Cartesian worldview but not *of* it. What gave my vision hope was the quote by Victor Frankl which sits directly beneath the masthead of Sy's inspiring journal, **The Sun**: "What is to give light must endure burning." It has been my discovery that this **Cortesian** light has guided my heart along the same paths followed by other historical visionaries. And the flames of their perennial passions for truth still burn along the paths of history they travelled. These "heart torches" have been the guideposts for this new age, and have led us directly and finally to **Cortesian Consciousness**. May I suggest that herein dwells the Noble Sage whose simple bit of wisdom has stood the test of time: "Do not live a life of quiet desperation; strive to live a life of humble devotion. Only then will life cease to be a personal burden, but become one of reverential service."

All our efforts today need a new and vibrant common vision and voice. **Cortesian Consciousness** celebrates a Lifeview and Earthview founded on deep respect, noble courtesy, and abiding reverence. But more than anything else, **Cortesia** reconnects us with our ultimate capacity to love, and to carry the torch of that compassionate love wherever we may journey. On our journey perhaps we may have time to reflect upon the receding Cartesian worldview and draw our **Cortesian** strength on these words of Teilhard de Chardin: "Someday, after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love. Then for the second time in the history of the world, humans will have discovered fire."

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