

## **PART I – BIG STORY AND PERSONAL STORY**

### **OVERVIEW**

As with *Earthfolk Papers, Volume 1*, the core assumption of *Volume 2* is that the movement called “globalization” is causing changes in every aspect of your individual and communal life. The guide question in the **Introduction** and **Part 1** is, “How do you hold the world together?” In both sections I relate how I held my world together as I actively responded to Vietnam, the first globalized war. I analyze how and why my world fell apart as I ended up on trial in a federal courtroom and eventually served time in a federal prison. As I struggled to put my world back together, I developed an analysis and interpretation of the globalization movement in terms of a *Big Story* and a *personal Story*.

Three Big Stories dominant the globalization movement. These are the Religious Big Story, the Secular Big Story, and Scientism’s Big Story. By illustrating how these three dominant Big Stories influenced me as I grew, I flesh out the moral impact of adhering to each of these Big Stories. All three Big Stories played a prominent role in my development. My journey covers breakdowns and breakthroughs during years as a young Roman Catholic altar boy, seminarian and monk, then as a “Catholic Radical” antiwar Resister to, finally, an ex-con parolee with no Big Story and no way of holding the world together either as a Catholic or an American. I drifted and searched for decades and only began to re-imagine a Big Story when I realized that I had in fact left prison with one word, one image, and it was, “Mother.”

In **Appendix A**, “Big Story and personal Story worksheet” enables you to analyze and identify your own Big Story as you respond to my development.

You are then prepared at the conclusion of *Part 1* to explore the three dominant Big Stories and the types of moral, personal Stories each permits and restricts.

In the **Introduction**, one stated reason for writing "Sensual Preciousness" was your need to understand the sources and causes of, and how to morally respond to, the "globalization" movement that is changing everyone's life on Earth. For some, the response is that while much is happening on the technological level, not much is really changing at the basic human level. They hold that, "Life changes, but everything remains the same." Since there is no standard or authoritative definition for "globalization," the question is not whether you are all-for or all-against globalization. Rather, it is how are you able to morally respond to the significant issues that the various aspects of globalization raise in your personal life. The task at hand is illustrated by events in my life, notably, the actions I took to imagine a world without war. These landed me in federal prison where the questions posed in this book first took seed. You are asked to look at your own Big Story and how you carve your personal Story from that Big Story. You are then asked to examine your Big Story in light of the three Big Stories which are the dynamic sources for the challenges globalization creates in various aspects of your life, such as at work, at home and as you travel or communicate globally.

In **section 1. A**, "Your Big Story and your personal Story," the concepts of a Big Story and a personal Story are explained in detail. The *Big Story* is the one which presents the Big Answers to life's Big Questions of *who, where, when, why* and *how* things are as they are. The *personal Story* is how you carve out from the Big Story you own particular, even at times idiosyncratic, way of "making everything hold together." It is your primal original work of

art, with you being the *object d'art*. My working premise is that you must tell your Big Story and personal Story because, together, they explain your vision, values and the scope of your imagination. Moreover, they give meaning to your life.

The three dominant Big Stories are introduced and described as the Religious Big Story, the Secular Big Story, and Scientism's Big Story. These are to be defined and explored in greater detail in **Part 2**, "Three Dominant Big Stories. "

Each Big Story and personal Story taps into certain brooding emotions. These ground you. They make you feel safe, sane and healthy. Or unsafe, insane and diseased. How these brooding emotions are expressed through icons and rituals is explained. The act of registering with the Selective Service System is presented as a Big Story and personal Story act which, through icons and rituals, enables you to tap into certain brooding emotions, e.g., national pride and patriotism. The act of resisting the draft is also explored in like terms. The concept of good and bad aspects of a Big Story is introduced.

In **section 1. B**, "How do you hold the world together?" How you answer this question is approached through a brief description of how you form a range of nested identities as you mature. These include: personal identity, family identity, social identity, and cultural and spiritual identities. The role of critical thinking and brooding emotions in your understanding of your Big and personal Stories is presented.

In **section 1. C**, "Evaluating a Big Story and a personal Story," the focus is on explaining the role of two disciplines and practices used to evaluate a Big

and personal Story. One is that, at any given moment, your Big Story is a *best-of-times* experience for you while it is, simultaneously, a *worst-of-times* experience for someone else. I describe my Roman Catholic upbringing to highlight how I was trained to “think it the best of times, but feel it as the worst.” I further explore how this approach was reinforced during my brief monastic experience. My journey from obedient adherent to the traditional Roman Catholic Big Story to my personal Story of becoming a “nonviolent Jesus,” anti-war, draft board raider is presented.

In federal court I presented a week-long “Defense of Necessity.” Witnesses included Vietnam veterans, nationally acclaimed ecologists, theology professors, a noted American historian, priests, nonviolent activists, and Daniel Ellsberg who eventually released “The Pentagon Papers.” I was convicted of a violent felony and sentenced to the maximum sentence of five years in federal prison. My Catholic personal Story, which I had carved out from the transformed Catholic Big Story sourced in the imagination of the Roman Catholic Vatican Council Two and Pope John XIII’s encyclicals, was judged “irrelevant and immaterial.” The thought of a French Jesuit paleontologist and spiritual visionary, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., is discussed in respect to its influence on my reimagining my Big and personal Stories.

I left prison an ex-Catholic, an ex-American, and an ex-con. In prison I lost my ability to speak. I left my American and my Catholic Big and personal Stories strewn on the courtroom floor. Then after a decade of drifting and searching, a time when I pursued doctoral historical and theological research, married and became a father, and worked as a sales and marketing senior manager in corporate America, I realized that I did leave prison with one image and one word. It took ten years to actually listen and

hear this prison declaration and bring the image into focus. This singular image and word is, "Mother."

As I first spoke "Mother," so it became the initiating word of my journey towards a new Big Story. It is both a challenging Big Story Big Question, "Mother?" as it is simultaneously a Big Answer, "Mother." As this happened I encountered others with whom I bonded as we shared the brooding emotion of feeling at home on a Living Earth. Yet, I explain why the Earthfolk were an ancient people whose vision and imagination were unknown to me at that time. The central words and images of the Earthfolk vision and imagination are then presented. I tapped into their brooding emotion of being comfortably at home on the Living Earth. The full Earthfolk Big Story is presented in *Earthfolk Papers, Volume 1*.

The second discipline and practice is to evaluate a Big and personal Story in terms of its *Sunny Spot* and *Shade*. These terms are defined and described. Almost everyone wants to live in their Sunny Spot, and rarely describes themselves in terms of their Shade. Normally, outside agents such as friends, family, corporations, nations and churches force you to see and accept your Shade. How the identity groups discussed in section 1. B impact your sense of power and powerlessness, and how they handle their Shade is explored. That Adolf Hitler would have claimed that he lived in his Sunny Spot is discussed. Lastly, the Digital Age's promise of enabling you to "think globally, act locally" is evaluated. Personal powerlessness as an unintended consequence of being a node on the World-Wide-Web is forwarded.

In **section 1. D**, "How do you feel things are going?" I explore further how I moved from feeling miserable and tapping into the Catholic tradition's brooding dreadful fear to the brooding peacefulness and comfortableness of

the Earthfolk. The significance and usefulness of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's thought is assessed. Notably, Teilhard's creation of a *world-wide-web of the human heart*, decades before the actual Internet was formed, is considered. My progression from accepting the brooding emotions behind "Praise the Lord and pass the ammo!" to those into which the "Just War Theory" taps, to those behind my understanding of war as an act of suicide is described. I fulfilled my military obligation by serving two years of Alternative Service on the staff at the University of Minnesota Newman Center—an on-campus Catholic student center. (Somewhat ironically, I am a "draft board raider" not a "draft dodger.")

At the Newman Center, I met the first person whose personal Story made present the Earthfolk vision. He was a returning Vietnam Vet who was suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome. He said then and later as a witness at my trial that "...instead of a hootch, it was a home. Instead of a gook, it was a person." This sentiment is the nub of the Earthfolk Big Story. As he spoke about his battlefield awakening, the ancient voice of the Earthfolk filled my ears. His battlefield awakening and insight became seed to my escalating my anti-war resistance from draft counseling to raiding draft boards. It bursts its first bud three decade's later as I began writing *Sensual Preciousness*.

Furthermore, you are asked to examine your own nonverbal communication style. Then, at times throughout *Part 1* you are invited to use a worksheet located in **Appendix A**. "Big Story and personal Story worksheet—Big and personal answers."

**Section 1. E** contains a "Summary."

Bulletheaded **Key Points** closes out *Part 1*.

## **A. YOUR BIG STORY AND YOUR PERSONAL STORY**

If I asked you the major Big Questions about life, through your Big Answers you'd begin to describe and detail for me what your Big Story is. These Big Questions focus on the *who, what, when, where, why* and *how* of life, itself. Who or what created the world? When did life begin? Where is life in general and humanity specifically going? How does life progress, if at all? Why is there Evil in the world? And so on. See Table 1, p.18. Also worksheet in *Appendix A*.

As we'd talked, I'd challenge you to define and refine your personal response. You might tell me, for example, that you are a biochemist and a Muslim. I'd question, "How can that be? Isn't *science* by definition and goal an atheistic pursuit?" In whatever fashion our back-and-forth conversation would proceed, you'd show me how you remain faithful to the *Big Story* as you carve out your *personal Story*. There might be tensions, even at times contradictions, between ideas and values in your Big and personal Stories, but you would still confess and profess that you are faithful to both.

As stated in the *Introduction*, I'm interested in your Big Story and personal Story and I want you to think quite critically about both because I want you to explore a new Big Story, that is, the vision of the Earthfolk and the vision of intimacy that defines my personal Story as an Earthfolk. I'd like you to engage that vision and if you find it inspiring to begin to carve out your own *Sensual Preciousness* personal Story.

While I will discuss them in greater detail in *Part 2*, as stated in the *Introduction* the Earthfolk is the name I use to identify a people, an ancient folk, whose imagination and identity has been in deep slumber for millennia.

Historically, the Earthfolk vision and imagination was “re-awakened” at a globalizing moment of the Nuclear Age when the iconic images of the Atomic Bomb’s Mushroom Cloud and of Starship Earth (the Blue Marble of “Sunrise Earth” photographed by the crew of Apollo 8) startled them. Iconic images stir the primal brooding emotion of a Big Story. Together, the iconic Mushroom Cloud and Starship Earth express that the ultimate victory of the Abrahamic spiritual quest—the *Warrior’s Quest* vision— has been achieved. These images enable Abrahamics to tap into their primal brooding emotion—dreadful fear. This fear compels them to seek complete and exacting dominion over the Earth and all people. Never before, in recorded memory, have humans confronted such iconic images or felt so deeply the brooding emotion these two icons tap.

While the Mushroom Cloud validates that humans have created a weapon they cannot control—which could annihilate all life, even the earth itself—its glory is that it is the ultimate weapon, ensuring “Final victory!” Starship Earth, as the product of a military expedition, reveals that outer space can also be dominated. The military goal of America’s space program remains that of creating a platform from which to wage a version of Star Wars. Yet these two iconic images are less than a century old, and few, even among scholars, have plumbed their meaning and import. For me, these two Abrahamic images open and close the *final chapter* in the Abrahamic Religious Big Story of dominion. When humans reflect upon these images they can only tap into the brooding emotion of dreadful fear—which inevitably and ultimately leads to suicide, here, nuclear self-annihilation.

Yet, an *unintended consequence* of Starship Earth was that it also served as our Earthfolk icon. As many of us beheld this image of Earth from outer space, an ancient memory of Her, of Mother, of our Mother God stirred.

Instead of seeing the Earth as a solitary planet adrift in oceanic darkness, and one fit only for conquest, for Earthfolk this image enabled us to tap into the long suppressed brooding emotion of feeling “at home” on Earth. Starship Earth re-inserted into the collective human imagination the image of Earth as Living and as our Mother. It threw off the oppressive Abrahamic image of Earth as a place of exile, inhabited by a cursed people. In exhilarating contrast, it stirred the memory that all humans are one family with just one home. This at home feeling had been effectively usurped and overridden for millennia by the Abrahamic emotion of feeling abandoned and cursed in their exile on Earth.

Of even greater import, Starship Earth stimulated the desire for intimacy, to be seen not as the Abrahamic’s Intimate Enemy but as Beloved. As “Mother” awakes so does “Father” as divine consort. We are children of divine parents who behold each other as Beloveds. Through our embrace of the Other as Beloved so do we make manifest the vision, imagination and transforming presence of Sensual Preciousness. These themes are explored in fuller detail in *Volume 1*.



At first we did not call ourselves “Earthfolk.” None of us had a coherent Big Story. Rather, we had personal Stories that spoke to our convictions and

commitments. "Earthfolk" came later. The name emerged from our shared feeling of being at home on Earth and our intuition that being comfortably at-home on Earth is the primal brooding human emotion. When I mentioned that I practiced "living as if I am no one's Enemy," this phrase resonated with many. Others spoke of their Shade experiences—of their breakdowns and breakthroughs. From these seemingly serendipitous meetings, a gossamer network of what I initially called "re-imaginings" slowly developed. What also deeply bonded us was the heartfelt certainty that visionary and imaginative insight and transformation came through moments of shared intimacy. More than a few of us had been prisoners of conscience. Many had already set about creating personal rituals of intimacy. All had moved beyond the darkness of despair and were seeking ways to express their creativity, what I term their artful stories.

By 2006 I had begun work on college campuses to develop programs to support a play written about the draft raids of the "Minnesota 8." *Peace Crimes: the Minnesota 8 vs. the war* had a successful run in the winter of 2008. By that time, through successes and failures, I learned about the mind-set and soul-set of contemporary youth. Learning with and from them, the vision of the Earthfolk, alive in their hearts, minds and souls, became clearer. See, <http://www.minnesota8.net> and <http://www.pwh-mn.org>

When the Internet became established, connections with others around the world grew. The notion of sacred sexuality became an Internet search term before it entered the popular culture. It was another phrase which stirred the ancient memory of the intimate embrace of our divine Mother and Father from whose intimacy we arose. In its formative stages, ours remained mainly a virtual network. Overtime, I listened to what these others were hearing. I grasped that there were ancient voices incarcerated within the

Abrahamic Big Story that spoke of Her. I was shown that there were alternative interpretations of *Genesis* and other stories in the Abrahamic tradition that through millennia kept alive a spirituality and vision that tapped into the feeling of being at home on Earth. These suppressed interpretations, I intuited, were what I myself had been hearing from my earliest years despite my traditional upbringing. Somehow, while at daily Mass, as I worshipped the Warrior Father God, I tapped into the brooding emotions that gave rise to my first Earthfolk act—raiding draft-boards.

The Earthfolk vision values the pre-Biblical, polytheistic peoples and spiritualities that *Genesis* was composed to defeat. Naming ourselves as *Earth's* folk became useful because it sharply contrasted with the Abrahamic Big Story that speaks of the earth as dirt, a realm to be dominated and a place of exile. Likewise, as *folk* of the Earth, we affirm that everyone is Chosen—that there is no Chosen People. Abrahamics seek to die in a state of holiness to achieve access to paradise. For Earthfolk, the Living Earth is paradisiacal. Of note is that there is no desire on the part of Earthfolk to create an Earthfolk sect. Rather, it is useful simply as a term of common reference for those who feel at home on the Living Earth. The name is not as important as is the experience. The Earthfolk vision and *Sensual Preciousness* imagination continues to blossom as we daily practice rituals of intimacy. (For Earthfolk rituals, see *Volume 1*.)

To effectively present the Earthfolk vision and practice of *Sensual Preciousness*, and to enable you to make a decisive evaluation of the Earthfolk, I need you to conduct a deeply critical evaluation of your own Big Story and personal Story. Consequently, I will define, describe, explore and evaluate what I judge to be the three dominant Big Stories driving the present worldwide transformation of every aspect of human effort—

economic, social, cultural and spiritual—namely, the movement termed “globalization.” As previously identified, these three are the Religious Big Story, the Secular Big Story and the Scientism Big Story.

### **Brooding emotions, icons and rituals**

You do not, presently, use the descriptors *Big Story* and *personal Story*. I employ them because of both their simplicity and depth. In slang, if I asked, “What’s your story?” meaning, tell me why you’re doing what you just did, you’d understand what I want. You’d know that I was asking, “What makes you tick?” in the deep inner personal sense of “What is really driving you, in your heart and gut, to do this?” At another level, you’ve heard or seen, most likely by viewing one of the several documentary storytelling Cable TV channels, the “story” of this or that people, from a historical, archaeological, religious, etc., perspective. For example, the story of a people, such as the Dreamtime story of the Australian Aborigines.

### **Brooding emotions**

While a Big Story encompasses what is referred to as a worldview or gestalt, even *Zeitgeist*, it is these but more than all these together. A Big Story is the source for the imagination, vision and inspiration of a people. More importantly, it is the source for the *brooding emotions* that ground a people. It is the brooding or source story that ties a person to his group as the group tells the story to tie itself to the universe. I use “brooding” because it is a story that “hatches” its people, from which they come as a chicken does an egg. Brooding emotions are your depth feelings about which you are often unaware. Surface feelings often mask a brooding emotion, which again is that which grounds your sense of being safe, healthy and sane.

Brooding conveys images of both birthing and perplexing reflective moodiness. It is a fitting word for the deep reflection required to discern how

your Big Story creates both the best or worst of times. Brooding emotions are what you tap into when you act morally in those situations where you put yourself in harm's way or at great personal risk. One translation of *Genesis 1:1* opens, "with the Spirit of God brooding over the dark vapors." (PTL's *The Living Bible*.)

Your personal Story is the unique, often idiosyncratic, very special result of your brooding upon the Big Story. You brood and carve out and rearrange the deeply felt parts of your Big Story that enables you to sustain your mental and emotional health as you act passionately and morally in the world.

Your brooding emotions, as contrasted to surface feelings, are often linked to an iconic image. Moreover, the iconic image is often a part of a ritual, even a liturgical event, which enables you to express your passion and moral convictions.

### **Secular Big Story's ritual of registration for the Selective Service System**

For example, in America's Secular Big Story of "Patriots defend Democracy!" patriotism is defined as a willingness and a commitment to defend America. To defend "We, the People." Yet, there is something quite peculiar about how you come to be an American patriot. Simply, if you are a young male, it is illegal *not* to be a patriot! To understand this nuance, let's look at

- ❖ the one singular and special act that every male American must do when he turns eighteen.

Every male, regardless of physical or mental health or capacity must register

with the Selective Service System. Once registered there are a range of deferments for health and other reasons. However, the Secular Big Story's act of registration is a rite of passage, a ritual act. Compulsory registration ensures that every male hears himself clearly called to imagine himself as a warrior (Warrior's Quester). He hears "We, the People" call. Although women can enlist, presently, they do not have to register.

At eighteen you register at a Selective Service Office. By signing the Registration form you enter "the draft." You are required to do this even during peace time, and even when there is a war mobilized by a volunteer army. Either you visit a Selective Service Office or somehow you get the form. Notably, in this Digital Age you have the option to go online and register. For most, the act and day of registration is not memorable. What is memorable is the day you are drafted or enlist. (Since 2001, in most states when you get your driver's license you automatically register with the Selective Service. <http://www.sss.gov> )

When you are drafted or when you enlist, you are called to Boot Camp. There you undergo several fairly standard rituals. You are put through a bodily and visceral process where you, yourself, become an icon of patriotism. Slowly, your body is transformed. You are put through a ritual of cleansing and grooming so that you "look like a soldier." You wear special outfits. You learn to walk in a soldierly way. Depending on your service unit, you learn how to properly march with your comrades in arms. When you achieve soldierly status and stature, you can proclaim with pride, "I am a man!"

### **Warrior's Quest primal brooding emotion**

As you progress from recruit to active-duty soldier, you learn how to think

and feel like a Warrior's Quester. You tap into a brooding emotion that is primal, not superficial. While you may have tapped into other brooding emotions as you registered or enlisted (such as a swell of patriotic feeling during the early phases of your military duty) now as you prepare for war drill instructors force you to *consciously* tap into a primal brooding emotion, that of killing another human being. It is descriptive of their self-conscious intent, and not a weak pun, to say that they "drill" this primal brooding emotion into your brain and heart and soul. You somewhat monastically intone and ritualistically shout, "Kill! Kill! Kill!"

You come to cuddle and be *intimate* with your gun. You learn the ritual chant of hating the enemy. You become submissively obedient. More, you become "blindly obedient." You learn **not** to question—especially not to critically question. Whether you like it or not, your drill instructors and leaders successfully break you down and build you up so that you are a "killing machine." Significantly, this change in your personal identity, namely, becoming Killer, is the basis for forming your social group identity as team. You become "unit."

As you become an "American" icon and as you tap into your primal brooding emotion as a Warrior's Quest killer, you confront the very core values of your personal Story. Ironically, for you as for most, it is likely the first time ever that you have been forced to consciously consider that you will lay down your life for your fellow soldiers. For he is you—team. Again, for you it is most likely the first time ever that you have been called to answer the spiritual Big Question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" In response, you are expected to act heroically, with a heroism that approaches spiritual sainthood, that is, martyrdom. It is expected that you will make and sustain a passionate commitment and dedication to warring.

You learn that you are not only your brother's keeper, protecting all your fellow soldiers, but that you are to be ready at any moment to surrender your life for theirs. At this moment, chapters of your Religious and Secular Big Story mesh. Or else, possibly for the first time ever, you "get religion." There is a reason for the maxim, "There are no atheists in foxholes."

As you tap into the primal brooding emotion of killing, you also encounter your deepest brooding fears. You fear that you will not be able to pass the test of killing the enemy. You are haunted by feelings of cowardice and you tremble during those moments when you let yourself ponder the fact that you, yourself, might die.

The icons of military life are numerous, as are those in the formal Religious Life of monks, such as the Franciscans whom I joined. Military dress is the basic icon, to which are added badges, insignias and medals for valor and other deeds. The rifle and other weapons of destruction are obviously iconic. In sum, warfare itself is a ritual event. As I will discuss later, warfare in the American Big Story is a bedrock ritual. In this light, the president as commander-in-chief cannot *not* go to war. Whether the war is cold or hot, it is essential that Americans regularly and continually perform the ritual of warring.

### **"Hell No! We won't go!" icons of war resistance**

As a Big Story is often expressed through quite diverse, often contradictory and at times adversarial personal Stories, so are their icons which represent these differing or dissenting personal Stories. These dissident icons serve to highlight the primal icons of a Big Story. Patriotic icons include the American flag, original copies of the *Declaration of Independence* and the *Constitution*,

the Liberty Bell, draft cards, veteran group insignias, such as of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) caps and banners, and others.

I watched numerous anti-war rallies—from a far distant position—before I began to identify myself as an anti-war resister. I observed the change in how the flag was handled in public. Resisters, as well as returning veterans, began to wear flags as clothing. Soon it became chic to wrap oneself in a flag or sport it as fashion. When flags were burned, nothing much happened. Desecration of the flag is considered part of Free Speech, and it is not a crime. As an icon, then, while the flag evokes certain brooding emotions, it does not tap into the primal emotion of America's Big Story.

If I had stolen and desecrated the treasured original copy of the *Declaration of Independence* or the *Constitution*, or took a sledge hammer to the Liberty Bell and smashed it to smithereens, or even if I set fire to the Judaeo-Christian Bible or the Koran or the Book of Mormon, I'd generate a lot of hate, possibly a fist fight, even a bit of legal trouble. In dramatic contrast, if I convinced you to burn your draft card, *Whoa!* "The Man" comes out of the crowd, swoops over in helicopters, recklessly careens with paddy-wagon lights blaring, strong-arms you, handcuffs and chains you up. *Whoa!* again.

Burning a draft card is not Free Speech. For it is not an act of speaking as it is an act of resisting the primal emotion. You are expressing your nonviolent convictions through a passionate act that conveys that you refuse to feel warlike. You refuse to tap into the primal emotion of killing. *The draft card—and only the draft card—is the primal icon of America's Warrior's Quest Big Story.* If you have lingering doubts, consider that to desecrate the draft card is considered an act of felony violence. You are interfering with the Selective Service System by force, violence or otherwise. As in my particular situation,

the courts said “violence” even when I claimed it was an “otherwise” act of nonviolent protest. Lastly, for what gravity of offense does the court sentence first-time offenders, with no rap-sheet backgrounds and advanced education, to a maximum sentence of five years? Consider: the draft card is to the Warrior’s Quest what the Eucharist host is to Catholics, that is, a sacramental—a holy instrument that makes its God present.

**Loss of the ritual of “marching off to war”**

Finally, let me call your attention to a fact I believe has momentous import in evaluating America’s Secular Big Story. Historically, warriors went “marching off to war” through a public parade. Since the dawn of globalization, America has ceased to both declare its wars and to conduct a public parade for marching off to war. The loss of this ritual moment is a highly significant fact. This loss is linked to the moment when the draft card became iconic. It did so after World War Two when President Harry Truman created the “peace-time draft.” From that moment forward, every eighteen year old America was legally required to register or face imprisonment. After every previous American war, the draft, if used, was disbanded at war’s end. The peace-time draft is the ritual event that characterizes the act and fact of Endless Warring. Note, moreover, that this ritual loss is a defining characteristic of the first globalized war, that is, the Vietnam War. The soldiers of my generation never went marching off to war, and they never demobbed to the roar of the crowd and the blare of triumphant bugles.

<b>BIG STORY</b>	<b>personal Story</b>
Patriots "Defend Democracy!"	register for Selective Service, "the draft"
secular ritual—at 18 every male must Register	even in peace time & volunteer army

deferments for disabilities & other reasons	to obtain enlistment & veteran benefits
Feelings: patriotism, honor, goodness	family pride; obtain social status as veteran
Boot Camp—iconic transformation	body, mind and soul = "killing machine"
Battlefield—heroic and spiritual call to place your life in harm's way, even sacrifice yourself	
for your fellow soldiers and others	
confront deepest fears as you tap into	Tap into primal brooding emotion—fear of being a coward; fear of dying
primal brooding emotion: killing another human	
Warring is American social & cultural ritual	"I am a man!"
"Marching off to war" and "Coming Home" lost rituals	Peril of Endless War & never leaving battlefield

**Table 1 Big Story and personal Story – Selective Service Registration**

**Good and bad aspects of your Big Story**

The first brooding inquiry, then, is to determine *how you hold your world together*. This requires an exploration of your various identities. You ponder, "Who am I?" You reflect upon your personal, familial, social and cultural identities. You wonder, "How am I to approach the Other?" The Other is the stranger, the alien, the outsider. He is someone with whom you must *consciously* develop a relationship because all about him is unfamiliar. So, do you approach him as if family, or as a friend or compatriot? Or, do you regard him as your enemy, a heretic, a gook? As you brood, you begin

to develop a way to explore and evaluate your own and other Big Stories.

For this evaluation, I discuss how to read a Big Story in respect to its creating a world that can be described as “*the best-of-times, the worst-of-times.*” My challenge to you, during your initial wondering, is to develop an approach that *ensures* that you look at your Big and personal Story in depth. This requires you accepting that there are, and then exploring, the good and the bad aspects of your stories. I refer to this as your Big Story creating a best-of-times and a worst-of-times vision.

It takes more than a bit of courage to look at how your Big Story effects a worst-of-times experience for others as it is, quite often, simultaneously one of your best-of-times. Most of us prefer *not* to explore our personal Story’s full depth, especially its worst-of-times. Yet, as I see it, we—you and I—*must* sound the depths. To explore this depth, I discuss how everyone seeks to inhabit a *Sunny Spot*, and how this Sunny Spot relates to the darkness which surrounds and describes the Sunny Spot, namely, the *Shade*.

Probing in depth means examining one’s own Big Story and personal Story in terms of the upbeat, heady vision it offers but doing so by being honest about its less-sunny, shadier aspects. The Shade often requires examining the unintended consequences of the Big Story that, at times, creates a worst-of-times reality for many while you are having a best-of-times experience. Such a Shady examination opens you to possible insights into the realities of your Big Story’s and even your personal Story’s dark intentions, malicious deeds, even, evil deeds and actions. This can cause great anxiety, even psychological breakdown.

For example, the Atomic Bomb was created by the best scientific and

military minds in America. Its use put a once-and-for-all-time end to a world war. Americans cheered its creation and deployment. Yet, several unintended consequences ensued. Americans created a weapon they could not, and cannot, control. In this light, Americans dropped the Bomb on themselves! They opened the Nuclear Age where the only way to win is not to go to war. But such has not been the case. Instead of being part of the War-to-end-all-war, it can be argued that World War II has never ended. Rather, it was the opening chapter in the Big Story titled *The Endless War*.

Likewise, the Nazis used advanced bio-chemical agents to exterminate millions of people. Few Americans would hesitate to cite the Nazis as evil people. Probing in depth means considering this question—Did the creation and dropping of the Atomic Bomb, which vaporized thousands, make present Americans as a good people? Wasn't what was the best-of-times for Americans clearly the worst-of-times for the Japanese ("Orientals")? But wasn't it really also a worst-of-times for Americans? We are the only people in recorded memory to vaporize human life, and all associated life in the area. Can nuclear vaporization ever be a moral good?

<b>BIG STORY</b>	<b>personal STORY</b>
worldview, gestalt, Zeitgeist	unique, often idiosyncratic
imagination, vision, inspiration of a people	sustain mental and emotional health
brooding emotions	act passionately and morally
"the best of times, the worst of times"	Unintended Consequences
Sunny Spot and the Shade	Dark intentions, malicious deeds, Evil

**Table 2 Big Story and personal Story - Summary**

## **B. HOW DO YOU HOLD THE WORLD TOGETHER?**

Generally, you hold your world together through the identities you form over time by recognizing and accepting the groups you are born into and/or by choosing to join various groups. Each group provides you with Big Story material with which to carve out your personal Story. During each identity phase, you develop parts of your Big Story and personal Story as you interact with group members and then with those outside the group. While your particular identity formation path is unique, in broad terms, you engage familial, social, cultural and religious groups as you mature.

While I discuss the Shade aspects of identity formation, the following presentation assumes that you grew up in a healthy family, which was loving, nurturing and not abusive.

### **Personal identity**

You, as I and all others are born "in the middle of things." By the time you become self-aware, one of the most dynamic, growth-filled and formative periods of your life has already happened. This is the "age of innocence" phase when you are closely held, your every step watched, and during which you are regularly embraced by others. All your experience is intimate. The "other" is friendly and nurturing. This is when you are most closely parented. You are nurtured physically and, most significantly, emotionally. Before you have concepts and words for them, "others" embrace you and feed you from their hearts. You feel safe within an embrace. When you become self-aware, it is at that emotional moment when you knowingly embrace others. As you become aware of others, you become aware of "you." This you has a special name.

### **Family identity**

The personal "you" awakens when all of a sudden you realize that not only do you have a name but others have names. It is at this time that the word

“you” draws you into dynamic interplay with others. It is a word others use to help you understand “who you are”—which becomes “me.” You begin to name your story’s other players: parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. You practice writing your name.

My middle name is Xavier, my first is Francis. Both names put me squarely among famous Catholic saints. “You’re named after Saint Francis Xavier. He carried God’s Word to the Japanese pagans.” This was said by my maternal grandmother and her intent was to make me aware that I had been “chosen.” At an early age, I was given a name that told others of my parent’s expectations, namely, that I would be a priest, specifically a Jesuit like St. Francis Xavier. While I clearly didn’t grasp the import of this at the time, my name always evoked a knowing nod or telling look from the nuns who taught me. *They knew* what my name implied.

Perhaps your name too evokes expectations, familial heritage or special significance?

As you grow increasingly aware of yourself, you begin to name everyone and everything around you. You discover a fuller meaning of “family.” And as I did, you often become aware of a name’s peculiarity, such as the *c* before the *k* in Kron-c-ke. Someone told me, “You’re German, that’s why.” Not much was said about being German, a matter that I only came to understand later as I learned about the Nazis. Since my church was filled with German-Irish families that still included immigrant and first-generation members, the talk was about “being an American” and not about ethnicity. Only the Irish talked about the Old Sod. In fact, many of German descent, like my father, made a conscious effort to affirm their Americanism by enlisting, as he did in the Navy, to fight the Nazi *der Fuhrer*.

Then, as you name yourself and those around you, your own name becomes more distinct and special to you and to others. This interplay between the growing awareness of yourself as a “you” and a “me” marks those years during which you hear others say, “He’s growing up so fast!”

For most, again assuming that the family is a healthy unit, you feel safe at home. You also sense that the “other” is not you, and that others have families. While you are warned to be aware and distrustful of strangers, you realize that you live in a neighborhood, which again is usually a secondary safety zone. Soon, you arrive at an acute stage of self-awareness. You enter adolescence.

### **Social identity**

As a teen you begin to feel socially awkward, self-conscious and sensitive to external evaluation. You develop two identities, private and public personalities. You sense your inner life. This is the phase wherein you probably feel that it is “me against the world!” Your sense of safety is only among those like you. You come to know others as different, odd, unusual or like you. You seek to join a “pack.” In my case, I sought identity through sports and being an altar boy. You might have joined an organization or an association, for example, the track team, Boy Scouts, 4-H or Order of Job’s Daughters. In these latter groups, you clarify your shared and/or separating values.

Overall, you grasp that there are the young and the old. As in each generation, at times you feel only comfortable with those your same age. Although it was at the end of this identity phase for me, being a “child of the Sixties,” I found membership in the global “Youth Movement.” The outward signs of being hip were long hair, folk and early rock-and-roll music, an

openness to smoking marijuana, and an attitude of rejecting parental authority, which was eventually anchored in “Resist Authority!”

Soon, you realize that so many others have lived before you. You discover your familial past. “Oh, you’re just like your grandfather.” You become aware of yourself as a distinct player within your own family unit. You also become aware of your family’s distinct identity. Without necessarily having the concepts or language, you become aware of your socio-economic, political, religious and sexual identities. You come to face all the “others”—nearby, in the neighborhood and far distant who are in your world. You begin to develop a set of values.

During these first two phases of initial self-awareness, you begin to form answers to the Big Questions, and start to carve out your personal Story, notably, to the very personal question, “Who am I?” You start to learn how to tell the first chapter of your own personal Story as it explains who you are inside your family. Soon, you learn how to begin to tell other chapters of the Big Story that ground your family in a larger social context. You learn how to tell your Big Story in respect to the quality of the neighborhood where you live, your ethnic identity, your parents’ work careers—often with corporate identities and titles, your religious affiliation, and even, in certain homes, your political persuasion.

### **Cultural identity**

You begin to develop your cultural identity that forms your global personality, that is, how you fit within the world community. You discover the particulars, even peculiarities, of your personal, familial and social identities. You experience their complementarity and distinctiveness. You sense a certain emotional safety inside national boundaries and for the first time become aware of the intellectual tradition of your groups.

In my case, I was a German-Irish, Roman Catholic American from Bayonne, New Jersey, a working-class town, whose father was a chemist for "3M," and who knew that the family voted for "Ike," meaning Republican. I didn't know how they all fit together but they began to provide me with a sense of boundaries.

### **Spiritual identity**

Soon the Big Questions that address the issues of Life and Death arise, and it feels urgent to answer them. "Where did we come from? Where are we going? Why are we here?" This leads to an examination of those spiritual parts of your Big Story that offer you a vision and language about your "eternal self."

During my spiritual awakening, all of the Big Questions and Answers were handed to me in a doctrinal and dogmatic book, "The Baltimore Catechism." More, I was not to question but to recite the catechism by rote. Each day I had a Catechism lesson and eagerly raised my hand to answer, "Who made us?" *Me*: "God made us." "Why did God make us?" *Me*: "To show forth His goodness and to share with us His everlasting happiness in heaven." And so forth for roughly 500 Questions and Answers which covered just about every moral act. My personal Story, then, was determined by my Big Story. Its imagination, vision and morality were mine in every and exacting detail.

During the development of my cultural and spiritual phases, I also became aware of certain relevant parts of my Roman Catholic Big Story. Through them I learned about certain others who were either enemies, corrupters, or allies. I understood, for example, that I was not to play with Protestant children nor enter their churches. All that I knew was that they were "temptations to your faith." I didn't know exactly what that meant, however.

Curiously, we could play with Jewish kids. I heard that they had “rejected Christ,” and for some reason this made them safe. I guess that there was no fear that I’d convert to Judaism, plus I was told—and sufficiently frightened by the statement—that they killed animals in their temples. Yet, there was a curious bond that was reflected in a shared sacred scripture, though they were Old and we were New. Initially, Jews as the “other” were accepted as manifesting the presence of God. I was to accept that they were God’s Chosen People, but understand that they had lost their way. Nevertheless, their “Old Testament” Big Story was a source for my “New Testament.” It would be decades before I grasped how insulting this Old/New distinction was to Jews.

I also, without any inquiry, accepted certain icons. Every room in my house and school had a crucifix. Holy Water fonts, large and small, were likewise omnipresent. Religious statues and pictures were abundant. I carried a set of Rosary beads and my family had an oversized version housed in a plastic statue of the Blessed Mother that we used for family prayer. Of note is that book-ending the sacred altar of Holy Sacrifice was the flag of the United States and its companion, the flag of the Papacy. It also drew no comment when soldiers and veterans wore their dress uniforms as they attended Holy Mass on specific holidays and holy days.

In your own life, as you proceed through these formative years, you begin to understand the “history and culture” of your people both nationally and globally. For me, I learned that my culture and history were separate. That while I was an American, I was not “100% American” because of my Big Story with its Pope in Rome. It wasn’t until John Kennedy was elected that this element in my Big Story shifted. Kennedy’s personal Story, that is, his convincing America that he was a true-blue 100% American while

simultaneously being Catholic, changed my Big Story. Beforehand, being Catholic meant exclusion from certain aspects of American society and culture. Now every facet of America’s Big Story, of American society and culture, could become part of my personal Story. I inherited my father’s strong Germanic traits and so comfortably matched a dogged obedience to the Pope with a profession of complete confidence in democracy. Dad would say, “Once a man is elected President, you stop criticizing him. You follow him.” God and the State were integral parts of my Big Story. Yet if I had to choose, there was no doubt that I was at heart a Catholic first and an American second.

In comparison to my social identity group, where everything in America’s Big Story was open to become part of mine, this integration has yet to occur for others who share only partial chapters of that Big Story, for example, American Jews and women. Americans, as a whole, still cannot imagine a Jewish or female president.

<b>BIG STORY</b>	<b>personal STORY</b>
Roman Catholics are not 100% American	"Baltimore Catechism" has all Big Questions and
Obedience to the Pope conflicts with Democracy	Big Answers
Question Catholic president's allegiance	Obey Pope before any other authority
Kennedy's election changes American Catholic Big Story	John Kennedy seeks and gets elected president
All aspects of American Big Story can now	All aspects of American society can now become
become part of my Catholic Big	part of my Catholic personal

Story	Story
Icons: crucifixes, holy water fonts, statues of Saints	I'm Catholic first, American second

**Table 3 Big Story and personal Story – American and Catholic**

### **Encountering other Big Stories**

Growing up, you become aware that for some their spiritual identity forms around denying that they have a spiritual identity. For me atheists were seen as tempters, as evil people who were in league with Satan.

Nevertheless, during these early times of cultural and spiritual awareness, few obtain a good grasp of how others with different Big Story identities react and why they do so to your self-description, your family's story or your social and cultural Big Story.

During each of these phases you are continually expanding your Big and personal Stories. In time, you broaden and deepen your stories as you search for Big Answers to other questions of social, political, sexual, moral, etc., concerns. As these answers form, you begin to mature, that is, parent yourself, "become your own man." Or woman. Eventually, the Big Questions become far-reaching and complex. For example, if you belong to a religious group outside the mainstream of American Protestantism, you discover that some people challenge whether you can be an American and, say, a Buddhist. When you first encounter such a truly Big Question, you not only don't understand how to answer it, you also likely don't grasp its full intent and import. You've yet to read the subtext in questions from outsiders. To do so, requires the skill of critical thinking.

<b>IDENTITIES</b>	<b>OTHERS</b>
<i>Personal Identity</i>	
born "in the middle of things"— Intimacy	
Age of Innocence—closely parented	"other" is friendly, nurturing
safe within an embrace	safe within an embrace
"You" appears as you knowingly embrace others	
"You" awakens as you are "name"	
your "name" is special	
<i>Family Identity</i> —interactive "you"	form distinct personality
sense that other families are same but different	"other" is "not me"
safe at home	"other" also call itself a family
Big and personal Story are one, the family story	"other" is neighbor
<i>Social Identity</i> —adolescence, "self- conscious"	Private and public personalities
sense of yourself as "other"	"other" is different, odd, unusual or same
safe in "the pack", part of a "youth movement"	"other" can be threatening
you sense your "inner life"	"other" is organization, association member
	sense of shared and/or separating values

<i>Cultural Identity</i> —Nation, Tradition	
Global personality	"other" might be enemy or corrupter or ally
safe inside national boundaries and	"other" might be ancient source for your Tradition
intellectual Tradition	
know values <i>willing</i> to die for	"other" is foreign, strange, alien
<i>Spiritual Identity</i> —Church, religion	
Eternal Self	mystical definition of self and other
Exclusive member, e. g., one of a "Chosen People"	"other" is Tempter, Evil or Saint
Inclusive member, e.g., all are Children of God	"other" is presence of God, Great Spirit
know values which <i>must</i> die for	

**Table 4 Identities**

**Critical thinking**

As you mature, your Big Story expands to include or consciously reject segments of the Big Stories of others. Here, you learn that some who had seem different, for example, your Moslem playmate or someone who claimed to be an atheist, share a key political aspect of your cultural Big Story, namely, you are both *American*. You learn that the political narrative in the historical chapter of the Big Story states that America is inclusive. The Statue of Liberty settles into your mind as an icon, "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore, Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my

lamp beside the golden door!”

You feel pride in being an American whose “national identity” is sought by and offered to immigrants and refugees from other social and cultural Big Stories. You learn that waves and waves of others—grateful immigrants—desire to rewrite their personal Stories by adopting a chapter in your Big Story vision, that is, the “American way of life.” At the same time, you get inklings that other Big Stories are sourced in some widely varying and sometimes apparently wild beliefs, values and histories. You begin to hear about certain “foreigners” who are “anti-Americans.” You learn that these are not allowed to enter the country, or entered and were then deported.

These latter “first inklings” often arise when you first hear about unhappy chapters in your Big Story. This is the first time you are challenged into critical thinking. It is the first time you learn that other Big Stories actually want to destroy your Big Story. For example, you listen to accounts about surviving the purges of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge’s “Killing Fields.” You might have had some preparation for this if your family had begun to tell you “the same old family stories” but with a different Shady slant.

You hear, “You’re grown up now, enough to learn that you grandfather ...” And so you learn about your family’s Shady side. Possibly about alcoholism, drug addiction, divorce, spousal abuse, criminality or simply a sully of your ideal image, “Your Uncle Jim, see, he’s what we call a ‘fallen away’ Catholic.” Now, you also hear about “enemies.” Words and images such as hero, warrior, savage, traitor, coward, infidel and heretic may enter your imagination.

Through this early critical thinking, your personal and Big Stories are

becoming more distinctly formed and you are grounding yourself. You are staking down the various identities that form “you.” In some situations, you are moved by an unsettling critical thought. As a draft counselor, I often heard a version of an account where, while you are talking with your wounded cousin who just returned from Vietnam, your dad breaks into the conversation, sternly admonishing, “Enough’s enough, I don’t want to hear any more of this type of talk!” Perhaps this command came because your cousin shifted from sharing with you his early enthusiasm for serving his country to urging you, “Whatever you do, don’t enlist!” Quite often, such “that’s not our Story” events happen when religious or political issues are discussed. Possibly, in some families, this occurs more often around issues of sexual morality. “I don’t care if she is on the pill, you are not to treat women that way! *No son of mine ...*”

As you mature even further, you are challenged to take your place in society. You are asked serious questions about your future. You are expected to give firm answers about the type of work you are going to do, when you plan to marry, how you handle your money, what your political and moral views are, and so forth. You find yourself entering into challenging and complex topics such as the role of government, abortion, environmental responsibilities, faith, economic impact of globalization, and so on.

You are making life decisions and, with more or less self-awareness, you are stabilizing your Big and personal Stories. If you enter college you likely begin to meet others who are vocal and aggressive about their Big Story and the commitments of their personal Stories. Sometimes, these people even get “in your face.” You cannot but viscerally react to them. Curiously, they may put you in touch with your own convictions and gut feelings. If you

study some liberal arts courses, such as history, anthropology, comparative religions, ethics, etc., you, ideally, begin to understand how Big and personal Stories play out in individual lives and across societies and cultures down through history.

### **Brooding emotions**

During your maturation your social, cultural and spiritual phases merge as you are confronted by a call to social service of some sort. You are asked to act on behalf of and to serve others. You are called to consider putting your life in harm's way. You may even begin to contemplate dying at a young age. You might enlist in the military. Or join a public service organization like VISTA or the Peace Corps. Or simply become active in social service or social justice organizations. You are developing a civic sense and an understanding of the obligations of citizenship.

Whichever path you take, it is a time when you are quite attuned to what you want your personal Story to be, and so you seek to delve the depths of the Big Questions and Big Answers. Of significance, is that this is the period when you accept or reject questions and answers in respect to how they enable you to feel. You plumb them in a quest to anchor your life-risking patriotic commitment, or to feel secure about God's judgment as you undergo an abortion, or to source your determination to propose marriage. It is the time when you access and discover—not always consciously discover, however—your brooding emotions.

As you critically probe these dizzying Big Questions, you might begin to sense that the Big Answers are possibly broader and deeper in intellectual scope than you can handle, even too complex for most people to have ready answers. You understand the difference between opinions and well researched thoughts. Yet, your daily life is rapidly moving in other

directions, and you hear yourself asking, “Who has time for all this heady stuff?” You might begin to let others do the thinking and acting for you. So you join organizations—social, political, professional, religious, etc.—that will represent you. These provide you with articulated fundamentals, namely, creeds, doctrines, dogmas, codes of ethics, and archives of “position papers.” Once you join, you may stop critically thinking about these topics. Indeed, these groups enable you to effortlessly tap into the brooding emotion which grounds them. As a member, you feel deeply patriotic or faithful or lawful or obedient. Whenever you want to brood, you simply attend a meeting, go to a rally, make a donation, attend a service, or so forth.

In my Catholic Big Story, a long-standing tradition is built on doing good works. At an early age I was aware of the demand to be a servant of the Greater Good (God and His laws) to realize the Common Good (service to others). The Big Story made this call to servanthood—to be a “Servant of Servants”—a required part of my personal Story. The Catholic tradition is one that mandates a commitment to social justice as a manifestation of faith.

Through all of this, your Big Story and your personal Story become quite tightly wound together. If someone challenges you personally, you feel that they are challenging your Big Story. And, vice versa: anyone challenging your Big Story is challenging you.

By this time in your growth—and there are no hard-and-fast age boundaries to this process—you have carved out a personal Story that might actually, if not perfectly, jibe with your Big Story. You have selected specific parts of a Big Story and rejected or minimalized others. Perhaps you are Jewish. With

your Jewish friends you agree about interfaith marriage, are fairly consistent in attending the synagogue, and observe in a traditional manner most of the holy days. Yet you disagree about the State of Israel. You support Israel because it is there; that’s a fact. But you are not a Zionist. You are open to some negotiation with the Palestinians. Yet, you’d never say that outside of your Jewish circle. In public, you artfully deflect and avoid the issues when conversing with non-Jews.

In time, you reach the stage where you have a fully articulated personal Story. Your personal Story is your commitment story. From this point on, if someone knows your personal Story, he or she knows the range of moral and heartfelt acts you are willing to take. When others talk with you, say about capital punishment, and make a broad statement, “You’re an atheist so I expect that you believe ...,” you counter with your personal Story, either to affirm or dispel the outsider’s assumption.

Your personal Story is how you remain in a Big Story but also a bit outside of it. It is one basis for how you can remain a critical thinker. “I’m a Republican,” you might say, “but I agree with the Democrats on...” Or, “I’m an American but really aren’t we all just people?” At this point, your personal Story might cease to grow and expand. “That’s what I have believed since I was five, and I’m not going to change!”

<b>CRITICAL THINKING</b>	<b>BROODING EMOTION</b>
consciously accept/reject parts of other Big Stories	share common deep feelings—brooding emotion
others form their personal Story with	called to social service
parts of your Big Story	to act on behalf of and to serve others

hear about those who hate your Big Story	consider putting your life in harm's way!
disenchanted by "problems" in your family story	Army, VISTA, Peace Corp
observe some within your Big Story	join organizations: social, political, religious
change because of conflicts with personal Story	clarify your commitments, which are sourced
"Don't enlist!"..."That is not part of our Story!"	in brooding emotion
Face challenging and complex Big Questions	Patriotism, Faith, Law & Order, Obedience
Asked serious questions; make Life Decisions	"Greater Good" and "Common Good"
	Servanthood—Social Justice as act of Faith

**Table 5 Critical Thinking and Brooding Emotion**

While the specific Big Answers provided by the three dominant Big Stories is presented later in this section, the worksheet in *Appendix A* provides assistance in preparing to understand and evaluate these Big Answers by jotting down the first draft of your own Big Answers and points of your personal Story.

### **C. EVALUATING A BIG STORY AND A PERSONAL STORY**

When you put together a Big Story and carve out a personal Story, you tap into the Big Story's brooding emotions. Once you have stabilized your Stories, you can go about your daily life without much critical thinking. Through the ages various Big Stories dominated certain societies or cultures,

and they enabled followers to create livable personal Stories. The simple fact is that you could live a full, complete and satisfying human life as a follower of nearly any of these quite diverse, even contradictory Big Stories. Your life could have meaning by acting out quite a wide range of diverse, even contradictory personal Stories.

Right now, the three dominant Big Stories driving globalization are the Religious, the Secular and Scientism's Big Story. These enable numerous individuals, societies and cultures to express and live out their humanity. I've indicated that I personally find these Big Stories and their associated personal Stories lacking in an imagination that can inspire a personal Story for me. Going forward, I evaluate them as preparation for introducing the Earthfolk Big Story and my Earthfolk personal Story. Yet, they are part of my already developing Earthfolk personal Story so I want to respectfully examine these Big Stories.

I understand that Big Stories are works of imagining. For you to similarly imagine requires that I invite you, not cajole or coerce you. The latter simply won't work. Human relationships are works of imagining, of imagining "you" and "me," "we" and "us." At the least, I hold that you will reap benefits from understanding how your Big Story functions as you carve out your personal Story. For example, if after reading *Sensual Preciousness* you opt to remain a dedicated Wiccan or Secular Humanist or one who professes a Scientism Big Story which advocates the panspermia theory of how life began, it will have been helpful for you to grasp just what your Big Story is, what it imagines, and how it determines the possible moral choices you have as you carve out your personal Story.

In sum, I respect Big Stories and personal Stories. I seek to understand

their imaginations and the process by which their followers carve out personal Stories. I maintain that it will be helpful for you to do likewise. All that I can ask of you is to accept my invitation to step forward into an exploration and critical analysis of the interpretations of your Big Stories. If you do so, I anticipate that you will respect my Earthfolk Big Story, even if you ultimately cannot imagine it.

### **And so we begin**

I am guided by two principles when evaluating a Big Story. To properly and respectfully evaluate the three dominant Big Stories, which I claim are source for globalization's imagination, vision and brooding emotion, I follow two core disciplines and practices.

First, I examine every Big Story or personal Story to discern how an event or situation is viewed by various agents. For example, how the Free Market is understood by an individual, corporation, nation or church in respect to their views on how the Free Market creates both "the best of times and the worst of times."

Second, I study how an individual or group perceives a Big Story's and a personal Story's Sunny Spot and Shade. As I queried before, Does the dropping of the Atomic Bomb reveal the character of America's Sunny Spot or its Shade? Moreover, I also follow these disciplines and practices when evaluating my Earthfolk Big and personal Stories.

#### **1. 1. "The best of times, the worst of times"**

One of the impacts of high technology and globalization, that is, through 24/7 newscasts, Internet websites, is that you, more often than in decades before, confront other Big Stories that either reject outright or are significant modifications of your own. As I discuss in *Part 2*, there are "camps" within each Big Story, for example, a "Sacred Secularism" and a "Non-Sacred

Secularism” Big Story. When you hear others say that they share your Big Story and many of your personal Story values but interpret everything quite differently and end up calling for a moral action you reject, what do you do? What aids you in understanding, although not always accepting, that others see the worst-of-times when your interpretation of your Big Story helps you see the best-of-times?

Clarifying how you see a Big Story as *best* when others see it as *worst* is the essential first step. More people stop talking—or never even begin—as soon as they hear negative feedback, such as, “You’re nuts. You people who think that way, *always* ....” No dialogue ensues. No human communication. If you could still live within a pre-globalization frame of mind then you might be able to withdraw into some space, for example, a fairly ethnically homogenous country such as France or inside a small regional corporation and stew, “I’ll never visit there, again.” Or “ I’ll never deal with that company, again.” But I hold that such retreat “places” are truly not available any more—are no longer imaginable—simply because every country is but a dot on a globetrotter’s tourist map, and every company, somehow, is connected to your company via another company. Of course, the World-Wide-Web also means that you cannot hide because you are always a node on some telecommunication device or system. Chillingly, you are *always* a node because you may be being watched or tracked by digital devices without your knowledge or consent!

To understand how I came to understand and appreciate this best-of-times, worst-of-times approach to evaluating a Big Story or personal Story, let me recount a bit about my upbringing.

When I was young, I was told that when I died that I would have to account

for my life. My Roman Catholic Religious Big Story stated that the beginning of my afterlife would bring about a meeting with St. Peter at the Pearly Gates. He would have the Book of Life in his arms. This Book already had my "personal Story." St. Peter would know who I was and what I had done. He knew *everything*, so I was forewarned. I would have no way of embellishing my story or conning the old guy. No, I was there to be judged. I was going to be "nailed" by what I did, not by what I said or could say in my defense. The bottom-line was, "Did you lead a moral life?" This was my Final Judgment. If the verdict was "Good Man," I went to paradise. If not, well, things would start to get really hot!

One purpose of this Final Judgment story is that it kept me focused on what I was doing today, right now. At every moment, I was supposed to be conscious of God's presence and act in a moral way, which meant in obedience to His commandments. If I lost my focus and by some misfortune died while doing something bad, there would be no second chances. The Final Judgment could occur at anytime, anywhere. Fearfully, even before I might finish typing this sent ...!

Since I heard this Final Judgment story during my tender years—that is, my age of innocence—it strongly influenced how I felt about myself and life in general. For some reason, which I had then yet to fully grasp, the "world" and "other people" were bent on tempting me to do bad things. Both were considered "occasions of sin." While I was told to love everyone, even my enemies, I heard, loud and clear, the unspoken message that others, from family members to distant strangers, were to be cautiously approached. More, that they were basically to be feared. As I now understand, I was being connected to one of my Big Story's brooding emotions, namely, fear of the "other."

In this world, which for me was the Irish Roman Catholic form of gloomy and strict Puritan-like Christianity called Jansenism, other people were temptations simply because the Devil overcame them and used them for his vile purposes. Of course, it was also clear that I could be a minion of the Devil and be a temptation for others and cause them to do bad things. With another twist, I was told that I was even a temptation to me, myself and I!

As odd as that might sound, it was explained to me that all humans, myself included, had "two natures." One was a "fallen nature," the result of an Original Sin. I was told to recognize that I was born rotten to the core. The other nature, the "nature of grace," was the result of my having been saved through the sufferings of Jesus Christ. However, I was told to be constantly aware of giving into temptations, which would arouse my fallen nature. Although Jesus had saved me, the Devil continued to prey upon me. This view was summed up in the verse I chanted before retiring in the monastery at the prayer hour called *Compline*, "Be sober, be watchful! For your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith." (1 Peter 5:8-9) That snake Satan was still able to tempt me and undo what Jesus had done. I could be bad. I could fall out of the state of grace. I could die in deep sinfulness. This simple but chilling story of the Final Judgment moved me to become a reflective person.

Emotionally, I feared myself! The only one I could trust was God. Righting my emotional self with God, then, became a daily spiritual quest. Fortunately, my Catholic Big Story came with religious rituals and spiritual practices with which I could ground myself and be confident that I was right with God. At the end of each day, I, as with others of my faith, habitually

knelt down and conducted an Examination of Conscience. This was my own review of what good and bad I had done that day. There were occasions where I would consider that I had actually acted evilly. These were times when I had either considered or committed a Mortal Sin. The significant point, here, is that I was instructed to examine my life, to look deeply at my intentions as well as my actions, on a daily basis. While this formed certain useful intellectual habits, such as analyzing and evaluating what influenced me and the why and how of my responses, it also molded my basic feelings about myself and life in general.

My basic feelings could be summed up in the phrase which opens Charles Dickens' famous novel, *The Tale of Two Cities*. That is, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." On any given day, at any moment, I could look at myself and judge that I was having the best time of my life, that I was the best I'd ever been—healthy, wise, in the dough. Life was grand. God's graciousness could be seen in the astounding beauty of nature, or made present through the hug my mother gave to me, or through a kindness received from or given to a stranger. Yet, I was simultaneously having the worst of times in every respect. Life was rotten, that is, Earth is not Paradise. I was a fallen, depraved sinner. The "bad me" would take over and I'd do things of which I was ashamed, and which I'd only confess in the darkness of the priestly Confessional. In short, *right now*, I deserved to suffer the fires of hell.

As I grew and matured I recognized another curious aspect to these dueling feelings. Namely, that when I was having one of my best-of-times, someone else was having their worst. And, vice versa. This aspect was evident as personal relationships developed. But it was more apparent as I became aware of the larger world, and came to know how truly worse or better off

many people were. So, at any time, I could pause, review the world situation, and then convince myself that though I was happy, I should be sad, or though I was sad, I should be happy. As significant, I learned that I, unfortunately without much effort, could turn someone's feeling of joy and optimism into despair and pessimism. And, with a bit more effort, make others laugh and see the brighter side when they were down or gloomy.

Here's where St. Peter comes back into the picture. At my Final Judgment he wanted me to account for myself. But he was judging me based on what I had done for others. He didn't care whether I was healthy, wealthy and wise, rather, if, like his Savior Jesus, I had been a servant of others. He wanted to know if I was a moral man, a Good Guy, someone with even just a slight odor of heroism. He would check my personal story in the Book of Life to assess whether I had in any way ever experienced putting my life in harm's way to help another person who was having their worst time. For even though the Other was an occasion for temptation, I was also not to become an occasion for them. Rather, I was to help them have one of their best-of-times experiences. I was charged with a moral obligation to love others with an unconditional love. Yet, I was to love without succumbing to the temptation of the sin of pride. For I was *not* the source of this unconditional love. Rather, it flowed *through* me from Jesus' divine love. In fact, so I was taught, I could only be a conduit for this unconditional love as I surrendered any personal desire for or claim on my own worthiness to receive such unconditional love.

Growing up was, for me, a constant up and down ride on this emotional and moral rollercoaster. This Final Judgment story expressed the controlling premise of the overall Big Story that Roman Catholic Christianity recounted to me. It came at every moment, every day, through every action. During

worship at Daily Mass. In the classroom through recitation of the "Baltimore Catechism's" Q & As. Through the obligatory inscribing "J.M.J." atop every sheet and every page of my homework pad: "Jesus. Mary. Joseph." It was whispered by the sacred statues and the ever-present crucifixes which adorned every room at home and at school. The very spoken and unspoken premise of the Big Story was that it's *okay to feel rotten!* Indeed, how else should one feel? The world is doomed. Humanity is doomed. The only hope is to die in the state of grace and escape this "earthly vale of tears." All in all, the times felt quite a bit more worst than best.

### **Think best, feel worst**

I want to be clear about this Big Story and how its brooding emotion formed and influenced my thinking. On the one hand, I was to feel, *not think*, that the world was doomed, that I was rotten, etc. I was not to think that way because I was Saved, and I was to think Saved. I was even to think of my enemy as a child of God and someone for whom I should be willing to lay down my life, even though I was to fear him. Clearly, on the thinking level, many things did not flow logically. Certainly, they did not link up smoothly with my brooding emotional state. The phrase could be, "Think it the best of times, feel it as the worst."

This conflict between thinking and brooding emotion would become significant in my young adult life as I faced the contradiction between affirming, "Thou shalt not kill," and then swearing allegiance to an army whose core purpose is to kill. It was a conflict that I never smoothly resolved. I could follow the logical thinking that would lead to my killing another by applying the principles of the Catholic "Just War Theory," but I could never feel in my heart that it was a Christian act.

Despite my personal emotional conflicts, I was to think that everything was Good because Jesus had Saved me. Heightening my turmoil was the fact that Jesus saved me because I was and am a miserable sinner. My working solution: as long as I continued to feel deeply miserable in my gut, I had no obligation to figure out how to solve all the heady intellectual issues. Rather, the conflict between my emotions and my mind was to be resolved by my submitting to a greater mind, namely, God's as revealed through Mother Church, led here on Earth by the Roman Pope.

My Catholic Religious Big Story contained a centuries-old, ready-made template inside it with which to develop my personal Story. This was perceived as a benefit of the Catholic Church, a hierarchical, authoritarian and benevolent dictatorship. Indeed, as a Big Story it has the most extensive and thorough-going set of Big Answers I have ever encountered. In fact, few Big Stories have created a manual for the development of its Big Story and its followers' personal Story the likes of St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*.

Intellectually, in terms of beliefs, doctrines and dogmas, the Church and her priests instructed me how to compose my personal Story, and helped me avoid the pitfalls of worldly temptation. Of note is that this obedient submission to the priest and Mother Church could only happen if I once again affirmed my miserable self's inability to be anything but profoundly miserable. I was even expected to see myself as a miserable thinker, as someone who must rotely follow and not presume to possess intellectual skills surpassing those of the anointed priests and bishops. In sum, the emphasis was on thinking that everything was Good, Right and Just because of what Jesus had accomplished and which the Church preserved. However,

I was to feel rotten and dwell in fear and dread, that is, feel what only a miserable sinner born into Original Sin should feel: *deeply miserable*, truly rotten in mind, heart and soul.

### **Monastic Years**

It took me many decades of following the discipline and practices of being miserable before I realized that I didn't feel miserable. Yet I couldn't describe myself as "happy." I was still too deeply grounded in the Catholic Big Story to tap into the joy of being. Despite all the hullabaloo around the "Resurrected Christ," the joys of Easter were always piddling compared to the panoply of the feeling miserable practices and religious rituals of the Passion and Death of Christ. Indeed, mine was a slow-developing awareness of feeling "not-miserable." Ironically, it began when I entered a Roman Catholic seminary to study to become a priest.

During my junior and senior year in high school, I entered the minor seminary. Later, I was invested as a novice Franciscan monk, as "Friar Otto" I followed the ancient tradition of "*Ora et Labora*" or "Pray and Work." I chanted (badly and off-key) the hourly prayers of the "Divine Office." I threw myself prostrate before the Master and the community as I accused myself of sins and failures during the confessional discipline called "Culpa." I thickened the calluses around my knee caps as I prayerfully crawled and scraped my way around the circle of the 12 Stations of the Cross. Then, one day, I realized that I had to leave.

As expected, most of my friends, family, and colleagues, back then as they do today, figured that I gave up my priestly call for sexual temptations. But that wasn't it. Somehow—and this is an insight that came back to me when in prison—the twisted maleness fostered by, and the narrowness of the

spiritual vision of, the monastery repulsed me. It found “joy and grace” only in suffering. Although I mortified and inflicted pain upon my body in holy discipline, I simply was not a “*milites Christi*,” that is, a “soldier of Christ.” Something inside of me said, “This is not a truly holy place.”

In brief, I was too damn “not miserable” to stay! My heart yearned for something other than pain and deprivation. I didn’t have the words yet, but my Sunny Spot was too large for the monastery’s Shade to encompass. (See, the following section C.2.)

<b>BIG STORY</b>	<b>personal STORY</b>
"Think it the best of times"	"Feel it as the worst of times"
There is an Afterlife with a Final Judgment	Daily "Examination of Conscience"
Judged in the Afterlife for moral deeds or failures	Daily religious and spiritual practices: attend Daily,
There is a Devil who tempts you through others	Mass, "J.M.J." atop every classroom page, holy
The Devil also uses me to tempt others to sin	water fonts, statues of Saints, Blessed Mother
Two natures: "fallen" and "grace"	Obey the Pope and his priests
Saved by unconditional Love of God through Jesus'	Entered the seminary to study for priesthood
death on the Cross	"Friar Otto, O.F.M., Conv."
	"Ora et Labora"—"Pray and Work"
Brooding primal emotion: Life is a Vale of Tears	Chanted hourly prayers of the "Divine Office"
Okay to feel rotten, but not to think rotten!	Communal confession of "Culpa"

Simultaneously, feel Damned and Saved!	Left monastery: too damn happy to stay!
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**Table 6 Big Story and personal Story – Author’s Early Years**

Although I had left the monastic world before entering college, after graduating in 1966 I took advantage of a major reform going on inside the Catholic Church. This change, for the first time in centuries, allowed lay people (non-clerics) to become theologians. Through my theological studies, then notably inspired by the “spiritual evolution” vision of a French Jesuit named Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, my not-feeling-miserable emotional self soon came into line with my not-feeling-miserable thinking self.

**Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s vision**

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., a Jesuit priest, paleontologist and co-founder of “Peking Man” was professor of geology at the Catholic Institute in Paris, director of the National Geologic Survey of China, and director of the National Research Center of France. His work offered many reflections on the early phase and initiating acts of globalization. This included a distinctly original and peculiar essay, “Some Reflections on the Spiritual Repercussions of the Atom Bomb,” published in 1946. All in all when Teilhard died in 1955, he left an inspiring vision, vast and majestic. It is a vision which is a useful bridge towards telling the Earthfolk Big Story.

Teilhard artfully integrates chapters in the Secular and Scientism’s Big Story. But the most daunting challenge which arose from his works was his demand that I carve out a personal Story based on my acceptance of the insight that my personal presence and moral acts create the world, right now. My personal presence is manifest as I engage the Other. In his vision, I as *person* am all and everything that evolution is striving to create. I,

through my personal presence, imagine and so create the world.

The two core aspects of his spiritual imagination that affected me then and now are the following:

1) As the brain manifests a mind, as the heart manifests a spirit, as the body manifests a person, so does the Earth manifest a mind-sphere (“Noosphere”), a spirit sphere (“Christosphere”) and a meta-personal presence, that is, the Living Earth present within a “Divine Milieu.”

2) Every human counts, meaning, that every act—physical, mental, emotional, spiritual—creates the world called “human.”

### **A personalizing universe**

Teilhard’s universe is driven by a personalizing energy or presence. This means that evolution has a psychic and spiritual aspect. Teilhard integrates the evolution chapter of Scientism’s Big Story into his fundamental Religious Big Story. He also consciously addresses and integrates aspects of the Secular Big Story. I more thoroughly discuss Teilhard’s integration with the Secular and Scientism’s Big Story in *Part 2*.

What moved me is the simple logic of the human experience that something does not come from nothing. If “spirit” or “soul” or “thought” or “mind” and like nonphysical words point toward real things, then somehow these real things are part of the evolutionary process. The question is how to “see” them. If your testing method only accepts empirically and/or physically grounded answers, then that is what you find. You will not find “spirit” or “soul” if you begin by not holding them imaginable.

However, if you start with the premise that humans only know in a human manner, then you submit every testing method to the *human test*. This human test places whatever you seek to imagine, know, understand or value *within a human relationship*. What is important to Teilhard, and to me, is you as a person. Nothing is finally nor fully understood or valued unless and until it becomes part of a personal relationship. Note however that this refers to a “personal relationship” as expressed through the nested identities of section *B*, above. In this light, consideration always has to be given to how the scientific research and/or result affects individual, social, corporate, cultural and spiritual identities. This approach recognizes that every fact, action, interpretation, etc., is part of the worldwide web of the human heart. Nothing that happens is meaningless, just as no person is meaningless. This way of thinking runs counter to the traditional scientific approach. (Teilhard’s approach has similarities to Quantum physics’ “Butterfly Principle.”)

In this approach, everything—every fact, analysis, interpretation, moral act, etc.— obtains definition and meaning as it enables you and the universe to more fully manifest personal presence. For Teilhard science approaches everything from the Alpha Point. It seeks to understand present reality by looking backwards in time to determine how reality and/or life began. It assumes that there is an Alpha Point where the simple evolves into the complex.

Scientists prefer to develop and employ *nonhuman models* to discern and interpret their research. However, for Teilhard, the Alpha Point approach only gets you half-way there. As a scientist he looked to the Alpha past, while as a human being he looked towards the Omega future.

Teilhard’s scientific colleagues, then and now, reject the idea that you must

start from complexity to accurately discern simplicity. However, humans are born complex and the average human life is accurately described as unfolding complexity, notably, complexity of relationships. What is required then is to *also* approach everything from the Omega Point. This involves looking at everything in terms of how it fulfills, enhances and enables an increased personal presence. It recognizes that reality is complex and seeks simplicity as caused by complexity. The model here is *human relationship* which by definition begins with two. Two people who “pull” the essence of what it means to be human from within a relational act such as embracing or warring. The Omega Point scientist sees his mind-work (thinking, analysis, evaluation, interpretation, forecast, etc.) as one part of a relational effort, that is, of the overall Noospheric mind.

Derived from this understanding is the idea that “to know” you must be within the embrace of another human. To know is a relational act, an engagement with another human, regardless of how indirect this relational contact might be. This is true whether your knowing is a mental act or a spiritual one. Scientific knowing, in this view, is only true, is only integrally “factual,” as it manifests a human presence. “Human presence” is the whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. In Teilhard’s vision, there is no separation of mind, heart, body and spirit. Rather, these are only distinctions which provide ways to understand and manifest “human presence.” From another angle, Teilhard’s is a vision of human action. Everything you know and/or believe is only meaningful within a human relationship. Scientists, to fully plumb reality and discern facts, must explore and express their findings in terms of how they manifest and reveal the beauty of human presence.

As you yourself also make manifest all four distinctions simultaneously—

mind, heart, body and spirit—as you define yourself as a “person,” so through your individual actions, as Teilhard asserted, you manifest the Noosphere, Christosphere and the Living and Divine presence of the Earth.

In *Part 2.C*, “Scientism’s Big Story,” I address the difficulty in discussing scientific knowing in relational terms. I note that there really is no “scientific community” at the social, corporate, cultural or spiritual identity levels. There is a level of academic and professional association that provides a level of peer review, but this is a very weak intellectual and communal relationship in that no entity—no human or professional organization—has moral authority. Scientists have no identity group other than what they personally choose to join. Consequently, any appeal to positioning his or her research within a Noosphere concept is unimaginable.

Teilhard’s profound influence on me only makes sense once you grasp that I accepted his claim that there is a mind-sphere, a Noosphere, which is to the Earth as the mind is to the brain. While this is not the place for a detailed presentation of Teilhard’s thought nor for a critical evaluation of my interpretation of Teilhard, what is of note is how I interpreted him, rightly or wrongly. His Omega Point and Noosphere concepts turned my intellectual way of seeing inside-out and upside-down. I was acutely aware that Teilhard’s writing were, at that time, officially suppressed by the Church (not condemned and not condoned). I was also aware of how other scientists scoffed at what they judged his poetic flights of fancy. Yet, his insights seemed so obvious.

I am an individual but am only so because of my parents’ relationship. I have a mind but it is informed by outside relationships, as noted in how identity forms and matures from personal to spiritual. Should I then accept

that what goes on in my mind has no impact on others? That my thoughts are only mine? I laugh because my Roman Catholic upbringing hammered home that my “dirty thoughts” had dreadful impact on God—they offended him and hurt Jesus! I saw my inner life as directly connected to and having consequences for my outer life. Moreover, I was future oriented, in that life on Earth is fleeting and only life with God in eternity is truly real. At its best, my Catholic training taught me to see myself as part of the human web of life, and to take responsibility for my actions since they affected not only me but everyone else.

### **Every human act counts**

When I first encountered Teilhard’s concepts what proved to be the linchpin for my breakaway from the spirituality and vision of rotten miserableness is his insight that every human action counts. That is, every act of every person: every thought, expressed emotion and physical touch creates the world in which you live. More, that human knowing involves engaging another person. What makes human knowing distinct and peculiar is that it is part of an emotional experience sourced through communion with another human.

Practically, this moved me to imagine that everything I did had an impact on everyone else and everything else. I am the personal imagination of the universe. *I and you are the imagination, the conscience, the mind and the soul of the Living Earth.* We make humanity present through our personal acts of mind, body and spirit. This moved me to grasp that even my thoughts about war made war possible. Certainly, my acts of violence—no matter where they occurred—were acts of violence against other people. In this light, the soldier is acting out my violence even though I am in Minnesota and he is in Indochina.

When I first reflected upon Teilhard, I grasped how it was that **nonviolence is a way of creating with violence**. I realized that when I intimately engaged another that I presented my Sunny Spot but also my Shade. Normally, I didn't want to expose my Shade but there is no way to have the Sunny Spot without the Shade. In like manner, so do I engage another's Sunny Spot and Shade. In fact, "**intimacy**" *is that area where both enter the Shade*. If I didn't recognize my Shade and labor to transform it into love and affection, the relationship dies. I learned that nonviolence is a way of making the other a fuller person. Again, "non" violence is not the denial of violence. Rather, it is a way of *embracing and artfully creating with violence*. Nonviolence seeks a relationship with the other, where war seeks to break the human bond through an act of murder.

### **Whoa! factor**

Clearly, the most dramatic impact on my personal Story was the insight that nonviolence is a unique and peculiar human characteristic. It is so because it is a *conscious* way of creating with one's violence. Nonviolence is *not* an avoidance of violence, which is actually impossible to achieve. Rather, nonviolence is a distinctly human act of engaging the violence within one's self so as to be able to engage the violence in an Other and together unleash the peculiar human emotion of selfless love.

I experienced this when young men came to me for counsel. Our conversations quickly brought us into each other's Shade. We talked about killing, being killed, fear of being a coward, conflict with parents, usually their dads. There was no way for me to intellectually resolve their moral conflict. Each had to confront his Shade. When this happened, the results were not always received well.

Many came to have me simply rubber-stamp their prejudice, whether it was pro or anti-war. Some wanted me to be the stereotypical bleeding heart liberal whose spoke about *Sweet Jesus*. They wanted this because they wanted to use me as an excuse. For some this was an excuse to reject Christianity—as it was manifested through me—and go off to war, snickering at my cowardice and yellow-streak. Others wanted to swoon with *Sweet Jesus* and yield their personal decision-making over to Him. Both types ended up hating me because neither wanted to enter their Shade. From such situations I gained the ironic insight that most warriors see themselves as peacemakers, and that many who engage in acts of nonviolent protests are really acting violently.

I only really helped someone when I got them to explore their Shade. I never really figured out how to consistently do this. However, such explorations more often than not led to an embrace. The young man knew that he wouldn't kill me and that I wouldn't kill him. We looked at each other from within the Shade. However, some who achieved this insight still went off to war. These had family issues which transcended their personal convictions.

*Nonviolence*, then, is a **coupled experience**. It is a term which describes a relationship. In this way, Teilhard anticipates a key image of the Earthfolk Big Story, namely, approaching "the Other" as Beloved. Teilhard sees this relationship of love as being expressed by life as it evolves from an Alpha Point towards an Omega Point. For Teilhard, the "heart of matter" is this love energy. Within this vision, I saw and felt my brooding emotion of not-feeling-miserable. As I later understood, it was the first time I tapped into the brooding emotion of Belovedness. (For most, I'd suggest that you re-

read this section to let these ideas begin to sink in because you need to understand my experiences to trust whether you want to explore your own life as I did.)

<b>BIG STORY</b>	<b>personal STORY</b>
Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's vision	experience Earth as Living Presence
Body evolves—increasing complexity expresses personal presence	being human means being with an other
Mind evolves— "Noosphere":Earth as mind:brain	human knowing requires engaging an other
Spirit evolves—"Divine Milieu":Earth as spirit:heart	spirituality and vision not an individual but group quest
Knowing is a presence sourced	"other" persons always required and necessary
in human relationship	to know and be present to the Divine
Alpha Point = "pushes" evolution forward	every person is of value, everyone "counts"
Omega Point = "pulls" evolution forward	every action creates Noosphere & Divine Milieu
No more "natural" vs. "supernatural"	Alpha and Omega means there is no End of Time
"Pan-en-theism"—God in-everything & everyone	Alpha and Omega means Eternity is Now
the only way "in" is through embrace of other	Now is the "Fullness of Time"
	Nonviolence is way of transforming violence, not

	avoiding it
	Nonviolence is how humans create self-less Love
	Nonviolence is <i>unique and peculiar conscious human</i>
	<i>act of creating with violence</i>
Teilhard vision's brooding primal emotion sources	source for brooding emotion of feeling Beloved
"not feeling miserable"	

**Table 7 Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**

**“What am I feeling that they are so afraid of?”**

My discovery of my not-so-miserable self deepened as I began to articulate and morally act in a way that I thought Jesus would have if he were alive today. I had formed a personal Story based on a heavily Teilhardian intellectual interpretation of the Catholic Big Story, a version which claimed that Christians should be nonviolent peacemakers, should be ecological stewards of the Earth, and should not be racist or sexist. Core to this personal Story were the *Documents of Vatican Two* and the encyclical of Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*. Both of these documents were received as evidentiary exhibits during my courtroom trial. (See, <http://ww.minnesota8.net>)

Yet, as I attempted to live according to and emotionally express this version of the “nonviolent Jesus”—a story I sourced in the Biblical and Catholic theological tradition as well as the inspiring vision of the then just-completed Vatican Council Two—I was resoundingly rejected by my local Archbishop. Although a small band of Catholics (“Catholic Radicals” and those in the Catholic Worker Movement) shared this revisionist Big Story of the

nonviolent Jesus, when I attempted to act morally by protesting for peace and justice in various arenas, society imprisoned me and the Catholic hierarchy barred me from preaching and/or teaching.

During my “free” time in prison, it became apparent to me that the biggest disconnect between my and the Church’s version of the Religious Big Story was not so much in terms of doctrine as it was in terms of how I expressed my feelings. However, even at this point in my development, even with Teilhard in hand, even after my courtroom trial, I had not fully plumbed the depths of Catholicism’s brooding emotion: dreadful misery. Rather, it took prison—my time in a barred cell with that special group of “others” whose lives are witnesses to depths of miserableness into which I had yet to plunge—to face the terrible and terrifying numinous awe (“mysterium tremendum”) of the brooding emotion of my Religious Big Story.

In prison the *ponderous weight* and presence of the miserableness of my life, of all people and even of all creation sat on my head and slept with me every night. In the slang of the times, I was thoroughly bummed out. All I knew was that my brooding emotion was directly related to my nonviolent acts. I was dumbfounded. Nothing computed any more. I pondered. “What am I feeling that they are so afraid of?”

### **Violent felon, nonviolent heart**

Eventually I came to realize that the government, also, was less concerned about how I thought than how I felt. *They feared my nonviolent heart.* Here I was, a strapping 6’3”, 225 pound athletic and articulate male who was expressing tenderness, encouraging compassion, and telling others to “live as if you are no one’s Enemy.”

Pause for a moment: What is so scary about someone risking his life to speak the word *Peace*? After all is said and done that is what I did through my symbolic speech of raiding a draft board.

It is true that I rejected the government's symbolic speech of firing a gun to speak *Peace*. But clearly, the government did not fear me as a terrorist doing physical harm to others. Yet they convicted me of a felony crime of violence. Why? Wasn't it because I assaulted their Big Story's brooding emotion? Mine was a violence of heart, consciously breaking the law because I was at peace within myself and willing to risk going to prison to save others from conscripted military service. I acted from my brooding emotion of being at peace. My felony was a *nonviolence of a passionate heart*.

Let me be clearer about the character of my *emotional criminality*. During 1968, I took part in a public discussion about my nonviolent beliefs during an adult education program after Sunday Mass. A middle-aged male rose and asked, fiercely and accusatorily, "Are you a fag?!" Given the year—during the early phase of the feminist revolution and before the Stonewall Riots, so few had heard about "gay rights"—others on the panel quickly (and not happily) came to my defense. It wasn't that they agreed with my nonviolence, just that the fellow had kicked the tripwire that set off the explosive relationship between Eros and Thanatos, between Lust and Murder. For him, a man's penile rod was his gun.

Of course, I was "not the man"—the cold-blooded killer—my inquisitor thought I should be. But for quite different reasons. Actually, I was *more* the man than he could possibly contemplate. This was the first time I came to realize that I was nonviolent because I had confronted and *accepted* my violence—the cold-blooded killer reconnoitering in my Shade. I was man

enough to embrace the despised fag inside me. (*Fag, gook*—the feared Other.) I wasn't afraid to express a range of masculinity about which my accuser was ignorant. This was a key moment in my development as a violent felon. Namely, my nonviolent manliness became grounded in my acceptance of my darker Shadier side, that is, of myself as killer. It was the day I fully realized that when *you* go to war, it is *I* who pulls the trigger. That day I became a man—as I *consciously* exposed my Shade.

When I first presented my case for claiming Conscientious Objector status, one member of the draft board—without taking his eyes off of the paperwork he was stamping and processing—said, “I’m a Catholic. I fought in the war.” The clear sub-text was “Hey, we Catholics kill people. Been doing so for centuries” Again, I confronted and accepted my violence. I told these draft board officials not to send me to Vietnam because I knew what I would do. I knew that if I was immersed in my fallen, depraved side—as a brother to *Genesis’* Cain—that I would become a killing machine. I simply didn’t want to be in a situation where I would be so demonically tempted to express my violence. Indeed, although I did not have the language to express it until several decades later, I was becoming a more fully integrated male, one who was experiencing the goddess within his masculine soul.

One of the reasons I came to this insight stems from my practice of the Examination of Conscience. While fulfilling my military obligation as a Conscientious Objector—as staff at the Newman Center on the University of Minnesota campus—after I counseled young draft-age men, many went over to serve in Vietnam. Although they went into armed conflict, I had no personal or spiritual disconnect from them. Simply, I was them. They were me. We were brothers; family. It became clear to me: I had to be nonviolent here at home because they were expressing *my* violence over there in

Vietnam.

### **Nonviolent Jesus?**

In general, most Christians can intellectually accept the “nonviolent Jesus.” The Jesus as a peacemaker who welcomed sinners and preached the values of the Sermon on the Mount. But something keeps them from tapping into the not-miserable emotion of this peacemaking and social justice Jesus. While we share the claim that we are all “Christians,” it is forcefully clear that what defines and limits the acts of acceptable moral witness are sourced in dramatically different emotions. Ironically, and as counterintuitive as it sounds, those who went to war did so because they *thought* they were violent warriors but *felt* themselves to be nonviolent Christians. Meaning, “I’m going to Vietnam to bring Peace to America.” Witness the slogan of SAC, the Strategic Air Command, “Peace is our profession.” (SAC, during Vietnam, was the branch of the United States Air Force in charge of America's bomber-based and ballistic missile-based strategic nuclear arsenal.)

With a similar ironic twist, I felt violent because I thought of myself as nonviolent. As I told my Big Story, I was having a best-of-times moment as they experienced a worst. Without arrogance or disdain, I was calling people to be comfortably at home here on Earth. To feel good about one another. To enjoy living in peace and harmony. To express their violence in nonviolent ways. However, as I gained clearer insight into my personal Story and witnessed to the moral mandates of my Catholic Big Story, I was heading for a breakdown and a worst-of-times.

The seed for *Sensual Preciousness* was planted at that moment when I examined my life and realized how the Catholic Big Story’s brooding emotion

of miserableness influenced and formed my and my fellow Christians' core beliefs. It also defined what we valued as good and evil acts. I discovered that the recurring claim made by other Christians as to why they could not oppose the Vietnam War or any war, and why they could not embrace the nonviolent Jesus, was because of how they *felt*, not because of how they *thought*. They continued to feel deeply miserable. However, they did not wear this emotion on their sleeves. To the contrary, they wore badges of America's spirited optimism. They were "high on life" and their fierce competitiveness reaped abundant and quite pleasurable material, sensual and sexual rewards. It was my Inside Sight which allowed me to sense how they felt.

Similarly, this deep Shade emotion emerged when I engaged those grounded in the Secular and Scientism's Big Stories. It was not that these people were walking around with droopy chins or moaning and beating their chests. Actually, they presented themselves as "happy people," hanging day-glo posters and chanting Meher Baba's "Don't worry. Be happy!" as well as other high-spirited versions of the Hippie slogan, "Tune in. Turn on. Drop out." As I would discover throughout the next decades, as the Yuppie replaced the Hippie, the pursuit of pleasure in terms of material and sexual acquisition and ecstasy served as the manhole cover over the seething miserableness that coursed through so many lives.

Although the seed for *Sensual Preciousness* was planted while I was a prison inmate, it came at a moment which I then assessed was one of my worst-of-times. But it proved decades later to have been one of my best. There is some Shady humor here. After all, I was that "miserable sinner," that "dog-breath" convict, that traitor, that heretic, that whack-job Radical who was getting his fair and just come-uppance. As that was happening, so the seed

of *Sensual Preciousness* began to sprout.

### **Ex-Catholic, ex-con and ex-American**

When I left prison, fourteen months later, I was no longer a believing Christian. Nor could I ground myself as an American. As a Catholic, I wasn't even a lapsed or heretical one. While Christianity and its Biblical tradition had formed me and focused my early decades, I could no longer intelligently or faithfully recount this Big Story. I could no longer tap into the brooding emotion of rotten miserableness.

Prison had done something to me that took a decade or more to even recognize. In fact, although I was depressed, although I went through alleyways of drunkenness, although I was a "lost soul" floundering and bouncing from job to job, I had tapped into a brooding emotion other than not-miserableness.

While I will return to this post-prison phase of my life later, consider that the Big Story one hears as a child grows into and forms your beliefs, determines your range of brooding emotions and teaches you how to think and feel about yourself and others. Significantly, the Big Story's brooding emotion is the prime determinant of what you think and believe in any area, such as religion, politics, economics, sex, etc. Few are consciously aware of the true character of a Big Story's brooding emotion. Actually, most misunderstand it. For example, until prison I bought the line that Christians were living in "Resurrection times," and so, "You will know we are Christians by our love, by our love, you will know ..." I sensed that something was awry, but only when inside prison did I admit how the brooding emotion of feeling miserable had dominated my life.

The age at which you fully awake and completely hear this Big Story is not as significant as the fact that you receive it at a moment of child-like innocence, for example, at that critical time when you seek Big Answers to life's basic and ultimate Big Questions, such as, "What happens to me when I die?" "Why am I on earth?" "Why is there evil?" "Why should I kill in battle?"

As noted, your Big Story is grounded in a range of brooding emotions that are most often *not* apparent. A brooding emotion is quite often covered by other brooding emotions or even contradictory surface feelings. You might hear yourself say, "I'm a patriotic son of Uncle Sam," or, "Science provides the only solid ground on which to develop solutions to human problems." Yet I ask you to accept as a possibility that in these cases neither patriotism nor confidence are the brooding emotions. I'm sure you can recall moments when you acted, say, in a foolish manner, and others asked you to explain your behavior. Even though you gave them an answer, only you knew that you were deeply angry at, say, your girlfriend and that these silly actions are simply how you are presenting yourself. Your behavior doesn't reflect how you deeply feel. And so, I am obliged to say that moving you to see matters in another way is my objective. One tool I use to review and evaluate your Big Story is determining how it creates both a best-of-times and worst-of-times world.

### **Earthfolk's *best and worst of times***

Presently, I am in the winter of my life. My hair is abundant but snowy and I am in relatively good health. As I review my life, I have experienced many best-of-times and worst-of-times. I am writing *Sensual Preciousness* because I must make an honest report of what I consider to be the most important discovery of my life. I am moved to report about what I have

learned during my sojourn on the planet. In the most simple of terms, I've discovered that I am a happy person. Better yet, that I imagine myself a happy person! My so imagining taps into a brooding emotion of peacefulness and being comfortably at home here on the Living Earth. This is a happiness that expresses itself in my passionate and moral actions which affirm that I *like* most people and *love* humanity-at-large. I experience the Other as Beloved, and I feel deeply beloved. Because I am beloved, I seek the Shade, that within myself and the Other. I phrase this approach and attitude toward life as "I live as if I am no one's Enemy." Yes, others may name me and hold me as their enemy but I refuse to live as their enemy. I open myself to become their Beloved.

At different times in the long history of humanity, I am confident that the pervasive feeling among people was one of being comfortably at home on the Living Earth. Yet somehow during the short span of my lifetime, I've become acutely aware that in this current historical age more rather than fewer of my fellow humans are trapped in an imagination and a set of brooding emotions sourced in dreadful fear and stark terror. They seem bent on suicidal self destruction, either at their own depressed hands or through nuclear MADness (the governmental policy of "Mutual Assured Destruction"). When I ask them to reflect on the meaning and effects of globalization, they say, more often than not, that this is a bit of the best times but a lot more of the worst. When pressed to "dig deep and tell me your gut feelings," they say that while they value High Technology, all of the touted advances and benefits of the varied telecommunications, Internet and digital devices have not greatly changed the human situation.

When they speak of the worst-of-times, they describe the current age as one that sees other people, "the Other," as not only the feared stranger but as

Intimate Enemy. It is an age of endless warring where the Earth itself is brutalized and tortured. It is an age where the human body is not honored or respected, where “lovers” treat one another as pornographic sex toys, and where intimacy is a lost geography of the human heart and spirit.

While I hear what they say, and although I could even agree with and articulate such a worst-of-times scenario, I and others, notably we Earthfolk,” are experiencing the best of times. We can see both the *best* and *worst* aspects of globalization, and of the three dominant Big Stories. Most Earthfolk, at one time, carved a personal Story from one or more of the dominant Big Stories. Yet, at present, our Earthfolk personal Stories are linked together by our shared brooding emotion of being comfortably at home on Mother Earth. We practice and follow a discipline where we live as if we are no one’s Enemy. We acclaim the Other as precious. We seek the precious intimacy of the embrace of Beloveds. (See, *Volume 1*.)

As you read, do you sense that this brief exposition of Earthfolk concepts and brooding emotion is creating a worst-of-times for you? Do you find yourself shaking your head in disapproval of all this Earthfolk silly optimism? Do you feel that such Earthfolk ideas actually endanger your world? Do you find “living as if I am no one’s Enemy” a naïve statement? Do you hesitate to sight yourself as Beloved? Is this notion of Beloved, in your mind, an unsophisticated, sophomoric bit of nonsense? Are you ready to close this book? Toss it? For many readers, I anticipate that you will say Yes to all the above and close the covers on this babble.

I realize, looking back, that my courtroom trial was my first Earthfolk moment, in that it was where my personal and Big Stories were likewise judged “irrelevant and immaterial.” Just reflect on that phrase for a moment.

Put yourself in my place. You are standing before twelve other humans, spilling your guts out. How you keep your world together and how you feel things are going are the questions you are answering ... but then the judge says to these twelve others, in effect, "Those questions are irrelevant and immaterial. This guy's out of touch with reality!" You can visualize him tapping the side of his forehead indicating that I was a bit imbalanced, more, an actual nut case!

Reality for him was for me to answer only the questions he and the prosecutor took as sane. To wit, did I or did I not climb up the side of a building in Little Falls, Minnesota on the night of July 10, 1970 and with a crowbar jimmy .... You get the picture.

I can only surmise that as the judge heard my Big Answers, he kept saying to himself, "Those are silly Big Questions." In short, the judge could not imagine that I could have spent my whole life seeking to answer the wrong Big Questions!

However, this worst-of-times courtroom dramatic moment was when I first tapped into the brooding emotion of feeling comfortably at home on the Living Earth. As improbable as it may strike you—since I was slapped with the maximum sentence of five years in prison—I lost my sense of miserableness in the courtroom. Again, in the curious way that matters often work in reverse, when I was sentenced so did I for the first time ever feel *comfortably at home* here on the Living Earth. Simply, I had lived true to my personal Story. I had spoken truth as I knew it. I had risked my life and put myself in harm's way. Curiously, as I entered prison escorted by a prison hack through my first knobless door in inmate khaki, an ethereal voice whispered, "Francis came home, today."

For you to evaluate *Sensual Preciousness: the Earthfolk vision and practice of living peacefully and comfortably at home on the Living Earth* and so respond to the invitation of us Earthfolk to imagine and live a sensually precious life, you must explore lore your own Big Story as it creates a best-of-times and a worst-of-times situation for other humans and the Earth itself. In the same manner, as I evaluate these Big Stories, I strive to artfully provide you with the tools to evaluate our Earthfolk imagination.

## **2. The Sunny Spot and the Shade**

Just as any moment can offer the best-of-times or the worst-of-times, so do people live in both a Sunny Spot and the Shade. Understanding these entwined concepts assists in further analyzing and evaluating Big and personal Stories. Both individuals and groups have a Sunny Spot and a Shade. Whether you admit one or the other concept—and whether you examine yourself or your identity groups using these concepts—determines to a significant degree how vital those Stories are or are not in enabling you to live comfortably at home here on the Living Earth during this age of globalization.

### **Living in the Sunny Spot**

Living in the Sunny Spot is how most people like to live, and how most people perceive they live. Most see themselves as a Sunny Spot in the universe and amid the mass of humanity. The Sunny Spot is, at its core, a way of feeling. Most people feel that they are Sunny, here meaning basically good, kind, fair and just. Most feel loveable. “If you took the time to really get to know me, you’d love me.” The Sunny Spot is a person’s warmth. It is the positive life energy they convey. On any given day the size of the Spot can vary greatly, but if pressed, most folks find a way to spread their warmth to others in time of need and want.

I use the Sunny Spot imagery because I lived with criminals whom others would assume do not think that they have a Sunny Spot. Certainly, it would be fair to assume that criminals aren't warm men with huge Sunny Spots. But the opposite proved to be the case. Even in the darkest recesses of the Shade, where an inmate is experiencing a worst-of-times, he still feels like a good person with a Sunny Spot.

Of course, whenever I heard "I'm innocent!" I did have to chuckle as much as admire the dogged persistence of the con's feeling his Sunny Spot. You won't be surprised then if I call it the con's Sunny Micro-Dot because many had very little Sun in their life. Indeed, wherever I've journeyed—from monastery to prison to the university to corporate America—I've found few people who would ever deny that they were loveable and/or good at heart and/or someone worth knowing and befriending.

It is important to note, again, that these are not superficial terms. It is not that everyone is "sunny" in the giddy, foolish, Pollyannaish sense. To be in your Sunny Spot is to connect to one or more of the positive brooding emotions of your *personal* Story, not your Big Story.

There is often a disconnect between how people emotionally respond when you ask someone about his personal life experience and when you ask about his Big Story, which is a shared story about Life. He may say, "I'm doing okay but the world is certainly messed up!" On a day-to-day basis, most folk express a dogged persistence in both wanting to express their Sunny Spots and in wanting others to accept them as basically Sunny, that is, good, fair, just, compassionate, and so forth.

To grasp the Sunny Spot concept requires understanding the Shade. Many thinkers over the centuries have spoken of Light and Darkness, of Good and Evil, of Love and Hate. Often these images and terms have been presented as if they were stark opposites. My experience tells me that just about every aspect of "reality" or "human nature" is best presented in terms of relationship and gradation. The ubiquitous Chinese Yin-Yang symbol is a useful graphic. Although, to properly appreciate it, one should remember that it offers a dynamic and not a static interaction between the Yin and Yang energies. Likewise, the Sunny Spot carries with it the understanding that the sun's intensity varies during the day and by season. Sometimes it is sunny and partly cloudy. Similarly, the Shade describes aspects of a person that are farther from the sun, until, eventually, total darkness is manifest.

### **Living in the Shade**

Everyone exists within the Shade. There is an envelope of darkness that defines the Sunny Spot as there is an envelope of sun that defines the Shade. After all, people are a bit like the weather, ever-changing during any given day. On most days, an interplay of sun and clouds creates Sunny Spots and moments of Shade. On days when storms and fierce weather create havoc, the Shade dominates. Imagistically, when earthquakes and tornados strike within a person or a group, people may find themselves in deep Shade, disoriented and lost in their own darkness.

One curious feature of the dynamically sinuous and mobius relationship of the Sunny Spot and the Shade is that few people discuss their Shade moments. Even as a Catholic youth when I practiced my Examination of Conscience if I accused myself of a Shade moment, say, a minor Venial Sin of a "white lie," I certainly didn't discuss this dark aspect of myself with my family. No, I'd only go to a special Shady place, the sacramental

Confessional, where I'd whisper my sins to a priest who sat behind a smoky, ethereal screen. My point is this: If you reflect on it, I'd wager that you only hear about your Shade aspects from others. That is, you first learn about aspects of your Shade when others respond negatively to a personal action that you previously thought was okay.

Let's say you make a sarcastic remark to a co-worker at lunch. As you speak you might perceive yourself as Sunny, that is, witty, insightful, and clever. After all, your sarcasm shows the other person something they previously did not see or know about themselves. Perhaps you feel playful, engaging and humorous. Let's say, however, that the other person recoils, even shows through a verbal or nonverbal response that you have caused hurt. Then you must face the fact that you've wandered into your Shade. Clearly, this is an unintended consequence of your alleged Sunny act. All of a sudden, the tables have turned. You now must see something about yourself that you didn't know or didn't want anyone to see, namely, your Shady nasty side.

In such a situation, many an individual fumbles and stammers, trying to reclaim their Sunny Spot. "Lame excuse!" others reply. Yet, even if you make a fervent apology, you might hear with a judgmental tone, "Well, it's said now. You can't take it back." At this point you might accept this insight into your Shade and pledge to more carefully guard your lips or you might totally deny your Shade aspect. "Oh, c'mon, I was only kidding." Often an attempt is made to switch attention to the offended person's Shade by saying, "Don't be so sensitive!" This is a clever (or not so clever) attempt to convince everyone that the offended person is manifesting his own Shade by his implying that you are not in your Sunny Spot.

My own experience based on, among other things, being an extremely sarcastic youth, is that we would never discover our Shade if others didn't point it out. I doubt that more than a few people discover their Shade through personal introspection. Rather, as with the long list of Mortal and Venial Sins catalogued in my first-grade catechism, it takes an outside agent to move us to explore our Shade.

Even after confessing legions of sins over the decades, I, to this day, am happy to speak to you about my Sunny Spot but not my Shade.

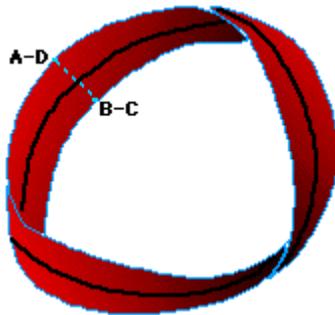
Sure, in time as you get to know me, I'll talk about my Shade, but no one in the early phases of a relationship opens up by saying, "Welcome. Come with me into my Shade." In fact, the opposite occurs. It is during the times when family, friends and acquaintances begin to truly get to know you that they provide feedback about your Shade. "All in all, Frank, you're not such a bad guy" is actually a compliment because it reflects that someone values both my Sunny Spot and my Shade.

<b>SUNNY SPOT</b>	<b>SHADE</b>
how people like to live	fear of the Other
where most people believe they live	stranger is Intimate Enemy
that is, that they are basically good, kind and just	Shade varies in sync with Sunny Spot
"I'm loveable!"	Shade is envelope of darkness around Sunny Spot
personal warmth, positive life energy	Shade and Sunny Spot interact like the weather
people like to spread their warmth	people don't accuse themselves of being Shade

	insight into Shade comes from outside, from Others
connects you to brooding emotions	connects you to brooding emotions

**Table 8 Sunny Spot and Shade**

**Figure A - Sunny Spot and Shade**



The relationship between your Sunny Spot and Shade has characteristics similar to a Möbius strip.

Möbius strips have found a number of surprising applications that exploit a remarkable property: one-sidedness. Joining A to C and B to D (no half twist) produces a simple belt-shaped loop with two sides and two edges. On this belt it is impossible to travel from one side to the other without crossing an edge. But, as a result of the half twist, the Möbius Strip has only one side and one edge.

You are a Möbius personality. Until others give you a half-twist you experience and express yourself as if you are a simple belt-shaped loop. The half-twist enables you to look at yourself and see yourself as other's do. This normally results in critical insight.

I use the Möbius strip image because the Sunny Spot and Shade are manifestations of one person, that is, you. There is no duality in human

relationships, only distinctions. Humans are all of one kind (humankind) and differ solely in degrees. Everyone is a human person, of equal value. How you express and manifest your humanness, however, defines your distinctiveness, your special personality.

While all visual images have their limitations, the Mobius strip also looks like a pathway. This conveys the sense of internal and external self-exploration and self-discovery. Your identity develops and matures as you walk the pathway that experiences with others "twists." As you walk your personal pathway, your group identities twist you inside and out. Some enable you to see more of your Sunny Spot; others, your Shade.

Of note is that many people are familiar with Mobius strips as used by the renown artist, M.C. Escher.

## **Identity groups' Sunny Spot and Shade**

In *Part 2*, as I examine and evaluate the three dominant Big Stories and certain personal Stories, I look through the lens of best-of-times and worst-of-times. In sync with that approach, I also employ the discipline of searching for the Sunny Spot and the Shade. For most people, this latter approach is usually valued and applied when looking at life and actions as presented through a personal Story. But matters differ greatly when the approach is used to examine and evaluate the actions of groups, which form your Big Story identity.

Let's say you work for a company that makes you feel part of a "corporate family." Then, when it is criticized, you feel defensive. Your first impulse is to deny that your "corporate personality" has Shade aspects. You might even feel more agitated than if you had been personally attacked. Part of the reason for this response is that few of us ever feel that we have any direct control over any aspect of a corporate personality. Certainly, you don't want to look around the office and conclude that "everyone is bad." If you accepted that as true, what would you do? Deep-six your career? Even with the seemingly never-ending slew of corporate scandals, few workers in a corporation ever feel move to publicly state, "I work for a Shady company." Even fewer, if any, actually judged their company as "evil." (During the Vietnam Era, certain corporations were put on trial. "The Honeywell Project" led by Marv Davidov held "The Honeywell Trials" at the Newman Center where I was serving my Alternative Service. At the time, one brother and one brother in law worked for Honeywell which then manufactured the heinous "anti-personnel bombs" that exploded and sent razor sharp flechettes to slice human flesh to ribbons. The flechettes did little to no damage on property.)

In this vein, when your nation is critically judged you may get really riled. Let's look at this in respect to the national identity group of "Americans." No matter what America does, from preemptive warfare to dropping the atomic bomb to outsourcing jobs to child and slave labor countries, a not uncommon response is, "Who are *they* to accuse us?"

If you are an American citizen asking these critical questions, you may be viewed as a "traitor" or at least "un-American." While I will return to a discussion about America's Sunny Spot and Shade, for now, please consider that the further away you and I get from being able to exercise direct influence on Shade aspects of an identity group, the more prone we are to deny that such Shade aspects even exist. Or, if they exist, that there really are good reasons for them and that these Shade aspects, if true, in no way lessen the size of our church's, corporation's or nation's Sunny Spot.

Let's take one more example: the Roman Catholic Church. As I experienced it, the Church is presented as the sole and sufficient source of what is *good* in the world. It alone has the "Good News." It is cited as being "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic" which means that its goodness goes back to the Age of the Apostles and Jesus, and that it has survived over the centuries as the One source of God's Truth and Goodness. It alone is Holy. Anyone who criticizes the Church at its core, that is, in respect to its doctrines and dogmas, is by so acting (*de facto*) a heretic and a minion of the Prince of Darkness, Satan himself.

When your corporation's, nation's or church's Shade is exposed, you have a deep need to assert its innocence—much like a convict's knee-jerk profession of his innocence. So, there is a curious relationship between your

sense of powerlessness and how unShady you profess your identity groups to be.

One insight into your defensiveness about your identity groups being labeled Shady, for example, racist, sexist, exploitative, and so on, is that identity groups enable us to express power when we feel powerless. Many people join identity groups because they feel powerless when facing major issues. For example, most people work within a hierarchy of power. They feel powerless to make significant changes within the workplace, and even more powerless when it comes to affecting social, cultural, religious and global issues. The peculiar dynamic sustained here is that by keeping their Shade hidden, your identity groups disempower you. They render you powerless to criticize them. You are only empowered when you praise their Sunny Spots.

<b>SUNNY SPOT</b>	<b>SHADE</b>
more protective of identity groups than of personal identity	defensive about "outside" criticism
personally you admit your Shade, e.g., sins	
corporate personality—you've little control in	never hear, "I work for a Shady company."
forming either Sunny Spot or Shade	never hear, "My company is evil."
national identity—"Americans"	criticism is "un-American," traitor
church identity -Roman Catholic example	leaders speak for God
	"One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic"
	Shade is only attacked by Devil & his minions
identity groups empower you as they	by keeping their Shade hidden they

act on your behalf	disempower you, make you unable to criticize
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**Table 9 Sunny Spot and Shade – Group Identities**

**Group brooding emotions**

I’ve observed that most of us are aware of our own Shady spots and dark feelings, even sins. However, I anticipate that when you talk about your identity groups, you will tell me how they work to affect change on specific Shade issues, for example, abortion, capital punishment, child abuse, or corruption. More, I anticipate hearing that the only way you can act in a morally pure, just and fair way is through your identity groups. The group “has all the expert information” and is morally pure. It is you who “lacks the big picture” and the “collective wisdom” to act as morally as your group does.

In this view, your group is motivated by good intentions and deeds. Here is where I see your Big Story come into play to define and delimit your range of heartfelt moral acts. This is a drawing of boundaries which you judge as positive but others may judge as negative. In those situations where you intellectually dissent from a Big Answer, I expect that you fail to challenge and assert your countervailing personal Story answers because of the group’s brooding emotions.

For example, if your group is primarily grounded in Scientism’s Big Story, you will approach the issue of abortion as a “health issue.” You will image, model and ground your moral actions as you value them in terms of making the other person, here the aborting mother, healthy. The brooding emotion that guides you is the feeling of being healthy as you act toward another so as to make her healthy. Through this moral act, you feel the healthy and

positive impact of your Big Story. Any qualms you might entertain or any weighty criticisms you might consider are swept under the rug because their brooding emotions do not make you feel as fully safe, sane and just.

When the three dominant Big Stories are explored in *Part 2*, how they negatively and positively define, delimit and regulate your personal Stories moral options will be more fully discussed.

Despite the ubiquity of high-tech devices, I aver that you have *not* made the world-wide-*human*-connection that Digital Age technology offers, that is, to “think globally, act locally.” Rather, the Internet enables you to defer your “thinking globally” to your identity groups. In fact, immersion into cyberspace is often accompanied by a sense of information overload, a negative impact of access to “worldwide” information at the click of a mouse. For me, the lack of significant public resistance to the wars since Vietnam underscores this seemingly *unintended consequence* of the World-Wide-Web.

I joined a draft-board raiding team partially as a media tactic. In the early 1970s most cities had one or two major papers. TV was pre-cable and limited in channel selection. There was no cellular telecommunications. News was the “nightly news,” unless there was a major catastrophe to justify an emergency report. Consequently, “getting media coverage” was next to impossible, unless you could afford to hire a PR firm. So, the draft raid was one way to get-out the anti-war message. In this light, my draft-raid action was an “alternative media” campaign, when alternative media did not yet exist.

Vietnam-era anti-war activists believed that their fellow citizens simply did

not have sufficient information about the war and about the government's secret actions. It took decades before anyone clearly proved that the Bay of Tonkin incident, which President Johnson used to escalate the war, never happened.

In like manner, a secret war in Laos was waged for seven years before it was reported by the American media. That this latter secret war went unreported by the "free press" of the world's major democracy blew-me-away at the time. However, even then, it became apparent that access to information was not the linchpin for moral resistance to the war. So, it is not surprising that in the Digital Age I often hear from draft-age men, my two sons included, that they simply ignore information to which they feel they cannot respond. Moreover, they are weary, almost jaded, as to the truthfulness of information transmitted by "experts." Instead of benefiting from virtual reality's instant access to up-to-the minute-information—often presented by top officials, scholars and "inside sources"—they turn away. They anticipate bias, misdirection, half-truths, hyperbole and distortion by special interest groups.

### **Internet's Shade and individual powerlessness**

Even when personally teleconnected and telecommunicating in the virtual community of cyberspace, you can still avoid acting locally in a moral or even ethical situation by saying, "I'm just one person. What can I do?" Who can argue with such a statement? After all, in the high-tech world, you are simply a *node* on a network, an IP address of binary digits, a mouse click away from disconnection. *Off-line!*

A key point then is that an unintended consequence of the World-Wide-Web is that *as you learn more about global matters, you come to rely more on*

*your groups to come up with answers and actions.* Somewhat paradoxically, the Web endows you with a greater sense of powerlessness and a greater need to tap into a group's brooding emotion.

In like manner, the Internet's cyber-Shade is world-wide. You—as logged-on through any group identity—can live a totally Shade life. You can lie, cheat and steal under your username, for example, "GoodBoyJohnnie." The Net tempts you in a way that Biblical Satan never could. In fact, you face your Shade self as if in a clear mirror because you know who you are as you use your Shade "GoodBoyJohnnie" username. Globalization then readily taps the darkest brooding emotions, but only at your personal choosing. Note that you can identify yourself as representing any of the group identities. This is something you cannot do "off-line." You can be online with a different personal and family identity. You can allege to represent a social group. You can identify yourself in an absolutely "other" cultural category, for example, impersonate being Eskimo to uncover information from an oil research company. You can be spiritually whatever you want to be: Native American, Christian, Wiccan, Jain, Bahai, etc.

The Internet allows you to carve diverse personal Stories from a vast array of Big Stories. You can live multiple lives when online. This, I anticipate, is one of the most daunting psychological and visionary challenges facing the Digital Age generation. They are growing up with an understanding of the Shade side of personal identity that few born before WWI might ever possess.

From a best-of-times perspective the Internet enables you to "walk a mile" in another's footsteps. You can log-on and take part in conversations, say, with Hindus as if you were one. You can explore military websites, even

communicate with soldiers in the battlefield. You can be a “virtual male or female” and explore a masked sexual identity.

What is to be discerned is what brooding emotions does the Internet allow most people to tap? If surfing the Net overwhelms you with a sense of powerlessness, how will you brood? If it expands your consciousness and sense of “I can think globally and act locally!” how then will you brood?

### **Managing your brooding emotions**

When you step aside and allow identity groups to act on your behalf, you aren’t doing so because you want them to act badly or evilly. In fact, you so want them to be Sunny that you temper or shut down your critical questioning. What is happening? More than just involving yourself in group-think, you are grounding yourself in the brooding emotions of the group’s Big Story. These group-emotions might include a feeling of being morally righteous, or safe, or compassionate. For example, your charitable contributions often provide you with a complex of brooding emotions that, taken together, make you feel good, just and morally and spiritually healthy.

The connection to the group’s brooding emotions overrides any conscious struggle you have with your self-judgment that “I don’t do enough.” Or “I don’t care enough.” In the main, the group’s brooding emotions provide you with a sense of belonging and of empowerment. Notably, however, it is an emotion that requires you to surrender your critical thinking skills as you seek to fully feel the depths of the group’s brooding emotions.

In my situation, I grew up in a highly hierarchical, centralized and dictatorial Roman Catholic Big Story. There was scant room for a personal Story that deviated from the Big Story. My personal Story was carved as 98% Big Story

and 2% my own individual moral decisions. Certainly, I was not encouraged to think for myself. Rather, I was subserviently obedient. What I received in return was the feeling that although the world would pass away, I would live in eternity because the Church was eternal: "Sic transit gloria mundi" or "All the glory of the world passes away." I felt that the Church was true, right, just and holy. Consequently, I followed Her doctrines and dogmas in exacting rote obedience. Groups—nations, churches, corporations, etc.—can draw you into their Shady, even evil, spot without you're being aware of that movement.

Now pause a moment and consider that adjusting to a group's identity statements requires managing your brooding emotions more than your thoughts. Intellectually, you might disagree with some of your group's beliefs and statements but you retain and maintain your group identity because of how you anticipate you will feel if the group rejects or ejects you. For example, how do you feel when your basketball tickets put you in the opponent's section? If you stand up and root for your team, you risk being booed, doused with a soda or verbally confronted by an angry fan. You might want to announce, "Hey! I'm a fan like you are. I have a right to cheer my team." Such a free-speech claim gets you nowhere! This sporting group has its brooding emotions: superficiality, macho camaraderie, playfulness and "soft porn" cheerleader pleasurable entertainment. However, it is sourced, for some, in an emotion that leads to Shade acts, such as violent attacks on property or even other fans. What is happening?

For most opponent fans, your presence in their section simply spoils their fun. Perhaps they urge you to return to the other side where you belong. They realize, "It's only a game."

However, I use this almost superficial example because it underscores the diversity of brooding emotions some find through a group identity that others in the group do not tap. This happens when a specific group identity, such as being a New York Yankee fan or a Manchester United Football Club fan, is the most significant identity that connects you to a satisfying brooding emotion.

Indeed, this is not such a superficial example when you look at the role professional sports play within the globalization movement. There are more than financial reasons why the major American sports are expanding globally. As national identities lose their hard, geographical boundaries, being a sports fan of a certain club or team provides a transnational, even global, sense of rootedness, of being at home. How else can one account for too many fans willing to put their lives in harm's way for the Home Team?

A weightier example addresses the issue of abortion. It presents a clearer connection between a Big Story and its Sunny Spot and Shade. Each side in the abortion debate proffers specific language and imagery in its Big Story, enabling others to connect to their brooding emotion. Abortion-rights or pro-choice groups talk about the fetus in medical and biological terms as a collection of cells. They speak of the mother as a woman having "control" over her body. This is not so much a moral claim as it is an image that connects to the brooding emotion of feeling safe within her own bodily space.

For a woman to be and feel healthy, abortion-rights groups assert, she should link herself to a "sisterhood" of all other women who define for themselves if and when they become mothers. Anti-abortion or pro-life groups speak of the fetus in psychological and spiritual terms as a person.

They position the mother as a co-creator with a father, and describe the decision to abort or not as a family decision. Her individuality, in body and as a moral agent, is subordinated to the group's need. Here, it is life's "need" to survive by birthing babies or God's "need" for His gift of life, i.e., the new child, to be accepted.

Depending on which Big Story you accept, you see your Sunny Spot and Shade differently. Each side of the abortion debate condemns the other as being ignorant or immoral. What is of point is that each side's intellectual position is readily comprehended. Each group's set of arguments are logically sound, rationally based, and reasonable. Which Big Story you elect to use to carve out your personal Story depends upon the brooding emotions which satisfy you. Since many anti-abortion groups use a Religious Big Story, their brooding emotions include a dreadful fear that they are offending God and that they will be cast into Hell for eternity. For them, not to follow God's Revealed Truths and consequent moral commandments, sourced in a sacred scripture, is to surrender to Satan's temptation.

In like manner, many abortion-rights groups forward a Religious Big Story that is modified by accepting parts of both the Secular and Scientism's Big Story. They feel that God has endowed humans with a thinking capacity that empowers them to seek out and discern God's truths. They accept the Secular Big Story's focus on the individual as an agent of history. They accept Scientism's Big Story of evolution that shows that life continues despite global catastrophes and species extinctions. In this light, one potential life is less of a concern than that of the group's life. So, whether or not the aborting mother already has children or is simply electing to have them later on, the group's overall survival is ensured. The immediate act of aborting does not threaten the group's survival. In this way, a personal

Story is carved that connects them to the brooding emotions of feeling free, healthy, and in control of their bodies.

Abortion also presents a Big Story chapter that occurs when there is a disconnect between your personal Story's brooding emotions and that of your Big Story. When this happens, you either reject your Big Story and seek a new personal Story or you rigidly align your Big and personal Stories so that all your personal moral acts of passion and commitment are identical with those of your group. Many have left the Catholic Religious Big Story because they reject the brooding emotions it offers at the moment of pregnancy. A similar disconnect happened for me when I failed to connect to the Church's brooding emotions as I sought to feel at peace and at home with all other humans.

Just as your Big Story can deliver you to the best-of-times while it creates the worst-of-times for others, so can you be drawn into a group's Shade while others are finding its Sunny Spot. For example, when it comes to handling accusations about the Shade aspects of your religious or spiritual institution, a full denial is quite common. The recent horror of the pedophilia scandal within the Roman Catholic Church (and other religious organizations) reveals to many a Shade so dark and profound that it can only be termed evil. But if that is so, are all Catholic priests evil? If the leaders are evil, are the followers evil too?

When we get to a discussion of deep darkness, of real evil, it is an awareness *always* forced on us by outsiders whom we accuse of having evil intentions. We label them as extremists, heretics, traitors, even witches. For example, although the pedophilia scandal brings about a complex and profoundly disturbing discussion, no organization such as the Catholic

Church accuses itself of evil. Perhaps only when centuries removed from an evil incidence might the group atone, even revise its internal historical accounts. But it does not—it cannot—do so in the face of contemporary active evil.

In this vein, even as more cases of child abuse are brought to light, the Catholic Church urges its followers “to move on,” to focus on the Church’s Sunny Spot and see the evil within as caused by a few sinful, possibly even evil, priests. I hold, as a guiding principle for assessing and interpreting a Big and personal Story, that no group confronts its deep darkness through internal introspection. Rather, it is an insight and awareness that comes from outside the group, often by those who are labeled in the Big Story as enemies.

I need to be clear on this point: Even if you try to remain inside the group, say, as a Roman Catholic, once you identify and expose the Shade, you are effectively cast outside of the group. If you truly expose evil actions, this group’s rejection is often quite formal, for example, exile, shunning, excommunication, incarceration, and in the historic past, even burning at the stake. Although it does not necessarily have to unfold in this manner, more often than not, once you encounter the evil of a Big or personal Story and reject it, then you are on your way out of that Big or personal Story. My experience in prison made me confront this reality. I could have persisted in calling myself Catholic or Christian, but my personal Story was so out of line, so severely idiosyncratic, that after I told it, others would ask, “Why do you still call yourself Catholic, even Christian?”

By being incarcerated, I was considered evil by society. Similarly, I knew my Church considered me heretical when my local bishop issued a letter

forbidding me from preaching, effectively blacklisting me when I applied to Catholic colleges for teaching positions. At that point I had to consider that I might be wrong. This *might* was difficult for me to get my arms around because the Church had been my emotional and spiritual refuge all my life. Once *Mother* Church rejects you, who is going to love you? For a guy who had devoted all his life, up until that time, to Mother Church, this was not a flip question.

From the State’s judgment bench, the judge at trial intoned, “You gentlemen are worse than the average criminal who attacks the taxpayer’s pocketbook. You strike at the foundation of government itself.” Of course, like all convicts I asserted my innocence. Actually, in alliance with another lawyer who represented my co-defendant, I appeared attorney-pro-se and my opening argument to the jury began, “We did it. And I want to tell you why.”

In terms I use today, the judge was telling me that my personal Story was rocking the foundations of his Secular Big Story, but that he had the powers of judgment and punishment. As I stood and heard his condemnation, I wondered, “Why am I so threatening to him?” I didn’t understand, back then, that I was striking at the foundation of the government’s primal brooding emotion, that is, at its gut need to be at war with an enemy to feel secure.

<b>GROUP BROODING EMOTION</b>	
group handles big moral issues	war, abortion, capital punishment, child abuse, etc.
group enables you to act "purely"	group has no Shade—“good intentions & deeds”
despite Digital Age you do not "Think	group "Thinks globally, acts locally"

globally, act locally"	
Web endows <i>greater</i> sense of powerlessness	Unintended Consequence of world-wide-web
"group think" and "group brooding emotion"	assuages your own "I don't do enough!"
Abortion's conflicting Big Stories	One's Sunny Spot is other's Shade
Disconnect between your personal Story & Big Story	Exposing a group's Shade leads to your leaving Big Story
	heretic, exile, shunning, execution

**Table 10 Group Brooding Emotion**

### **Adolf Hitler's Sunny Spot?**

Let's explore a bit further this theme of how a group's Shade, even evil, is brought to that group's awareness. Most people's Number One Evil Doer, Adolf Hitler, offers a perfect example. For the vast majority of people, the crimes, horrors and abuses of the Nazi Reich clearly show that its Big Story—of the Aryan Race's German Fascism—had a heart of deep darkness. After inspecting concentration camp photos, reading about the unimaginable medical experiments conducted by seemingly highly educated scientists and doctors on innocents, or hearing about the Gestapo's culture of sadomasochistic brutality, who would not consider the entire lot wholly evil? (Note: It is important to realize that these Germans were highly educated in Western culture's scientific tradition, and that most if not all were strongly influenced by Judaeo-Christian values of the Biblical tradition.)

Few would exonerate any German who alleges that his or her personal Story was morally sound during this time, unless he or she had risked personal harm to resist the Aryan Big Story. Yet, let's be realistic: As I learned while

in prison, no one accuses himself of being intentionally evil. In fact, if someone says, "I am evil," and/or indicates they enjoy doing evil acts, he or she is labeled a sociopath or madman. We must accept, in my terms, that Adolf Hitler likely thought he was acting from within his Sunny Spot and that he was feeling the warmth of that Spot as he led others—individuals, corporations, the German Nation and, yes, the German Roman and Lutheran Catholic Church through its Bishops—into the heart of darkness.

Germany provides an interesting study concerning how individuals accept and integrate into their personal Stories the understanding that their national historic Big Story was so hugely in the Shade. Germans continue to reflect on their country's Shady darkness. This has included profound private and public discussions about why Germans as citizens of the Nazi Reich became evil. I believe that Germany continues this internal examination of conscience *only* because it lost the war. More, that there is nearly no discussion about modern Germany's Shade. The discussion of evil is relegated to a historic timeline. This is so because Germany as a nation has moved into the Sunny Spot of the currently globally dominant nation's Big Story, namely, the United States. Through the Marshall Plan and other American-led reconstruction efforts, Germany is now part of the U.S. economic and cultural system. America is the leader of Western culture, and Germany has atoned, repented and returned to the fold. "Evil Germany" is a nation of the fascistic past, not of the "American" present. Presently, reconstructed Germany is a case history example and part of the "American way of life." In sum, Germany jettisoned the Nazi Aryan Big Story and adopted the three dominant Big Stories which are driving globalization.

Again, I stress that it takes an external agent to alert you to your Shade and most especially move you to identify and admit your evil acts. So, consider

what, if any, specific external agent(s) move you to see your personal, corporate, national or religious-spiritual Shade? Likely, you live nested within a hierarchy of external groups that enable you to sense or not to sense your Sunny Spot and Shade.

As you mature, the strongest external agents which influence your awareness of your Sunny Spot and Share are the church, then the nation, then the corporation and then the family. Group influence flows in reverse as you identity matures, that is, you were first most strongly influenced by family, then social groups, etc. Such groups continue to provide feedback and potential insight into your Shade as your personal Story matures. At this point, you are formed by the church’s spiritual truths and proclaims moral guidelines. By the nation’s laws and policies, which provide external boundaries for individual and corporate actions. By the corporation’s own internal culture, which is bounded by ethical rules and procedures. However, at this moment of maturity, does the formative influence ever flow the other way? That is, can the mature individual articulate the Shade aspects of his church, nation or corporation? We will return to this question often.

<b>GROUP SUNNY SPOT</b>	<b>GROUP SHADE</b>
Adolf Hitler acts from his Sunny Spot	Adolf Hitler never called himself evil
Germany accepts its Nazi Shade	Germany does so as a "historical" fact, doesn't reflect on current Shade
moves from Nazi Big Story to America's Big Story	<i>Marshall Plan</i> planted "American way of life"
Germany now part of three dominant Big Stories	part of wave of globalization

External agents: nested hierarchy Shade	limits individual access to group Shade
External agents: church, nation, corporation, family expose your Shade	can the individual be an external agent who
	exposes group Shade?

**Table 11 Group Sunny Spot and Group Shade**

In summary, the two core disciplines and practices I follow as I write *Sensual Preciousness* are the following: 1) to examine every Big Story and personal Story to discern how an event or situation is seen by various agents (such as the individual, corporation, nation or church) in respect to it being the *best-of-times* or the *worst-of-times*, and 2) to look at how an individual or group perceives its Sunny Spot and its Shade aspects.

**D. HOW DO YOU FEEL THINGS ARE GOING?**

By this point you understand why I ask how you feel instead of how you think things are going. Some believe that the mind controls everything and that how you think controls your feelings. I maintain that while this approach is faulty, it has some accuracy when applied to surface emotions and thoughts. For example, you can think yourself into the blues by dwelling on unhappy thoughts or by surrounding yourself with others who wallow in negatives. Indeed, the three Big Stories believe in “mind over matter,” consequently we exist within a social, cultural and group-psychological milieu wherein thinking is valued over feeling. When you disagree and say, “I don’t feel that way,” you may hear, “Stuff your feelings!,” “Get a grip!” or “Grin and bear it!” These popular quips indicate that a thinking person controls his gut feelings.

What I suggest, in distinct contrast, is that brooding emotions rule your mind. Consider this question: "What is your primal brooding emotion or range of brooding emotions?" I anticipate that you can make a list, but I doubt if you'll correctly identify it or them. To properly identify your brooding emotion(s) is a major task and objective of *Sensual Preciousness*.

On a conversational level, you probably have a fairly good understanding of how things are going. If we talked you'd probably share a lot of positives and negatives, going back and forth as we discussed whether it is the best or worst-of-times. In the end, you might even throw up your hands and say, "Who really knows?! Who can see the Big Story?" At that moment, while you're steeped in thinking mode, I might suggest not figuring it out—just tell me what your gut says.

### **"Praise the Lord and pass the ammo!"**

The life-or-death importance of your working from your brooding emotion over and against your thinking is evidenced by my experience in trying to stop war, which is really legalized murder. When I encountered my first pacifist, my college roommate Jim Hunt, I thought he was screwy. I had just left the Franciscan monastery but was still intent on searching out the meaning and demands of Jesus' message. Since I was a Roman Catholic, I had over a millennium of Big Story tradition to draw upon as guidance. The tradition is the accumulated wisdom of great thinkers and souls, called the "Fathers of the Church." It is an account of how they carved their personal Stories from the Big Story and in turn often changed parts of the Big Story. Some of these "Fathers" are known to you, others possibly not. From Origen to St. Augustine, from Thomas Aquinas to Cardinal John Henry Newman, from Jacques Maritain to the current Pope.

A study of this tradition reveals the core Religious Big Story, passed down

through the ages, as well as all the personal Stories that arose from that tradition. Of great interest to me have been those within the tradition whose personal Stories made them apostates, heretics, excommunicants and dissenters. By studying these outsiders, the brooding emotions of the Big Story are plainly revealed. Truths (doctrines and dogmas) of the faith are clarified by denouncing what is not true, that is, what is heretical. In this tradition, the solution called the "Just War Theory" clarifies how I was to connect my personal Story to the Religious Big Story.

Moreover, in this tradition much thought has gone into dealing with the apparent conflict between the Biblical commandment against killing and the waging of war. This conflict is heightened by the New Testament's emphasis on such themes and utterances as "God is Love" and "Love thy neighbor as thyself." As well as, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (*Gospel of John*, Chapter 15) While the Jewish Torah and Christian Old Testament Religious Big Stories narrate instances of "the faithful" fighting "holy wars" as acts of devotion to their god, in the New Testament there exists no notion or call for such warring. However, my tradition's theory of the "Just War" enabled me to grow up and have no intellectual-emotional conflict between being a good Catholic and being a professional soldier.

I studied comparative religions during my early graduate years, and verses from other religions were not as significant then as they have become in the current millennium. For example, the Koran's *Sword Verse*, "Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever ye find them, and take them (captive), and besiege them, and prepare for them each ambush. But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor-due, then leave

their way free. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." Qu'ran, 9:5 As back then, so now, this seems to clearly mirror the Old Testament's acceptance of holy violence. However, as within Christianity, this verse is argued, equally, as testament to Islam's peacefulness as to its inherent commitment to Holy War.

I was dressed in my novice Franciscan robes when the Novice Master took me to register for the Selective Service System in August of 1962. I remember the ride into town from the rural monastery fields. I was observant enough—and characteristically curious—to read the Selective Service registration materials. It was the first time that I had come across the mention of "Conscientious Objector" status. I asked the Master, "Aren't we *Conscientious* Objectors to war?" I can still see his paternal and well-intentioned smile as he actually patted me on the head and said to the effect, "Later, Friar Otto. You'll learn all about that, later."

So, while I had an inkling that something was amiss, I never seriously thought about pacifism until I met my college roommate, Jim. Even then I wasn't readily convinced. My dad had served in the Navy during World War II, my brother, George, was considering signing up for a stint in the early Vietnam-era navy, and around my house, "Praise the Lord and pass the ammo!" was a popular phrase.

Simply put, I could see myself as a military chaplain, tending and anointing men on the battlefield. However, as with most Americans, I wasn't paying much attention to the escalating Vietnam War. My mind was immersed in philosophical meanderings and, now out of the monastery, on the young women at the all-female College of Saint Benedict.

## **The *Just War* theory**

During my college years, my intense thinking-feeling conflict centered on sexual morality and not the war. The “free love” movement and early *Feminine Mystique* feminism rocked my personal Story. But I did learn about the Just War theory as part of my major in philosophy. It is worth reviewing its principles.

### **Principles of the Just War**

1. A just war can only be waged as a last resort. All nonviolent options must be exhausted before the use of force can be justified.
2. A war is just only if it is waged by a legitimate authority. Even just causes cannot be served by actions taken by individuals or groups who do not constitute an authority sanctioned by whatever the society and outsiders to the society deem legitimate.
3. A just war can only be fought to redress a wrong suffered. For example, self-defense against an armed attack is always considered to be a just cause (although the justice of the cause is not sufficient, see point #4). Further, a just war can only be fought with "right" intentions: the only permissible objective of a just war is to redress the injury.
4. A war can only be just if it is fought with a reasonable chance of success. Deaths and injury incurred in a hopeless cause are not morally justifiable.
5. The ultimate goal of a just war is to re-establish peace. More specifically, the peace established after the war must be preferable to the peace that would have prevailed if the war had not been fought.
6. The violence used in the war must be proportional to the injury suffered. States are prohibited from using force not necessary to

- attain the limited objective of addressing the injury suffered.
7. The weapons used in war must discriminate between combatants and non-combatants. Civilians are never permissible targets of war, and every effort must be taken to avoid killing civilians. The deaths of civilians are justified only if they are unavoidable victims of a deliberate attack on a military target.

From Vincent Ferraro at <http://www.justwartheory.com/>

Impressive, yes? All of this “Heavy, man!” mentation to arrive at giving yourself comfort as you pull the trigger and thump the life out of another person! Well, this was the intellectual tradition of my youth. It remains a core moral theology doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church and most Protestant denominations.

My roommate Jim was a nice guy but I wasn’t overwhelmed by his undergraduate command of random Scriptural quotes, a sprinkle of the Hindu Mahatma Gandhi’s *satyagraha*, the contemporary call to nonviolence of Martin Luther King, and the anarchist Catholics who followed Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk. Merton and Day were part of the “Catholic Worker” movement who, since the 1950s, protested nuclear war, war taxes, and seemingly anything that they judged led to war. Yet, I clearly remember the queasy feeling in my gut as I defended the tradition’s Just War theory!

From Jim’s perspective, I was the one who needed conversion to Jesus’ true message. While his focus on the *Sermon on the Mount* and the fact that Jesus lay down his life for us snared my attention—because I had always seen myself as a Good Guy, a future caring teacher and loving father (a large Sunny Spot!)—I still vigorously resisted his arguments. After all,

adopting a nonviolent spirituality and vision would have implied that I was critical of my Dad's and brother's service, and it questioned my patriotism, my bravery, and my loyalty to Mother Church.

Back then, I was just as fairly comfortable with the belief that the Just War theory settled the issue as I was with the Catholic tenet that women were ontologically inferior to men. In brief, the intellectual Big Story of Roman Catholicism and the Just War theory enabled me to squelch my gut instincts toward being a "peacemaker." Moreover, it allowed me to develop a personal Story marked by the fact that I did not feel uncomfortable dressed up in an Army ROTC uniform and marching in formation to fulfill one of my collegiate requirements. Indicative of the times, taking ROTC and an anti-communism course were requirements of most Catholic college curriculums.

Up to this point in my life I had never been violent, never even been in a serious fight. I was a tall, basketball-crazed guy but I had never given into a temptation to abuse my strength or size. Yet saying aloud that I was nonviolent *felt* like saying I was unmanly, weak and fearful, even girlish. The word *nonviolent* conveyed a sense of cowardliness. For males of my generation, our hero was John Wayne, charming, taken with the ladies, brave to a fault, and willing to blast the living hell out of any enemy who wandered into his numerous wartime flicks.

### **Vatican Council Two and "Total War"**

While I had a wavering admiration for Jim's personal Story of nonviolence, it didn't fit into my Catholic Big Story. That was soon to change, dramatically. During the Sixties, the Religious Big Story of Roman Catholicism was undergoing a historic and challenging revision. In 1962, Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council whose purpose was to present the Big

Story of the Catholic Tradition in concepts and language that spoke to modern times and sought to engage major issues of the day. Significantly, its reach was intentionally ecumenical and globally cultural in that it intended to speak to those outside of the Church, not just to those inside it.

When the Council ended in 1965 under Pope Paul VI, one the Council's most startlingly statements was its condemnation of "Total War."

Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and humanity, which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation. From, "Gaudium et Spes," Section 1, "The Avoidance of War," in the *Documents of Vatican Council II*.

This assertion was proclaimed to every nation. How was it heard by the nation that dropped the first and only Atomic Bomb? How did it begin to reformulate the thinking of those who, like me, clung to the Just War theory?

Further, a direct challenge was laid at the feet of every person of conscience by Pope John XXIII who wrote in his papal letter *Pacem in Terris* the following:

Since the right to command is required by the moral order and has its source in God, it follows that, if civil authorities legislate for or allow anything that is contrary to the will of God, neither the laws made nor the authorizations granted can be binding on the consciences of the citizens, since we must obey God rather than men. Otherwise, authority breaks down completely and results in shameful abuse.

Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, Part II, par. 51.

These were just two of many statements that caused numerous Catholics like me to begin to re-imagine the Catholic Big Story. It also made us feel confident that it was our moral right and duty to form compelling personal Stories. We strove to develop what Pope John XXIII called the “consciences of the citizens,” which I also reference as “conscientious citizens.” It was clear that this referred to me as both a citizen of Caesar and of God.

### **Catholic Big Story’s brooding emotions**

Although the Council was calling for a “modernization,” a re-imagining of the Catholic Big Story, its impact was more emotional than intellectual. Looking at the call metaphorically, the Council’s documents are beams in a soaring intellectual architecture, but their deeper emotional foundation is best assessed by evaluating the range of critical responses. It is not reaching for hyperbole to say that responses came from both the howling depths of fear and the ecstatic heights of joy.

How you imagined the Vietnam War, either as a “Just War” or a “Total War,” revealed your range of brooding emotions. Those who defended the Vietnam War as a Just War expressed a brooding dreadful fear and terror. Those who opposed the war as a “Total War” and who imagined themselves and all other people, including the Vietnamese themselves, as “People of God,” expressed a brooding peacefulness and comfortableness. The former declined the call of Pope John to exercise their “consciences” as citizens creating “Peace on Earth.” Rather, they preferred the tradition’s Big Story to do the thinking for them, that is, apply the principles of the Just War Theory.

The “citizens of conscience” (my phrase) were stepping out from tradition’s Shade and witnessing to the larger Sunny Spot that the “People of God”

image made manifest. If you are not familiar with Catholicism, you might have a difficult time understanding the veritable earthquake that the Council unleashed in the minds and hearts of its faithful. Yet using them as an example is critical because I identify the brooding emotions of the Religious Big Story tradition as a driving force of globalization.

In one sense, the Council caused certain Catholics to become refugees—a displaced people. Prior to the Council, these citizens of conscience accepted their role as “lay people” who lived in an authoritarian, benign dictatorship where paternalistic mind-control was soothingly effected through rote catechetical training and a highly ritualized world.

While the Council did not change any doctrines or dogmas, it did call for faithful individuals to see themselves more as part of the “People of God” (a key Conciliar imagistic phrase) than as an institutional Church. This was a call beyond just being ecumenical which, for most, simply meant embracing Protestants and Jews. Rather it was *a call to embrace all people and all cultures*. The Council offered up fresh and startling concepts and images for re-imagining the Catholic Big Story.

Today it is apparent to me that many Council members were beginning to feel comfortably at home here on the Living Earth. This was partly due to the profound influence of Teilhard de Chardin’s vision upon many Council leaders, including Pope John XXIII.

Few Catholics responded to the Council’s documents with moderation. Looking back, now four decades later, I sense a crack in the Big Story of a proportion I never could have foretold. Like many others I saw myself as a reformer, not a radical. In my own mind and heart, I was doing the Church’s

work. I defined myself as a theologian, having obtained a master's degree in theology. Where once I would have accepted the critical comment that my antiwar actions were drastic and extreme, today I see them as normative—at least normative in the new spiritual imagination of the People of God who condemned "Total War."

Nevertheless, the history of the Church after the Council up to today is dominated by a pervasive withdrawal, even rejection, by the post-Vatican Two popes from the imagination of the Documents. While it is a long story, the short version is that just about every "citizen of conscience" left the Church. "People of God" inspired priests, nuns, seminarians, theologians and laity left in droves. Those who remained strove to retain the Catholic Big Story as it was before the Council met. They are, in the main, those who rejected being "citizens of conscience." For me, the extreme-but-telling character of their faithfulness to the pre-Conciliar Big Story is manifested by their tolerance of the sexual abuse and pedophilic crimes committed and condoned by their priests, nuns and bishops. Simply, they could not *imagine* that their anointed and ordained, "supernatural" priest-Fathers could be so corrupt. For them, this evil had to have come from outside—the Serpent! Certainly, for them Mother Church has no such evil Shade. I discuss this assessment and judgment in greater detail in *Part 2*.

What happened to me is that the Council changed my personal identity. The Catholic Big Story was being re-imagined and it led to a huge wave of individuals re-imagining their personal Story. I and others expanded our *personal Stories* from 98% Big Story to 51%. That's a fair judgment because, at this pre-prison time, I still viewed myself as a faithful son of the Church.

My civil disobedience I fashioned as other Catholic Radicals did as “Divine Disobedience.” I heard the Council proclaim that my personal identity included my personal moral responsibility for developing my social identity as a consequence of my spiritual identity changing to that of being one of the People of God. Personally, I was to be a citizen of conscience for whom social justice and social service were daily priorities. I heard them rephrase JFK and challenge me, “Ask not what the People of God can do for you. Ask what you can do for the People of God.” Obeying Mother Church, then, meant obeying *my* conscience, for my actions made the People of God present to all peoples of the world.

### **Moving toward peacefulness**

This re-imagining of the Big Story was a historic event, but even more so was the call for the individual to form his own personal Story. As stated in Pope John XXIII’s quote (above), the faithful individual was to envision himself as a “conscientious” citizen. It was his task to deal with the Big Questions. He was no longer simply to follow clerical advice, although, obviously, he was to seek its wisdom.

The point here for us in this discussion is that it is up to you to weigh the risks which accompany the emotional breakdown that occurs at this moment of transformative breakthrough. Instead of finding safety and security in a doctrinal and dogmatic tradition, you are called—even obligated—to be and so form the conscience of this living tradition. It is up to you to express the Spirit of God. It is up to you to transform the world. *Whew!* Very heart-thumping stuff.

As you might anticipate, many mainline critics opine that “life changes but everything remains the same.” In effect, they look at Vatican Council Two

and don't see any special challenge to embrace transformative change. Rather, they say that in the Catholic Big Story a controlling theme is that the faith remains the same throughout the ages. They grant that how it is communicated through concepts, images and language may change, nevertheless doctrines and dogmas are infallible.

But—and this is a point to continually remember and recall—a Big Story often has unintended consequences. To be fair that is what critics of my personal Story did and do say. They see my reaction as “radical.” But I ask you to simply re-read the above statement from *Pacem in Terris*. How would you form, in obedience to the Council's wisdom, your personal Story based on the Big Story that is behind this statement, namely, that “the right to command ... and the moral order has its source in God”? How would you see your obligation then to obey *all* the laws of your nation? How would you begin to feel what it is that you must do? How would you preach and teach about the “consciences of the citizens.”

### **Teilhard de Chardin's powerful influence**

Ever so slowly my feelings overcame my fearful thoughts about being branded anti-American or traitorous. I could dissent from the American chapter of my Big Story because I believed that I was faithfully following my Catholic Religious Big Story. Based on Pope John XXIII's encyclical letter, I had less to risk at becoming a heretic to my nation than I did to my Church.

My transformation began, as I've mentioned, when I read the works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. As his thoughts were the intellectual scaffolding behind most of the re-visioning championed by Vatican Council Two, so were they transformative for my personal Story. Teilhard artfully crafted a Religious Big Story that blended the main tenets of Scientism's Big Story and

the Secular Big Story. Yet, again, his accomplishment for me was more deeply emotional than intellectual. It is instructive to explore the outlines of his thought.

Teilhard embraced science and Scientism's central belief in the evolutionary process. He also affirmed the Secular Big Story's theme that the human mind should be unencumbered by dogmatic systems, such as religions, even his own beloved Catholicism. He saw all three Big Stories as containing truths, and he saw them as converging to produce a grander Big Story. What distinguishes Teilhard is that he placed Religion, Scientism and Secularism in a human context. Although I am presenting his thought in my terms, what he caused me to see is that there is *only human knowing*. There is no way to get to an "objective" position that is devoid of subjective human emotion. More, he positioned every event and truth within a human relationship. Consequently, if you look at evolution, the physical evidence shows you where humans came from, that is, their Alpha point, as he terms it. What about the emotional evidence? For that, Teilhard looked forward to what he called the Omega point.

What was Teilhard getting at? He actually went one step beyond both Scientism and Secularism in that he implied that "all you have" is you. You are human and you know, feel, act, etc., as a human. So, why do you look to the past? Why do you concern yourself with evolution? Teilhard moved me to see that we look to the *past* to understand the *now* so that we can move into the *future*. What are we humans but *future people*? You are born, as stated previously, "in the middle of things." You are born from and into a relationship, and your life unfolds as you develop relationships. Being human then means being transformed through relationships.

## **Life as a relationship**

Teilhard's vision moved me and others to ask ourselves, "What is life as a relationship?" One answer is that just as my personal Story pivots on my recounting my life in terms of relationships with family, neighbors, society, church, etc., so the Big Story of Life is the story of my relationship to the universe. In this light, my family is my Alpha Point and the Living Earth is my Omega Point.

In Teilhard's vision, there is no compelling reason not to think that everything is alive. But it is not a matter of thinking as it is a matter of feeling. You cannot think-a-relationship: It emerges from a feeling. Teilhard, in effect, asked me, *Can you feel not alive?* Is there any moment when I can say that I don't feel alive? If not, then why conjecture that such moments exist? Isn't it a tremendous fantasy to consider that any human experiences being not-alive? And if every human is alive as you are alive, then isn't everything alive? This is so because you only *truly* know something through a relationship—intellectual and/or emotional—with another human being. I was a philosophy student when I first encountered Teilhard's thought. I had read idealistic philosophies. I was steeped in the rationalistic tradition of Thomas Aquinas, and I was learning about the limits of human knowing as articulated by the then-popular school of Language Philosophy and the Philosophy of Science movement. So, I knew how others disdained Teilhard, and how foolish and naïve they felt his approach to be.

At a secular University conference for student philosophers, my paper on Teilhard was considered amusing, and my interest in him deemed understandable given my "intellectually suspect" Catholic background. In fact, most modern philosophers feel that a believer of any sort is a subservient intellectual in theological disguise. For them, all theological

thinking is guided by dogma and doctrine which negates any claim to interpretive objectivity. Modern philosophers claim to investigate and interpret facts and truths from a point of rigorous “value-free objectivity.” For me, “objectivity” can only be defined as a degree of “subjectivity,” and vice versa. I found “modern” philosophers to be, in the main, philosophers of the non-human. Meaning, their analyses led to paralysis—a paralysis of inaction. Despite the poetic vagueness of certain Teilhardian terms, when I finished reading him I was always intellectually on fire and inspired to get up and get out into the world—to act!

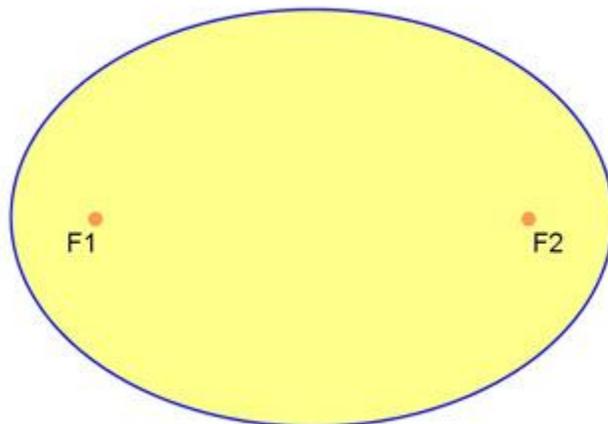
In my gut, I felt that Teilhard was onto something. Although his terms, Alpha and Omega, seemed almost academic, he sparkled with fire and passion as he wrote a “Hymn of the Universe” and celebrated a “Mass on the World.” He lived within a “Divine Milieu.” While I wasn’t ready to reform the Catholic Big Story in Teilhard’s image, his impact on my personal Story proved devastating.

If Teilhard was right, I reflected, every human being manifests *my* person. I was in relationship with that person even though I didn’t directly know him or her. Simply put, each of us was present to the other. Moreover, it was impossible for me as a person not to be in relationship with every other person on the earth. Humans are, in this light, one person, as we are all one biological unit or gene pool.

Visually, instead of imagining yourself as a circle with a single center, Teilhard’s thought leads to imagining yourself as an ellipse which is an oval with two centers or focal points. This reflects the fact that you were born within a relationship, namely, that of your parents. Human development is an interaction between you and the not-you or the “other.” As an elliptical person, the “other” is always part of your presence. You cannot make

yourself present unless you are engaged by this “other” focal point. You become more aware, more conscious and more human as you engage this other who is an integral part of your presence.

This elliptical character of your presence expands into the image of a web when you develop your social, cultural and spiritual identities. This is so because the “other” is also “other” to others besides you, as you are to still other others. The human web you create as your life unfolds is not simply one, two or three dimensional, rather, it is multi-dimensional and has the characteristic of a spiral. You experience this spiraling sense of your presence during any given day as you engage others through your various group identities. For example, with your family you make certain aspects of your identity present. When you engage your corporate others or spiritual others quite distinct, varied and multi-dimensional aspects of your presence are manifested. In short, this elliptical, webbed and spiraling self throbs with living energy, that is, you are the heartbeat of life, itself.



**Figure B - You are the heartbeat of life, itself**

Teilhard forwarded an early form of Quantum physics’ “Butterfly Principle” which states that every action we take, everything we do and say, has an impact on the future. These effects may be positive or negative. While the actions may be small and judged insignificant, they have a way of being

amplified over time. To me, this meant that every person was someone with whom I could be in relationship and consequently was vital to my discovery of who I am. Additionally, every personal act of mine and yours has some degree of impact on every other relationship in the cosmos. The impact can be at a personal level or an identity-group level. In essence, I couldn't become me or reach my full human potential unless I nurtured my relationship with every other human. I had to find a way of inviting others to receive me and for me to receive them. But wasn't that *physically* impossible? Of course. But maybe not emotionally impossible from the perspective of brooding emotions?

### **Teilhard's world-wide-web of the human heart**

I believe that you and I set the brooding emotional tone for the whole Living Earth and every other human being. We do so directly when we are in a personal relationship. This can also be manifested by individual contact through the relationships developed by participating in shared group identities. Teilhard enabled me to feel worldwide, to feel myself as an earth person. Indeed, humorously, he made me feel part of a "worldwide web" long before the physical Internet was created.

In terms of my vision, Teilhard is one of the founders of the worldwide web of the brooding emotion of being comfortably at home and at peace on the Living Earth. Teilhard is described as a "pan-en-theist" which means he found the divine in everything and everyone. For him, while a physical and mental duality exists in the world, namely, I am me and you are you, there is no *emotional* or *spiritual* duality. Physically, once born, I am a distinct and individual body. Mentally, I can think thoughts that you cannot hear or which I refuse to share with you. However, emotionally and spiritually, I am you and you are me. Emotion, vision and spirituality are, by definition,

expressions of a relationship. They are coupled experiences. Each is an aspect of your intimacy. Emotion, vision and spirituality as expressions of intimacy become critical notions when I later critique the three Big Stories and introduce the Earthfolk vision and imagination.

As the current Digital Age Internet is a technological physical construct that affords global human communication, that is, a mental connection, so did Teilhard move me to understand that I am a node on the worldwide web of the human heart. His Divine Milieu is akin to virtual reality. He made me feel that I could be online while offline, meaning, that as I walked through my physical day at my college in central Minnesota, I was simultaneously Internetted with everyone in the global web of the Living Earth.

Teilhard's vision led me to a deep contact with the brooding emotion to which I had always been connected but about which I had no concepts or imagination. I realized that I was the Living Earth. Just as I was called to be a "People of God," so was I called, as all others are, to understand and deeply feel myself as the Living Earth's heartbeat and conscience. I came to imagine the everlasting Living Earth as forever hearth and home. That the Living Earth is us. That we humans are lively manifestations, presences of the Living Earth. We are its consciousness, its imagining. We are the Living Earth's passion. The Living Earth is hearth, and we the flaming breath of fire. We humans are full-flesh in blood and gasp, birthed from the Living Earth: seed, flower, bloom and fade. I know: *Whoa!*

### **War as an act of killing yourself**

If you accepted Teilhard's worldwide web of the human heart as I did, how would you respond to a call to war? If you understood that every action you take—every thinking, feeling, kinesthetic, creative action—affects every

other human, then what will you feel when you slay another? Isn't his or her bloodshed your blood? Isn't war an act of killing yourself? Simply suicide? If you felt this way as, I did, how else could you respond but to conscientiously object?

To hammer this point home, imagine thinking about killing people, all day long. If you turn on the TV, you can follow one show after another, from movies to the news to Hollywood gossip, and be moved to think violent thoughts and steep yourself in violent images. You could think that such violence was justified. That national defense requires that the enemy be slain. That violence is just the way it is in urban areas. That sexual violence and date rape is the price sexy women pay in the world of glitz and glamour and free sex.

I know that I can think all this if I emotionally distance myself from what I see and hear. But if I let myself feel what I am seeing and hearing in terms of our relationship, that is, that it is *you* who are being harmed, since you are integral to my being me, then I can no longer tolerate all of this violence. If I see the enemy as *family* and seek to intimately embrace them as I would my brothers or sisters, then I experience war as a direct, personal attack on all I hold sweet and dear. It matters little which nation's soldiers are on the attack. Once I behold and revere everyone as a darling brother or sister within the "People of God," I can no longer imagine killing them, unless I am suicidal.

When I was on trial, Gordy Nielsen, a former Marine who had been on several "search and destroy" missions in Vietnam, testified on my behalf. Here is what he said, in part:

In dealing with myself, coming back and thinking I

was right. And thinking that the things I had done were right because it was what I had been taught in boot camp, and then viewing it from the other side, instead of a gook, it was a human being. Instead of a hootch, it was a home. That really socked it to my head. It really blew my mind. Because I have never thought of a hootch being a home, it was an old grass hootch. And they were peasants, they weren't people.

If you carefully read and then spend some reflective, even meditative, moments on Gordy's statement, then you'll know what the prime message of my life and *Sensual Preciousness* is.

- "...instead of a gook, it was a human being."
- "...instead of a hootch, it was a home."

Gordy found that he was feeling as brooding emotion that the *gook* was his own brother. Although, back then, he as I did lacked the concepts and images of Earthfolk, he was feeling comfortably at home while standing inside the hootch. Gordy broke-down because, as a Marine, he was living within the American Patriot's chapter of his Big Story, and he was supposed to be feeling as a soldier should, namely, as if he was the Enemy of those whom he was sent to kill. At that battlefield moment, Gordy lost his personal Story.

Gordy lost his personal Story as a Good Man, as a loving spouse and father. He sat before me in my Newman Center office and told me that he woke up at night and in the midst of a crazed flashback threatened his wife. His children were terrified. He was terrified—of himself. He had returned from Vietnam only to find the war waging in his bedroom. Neither he nor I, then, had the phrase "post-traumatic stress syndrome." What we did have,

however, were our own minds and hearts and a commitment to act. Gordy testified at my trial, and later threw his medals over the fence onto the White House lawn.

### **My first Earthfolk**

Gordy was feeling Teilhardian. Although he didn't have Teilhard's Big Story, Gordy's personal Story expressed Teilhard's emotional vision. Gordy was the first Earthfolk that I personally met, although at the time I didn't have that word nor knew how to respond to him. When we first met in my office at the Newman Center on the University of Minnesota campus, I was preaching and teaching theology. Oddly, my job as program manager was approved by my draft board and fulfilled my two years of Alternative Service military obligation as required by my Conscientious Objector status. Usually, "COs" were assigned Alternative Service jobs as hospital orderlies. So, here he was, Gordy the emotional Teilhardian and first Earthfolk challenging me, *What are you going to do?* Indeed, what was a young, Roman Catholic theologian going to do during the time of the first globalized war, a Total War?

<b>BIG STORY</b>	<b>range of moral issues in personal STORY</b>
Personal Creator	focus on one's individual personal morality, not
Exiles and curses Adam and Eve	on social issues which are Church's focus
Earth is a Vale of Tears	seek priestly guidance to discern which moral
Suffering is Redemptive	issues require your personal response
Divine Truth is Revealed through	no basis for developing personal

priests	resistance to injustice
Jesus is God's Warrior, overcomes Satan	
"Outside the Church there is no Salvation"	no basis for developing nonviolence
range of moral issues very restricted	range of moral issues—part of global family
primarily concerning personal piety	"the personal is political"
Answers in "Baltimore Catechism"	Answers are in your heartfelt relationship with
Focus on Passion and Death of Jesus	God as you relate to His People
<b><i>Impact of Vatican Council II</i></b>	
People of God, not hierarchical Church	every human is invited to be one of the People of God
Laity to assume leadership position in	every culture's values are to be respected
developing solutions	individual responsible for moral choices
to international social justice issues	seeks priestly guidance but must write own
Divine Truth is Revealed but laity can become	personal Story
theologians and preach	
Jesus as healer	discover the nonviolent Jesus
Focus on Resurrection and New Life	"citizen of conscience"
Teilhard's world-wide-web of human heart	everyone count, every personal act counts

"it wasn't a hootch, it was a home"	tap into brooding peacefulness
"it wasn't a gook, it was a person"	tap into brooding being comfortably at-home on Earth

**Table 12 Big Story and range of moral issues in personal Story**

Teilhard de Chardin and Gordy Nielsen are two individuals who challenged not just my thinking, but my feelings. *Okay*. Pause. Let's be brutally honest: They *threatened* my thinking and feeling! Deep down, brooding, gut-wrenching, trembling emotions. One transformed my Big Story, the other my personal Story. While my development has many more chapters and is influenced by many other people, the question at hand for you is, *How do you feel things are going?*

**Truly, how do you feel things are going?**

Take a minute to go over the "Big Story and Personal Story" worksheet in *Appendix A*. Review your answers to the Big and personal Story questions. Evaluate them in terms of how you feel deep down in your gut when reading the questions. Consider that although you have an intellectual answer, is it matched by your gut feeling? What do you sense is your brooding emotional response, say, to the question, "Where do humans come from?" Do you feel any dread or angst when you consider that? Even if you have a snappy answer such as "from God," does that answer give you a sense of security, safety and peace? I'd like you to reflect on the levels of feeling and range of brooding emotions that emerge as you apply deeper critical thought to these Big Questions.

**Your nonverbal communication**

To plumb your deepest feelings, consider how you nonverbally react to these Big Questions. Do you express how you feel more nonverbally than verbally?

Most people do. Consider how you express your deep passion to your beloved: *Words, words, words!* They never seem to suffice, do they? You hear yourself saying over and over, "I love you. I love you. I truly love you." And even though you've said it a thousand times, your beloved wants to hear it again. As humorous as this lover's verbal plight might be, the real challenge comes when you hear, "*Show me that you love me.*" The call here is to demonstrate your love through heartfelt actions—deeds and words combined. In a nutshell, to integrate your beloved into your personal Story. Some nonverbal responses of love may include seemingly trivial tasks, say, washing the dishes, bringing home flowers or attending a ballet you loathe.

Or, perhaps it is going to a football game, shooting pool at a bar or holding the tools as you tinker with your Harley. But your true nonverbal self is tested by heartfelt deeds. You stand by one another through the death of parents. You alter your career to be responsive to her medical care. You work two jobs so he can go back and get his masters degree. At these times, what you were saying during your first heartfelt moment of nonverbal commitment, that is, when you each slid the wedding ring on the other's finger, speaks volumes. So now, reflect on the many ways you express yourself through heartfelt nonverbal deeds on the personal level.

Taking that idea to social settings, how do you express yourself there, nonverbally? Do you normally smile at strangers? Do you go out of your way to help someone, say, a person in a wheelchair trying to get through a difficult doorway? Have you ever given money anonymously to someone you didn't really know but whose plight you did? What groups express your beliefs and commitments? Have you ever protested in public for something in which you believe?

Finally, what is your global nonverbal expression? This is a difficult question

for most of us. How do you express yourself nonverbally through heartfelt deeds in your global relationships? Consider how you express yourself in front of your family, friends or co-workers when foreign events or peoples are mentioned. Then, how you respond to pleas for financial or skill contributions to troubles and needs in foreign countries? How do the social identity groups to which you belong speak and act on your behalf? Have you ever tried to affect how your organization or company presents itself—on your behalf—through its global relationships?

I've already mentioned that I evaluate the dominant three Big Stories as valuing "mind over matter." So I am fairly confident that you, as I, do not often think about how our groups express us through their global interactions. A time when you probably have consciously "felt globally" was when you feared that your national identity was under attack.

After the "9/11" terrorist attack, people in the United States flailed about trying to understand why America was being attacked. As often said, 9/11 was a reality-check for Americans. Up until that time, most Americans' Big Story allowed them to view the United States not only as the Land of the Free but a safe and secure haven. However, when attacked, brooding emotions were unleashed. What were yours? Are you living in dread and foreboding, anticipating terrorists attacks even while fly-fishing in Montana? Or do you, in striking contrast, feel that "Finally!" everyone in America must start feeling as part of the world community and understand that "America" no longer exists? That there is only one people, the family of humankind, one people on the earth?

The attack on America unleashed a brooding emotional tremor which continues to impact you and your fellow Americans. This is similar with what

Catholics felt after Vatican Council Two. You realize that somehow the Big Story has changed, more, that it is continuing to change. You also sense that somehow your personal Story is still changing. And, yet, while this generalization is true, what are you truly feeling? Deep down in your gut, are you at peace, comfortably at home on the Living Earth, or are you living in dreadful fear, in a world of global terror?

### **E. Summary**

You have a Big Story into which you were born. As you grew up you carved out a personal Story which was your source for heartfelt moral action. By knowing your Big and personal Story you understand your passions and commitments, and for whom and what you are willing to put yourself in harm's way, even die. Your Big and personal Stories enable you to hold your world together. They ground you in a range of brooding emotions. They tap into a primal brooding emotion, even though you may not be conscious of what that primal emotion actually is.

How you feel determines how you think. Every situation and event can be interpreted as either the *best-of-times* or the *worst-of-times*. To understand how and why you experience either the best or worst-of-times, you need to understand how you experience your Sunny Spot and your Shade. Your Sunny Spot is defined through your relationships with others who point out your Shade aspects. Individuals come to accept their Shade acts, even ones judged to be evil, only by insights provided by external agents. Individuals, family, corporations, nations and churches are such external agents.

However, you strongly resist others defining the Shade of your identity groups, notably that of your corporation, nation or church. Identity groups empower you by articulating and acting on your behalf as they develop Big

Answers. Yet, you also feel disempowered by these identity groups because you have little direct influence over them. As an unintended consequence, the Digital Age's World-Wide-Web, instant messaging ("IM") and 24/7/365 access are forces that disable many people from acting according to the slogan, "Think globally, act locally."

Figure C, below, charts how the level of my critical thinking linked with the dominant brooding emotion of the time and how together they determined the range of moral issues I felt I could address and act upon. During "My traditional Catholic formation" period my level of critical thinking is almost non-existent. In brief, my spiritual identity as a Roman Catholic determined how I formed all my identities. The priests formed my obedient conscience. While I could sin, my moral range did not include my being an independent, self-critical and conscientious social, cultural or spiritual actor.

"Vatican Council II's impact" reveals how I changed as Vatican Council II offered new images, such as the People of God, and issued calls for me to follow my conscience and assume moral responsibility for solving international responsibilities. My personal identity expanded to encompass and integrate with aspects of my familial, social, corporate, cultural and spiritual identities. In brief, *I was to inform* my group identities through my heartfelt moral actions. This reversed my early upbringing where my group identities dominated my personal Story. As a youth, the Catholic Church formed me as I knelt and obeyed. Likewise, the State formed me as an American as I obeyed its laws. Corporations presented me with guidelines for ethical and moral behavior in the global marketplace. In contrast to my uncritical youth, after Vatican Council II, I was to guide and mold all these group identities through my personal moral behavior and imagination. I was to listen to the voice of my personal conscience.

“Raiding Selective Service Draft Offices” reflects the influence of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin who envisioned a Big Story that integrated chapters of the Secular and Scientism’s Big Story. He imagined a worldwide web of the human heart. Within this worldwide web each person makes present the person of the Living Earth. Teilhard’s vision moved me to resist the first globalized war and the first “Total War,” that is, the Vietnam War. During my trial the federal prosecutor accused me of making draft raids the “eighth sacrament.” In a way, he was right on the mark.

In the draft office I exercised my priestly authority as I ritually destroyed draft cards. Instead of the Warrior’s Quest’s ritual sacrifice using bread and wine to make real the body and blood of the crucified and suffering Christ, I transformed the draft card’s symbolic violence through the nonviolent destruction of this sacred paper which all American males must possess and which makes present their spiritual identity as Warrior’s Questers. My brooding emotions had developed from a morality driven by a fear of cowardice all the way to being grounded in the transforming emotion of making a prophetic leap.

Finally, you have been asked to critically reflect on the Big Questions and take time to feel what is in your gut. Are you at peace and comfortably at home on the Living Earth? Or, are you in dreadful fear, embroiled in a terrorist global war?

**Figure C - Group Identities, Critical Thinking & Moral Range in respect to issue of war**

	<b>EXAMPLE A</b>	<b>MY TRADITIONAL CATHOLIC FORMATION</b>			
<b>Brooding Emotions</b>	cowardice	manliness	patriotism	superiority	obedience
5					
4					
3					obey priests
2			America is second	Church eternal	doctrines
1	obey parents	obey Church	Catholicism first	distinct identity	Catechism
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Familial</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Cultural</i>	<i>Spiritual</i>

	<b>EXAMPLE B</b>	<b>VATICAN COUNCIL II'S IMPACT</b>			
<b>Brooding Emotions</b>	responsible	accountable	creative	optimism	joyfulness
5					
4					People of God
3			global citizen	men of good will	No Total War
2	obey conscience	obey People of God	Atomic Bomb	Youth Movement	<i>Pacem in Terris</i>
1	honor parents	obey Church	American Catholic		Build the Earth
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Familial</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Cultural</i>	<i>Spiritual</i>

	<b>EXAMPLE C</b>	<b>RAIDING SELECTIVE SERVICE DRAFT OFFICES</b>			
<b>Brooding Emotions</b>	commitment	activism	transforming world	acting justly	prophetic leap
5					8th sacrament
4	Teilhard "Divine Milieu"	lead People of God	global citizen	imperialism/patriarchy	People of God
3	conscious evolution	obey People of God	"small d" democracy	endless war	No Total War
2	obey conscience			Youth Movement	<i>Pacem in Terris</i>
1	discuss with parents				Build the Earth
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Familial</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Cultural</i>	<i>Spiritual</i>

## **Key Points**

### **Your *Big Story* and your *personal Story***

- Big Questions: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How of Life
- Tensions, even contradictions, exist between ideas and values in Big and personal Stories but you still confess and profess that you are faithful to both
- Earthfolk Big Story of *Sensual Preciousness*, an ancient folk vision and imagination which has been in a millennial slumber
- Image of Starship Earth, the "Sunrise Earth" photograph of Apollo 8, awakens Earthfolk vision and imagination
- *Big Story* is the source for the imagination, vision and inspiration of, but more importantly, the primal feelings that ground a people
- *personal Story* is the unique, often idiosyncratic way each person carves out and re-arranges parts of the Big Story so that they can feel healthy and act effectively and morally in the world

### **How do you hold the world together?**

- You were born "in the middle of things."
- You mature as you become aware of "you," family, neighborhood, ethnicity, religion and other identifying aspects of your life
- You develop group identities starting with family, society, corporations, spiritual and cultural organizations
- The group identities are organizations which "think for you" and have doctrines, dogmas, position papers and codes of action
- Group identities assist you in develop critical thinking skills but can also severely limit your vision and imagination
- You experience internal conflicts with your Big Story
- You discover that other Big Stories want to displace, replace or abolish yours
- Your personal Story is your commitment story

## **"The best of times, the worst of times"**

- Big Stories have "camps," for example, "Sacred Secularism" and "Non-Sacred Secularism"
- A non-Catholic version of the Examination of Conscience provides a useful tool for exploring and evaluating Big and personal Stories
- For some who share your Big Story it is always the "best of times" while it is, simultaneously, the "worst of times" for another individual or group
- The latter also holds true for those who do not hold your Big Story
- Sometimes, as in author's Catholic Big Story, a great disconnect exists between thinking and feeling; at times, there is a total lack of awareness of brooding emotions
- For the author, it was "okay to feel rotten" because humans had "fallen" from God's "good" creation, yet, an apocalyptic End of Time was anticipated
- Author was influenced by the vision of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., in discovering that every human counts and, more importantly, that every human act counts to create the world as it is *right now*
- Teilhard saw a mind-sphere ("Noosphere"), a spirit-sphere ("Christosphere") and a meta-person presence ("Living Earth"). These mirror the brain/mind, heart/spirit, and body/living presence relationships
- Teilhard experienced life as existing within a "Divine Milieu"
- "Emotional criminality"—The nonviolent author experiences and claims his violent self, his "emotional criminality"
- Ironically, most violent warriors believe that they are peacemakers as they tap into the primal brooding emotion of the warrior—*Kill!*
- Of critical importance is the insight that to be a nonviolent peacemaker

requires owning your personal violence

- One reason for *Sensual Preciousness* is the author's discovery that he is no longer steeped in Catholicism's brooding emotion of feeling miserable
- Many argue that, as this millennium continues, the worst-of-times appears to be more prevalent than the best-of-times
- Digital Age, Age of Aquarius, Global Youth Movement and other appropriate labels for the present times give way to the Age of Dread and global terrorism; of individual and group suicide, even possible nuclear or ecological holocaust
- Three dominant Big Stories fear the Other not only as stranger but as Intimate Enemy
- Earthfolk experience a best-of-times during these worst-of-times. They are:
  - Feeling comfortably at home on Earth
  - Living as if no one's Enemy
  - Acclaiming the Other as Precious
  - Seeking the precious intimacy of the embrace of Beloveds
  - Practicing *Sensual Preciousness* rituals

### **The Sunny Spot and the Shade**

- Most see themselves as a Sunny Spot in the universe and amid the mass of humanity
- Sunny Spot is a way of feeling, that is, "I am basically good, kind, fair and just."
- "If you took the time to really get to know me, you'd love me."
- Even hardened criminals proclaim a Sunny Spot: "I'm innocent!"
- Everyone exists within the Shade
- Like Chinese Yin-Yang symbol, Sunny Spot and Shade have a dynamic, fluid relationship and interplay

- Few talk about their Shade
- Personal and group Shade awareness is most often exposed by outside agents
- Even Adolf Hitler would have claimed a Sunny Spot had he understood the concept
- Germany as a nation continues to explore its darkest Shade
- Families, corporations, nations and churches are outside agents that move individuals to see and experience personal Shade
- Can an individual articulate the Shade aspects of a church, nation or corporation?
- To foster understanding, follow these two disciplines and practices:
  - 1) examine every situation to discern how an event or situation is seen by such agents as the individual, the family, the corporation, the nation or the church in respect to it being the best-of-times or the worst-of-times
  - 2) look at how an individual or group perceives its Sunny Spot and its Shade aspects.

### **How do you feel things are going?**

- Three dominant Big Stories believe in “mind over matter”
- They hold that the “mind” controls everything. The author finds this a faulty concept.
- “Don’t try to figure it out. Feel it out. Just tell me what your gut says.”
- The importance of feeling over thinking came from trying to stop the legalized murder called “war.”
- A perennial conflict in Catholic tradition concerns “Thou shalt not kill” and warring
- Catholics developed the *Just War* theory
- Author grew up ready to serve as a chaplain at war
- Vatican Council Two dramatically transformed the Catholic Big Story in

major ways:

- It did not introduce new doctrine or dogma
- It provided new images and concepts, for example, “People of God” and “consciences of citizens”
- It addressed “modern times” and modern issues, for example, it condemned “Total War”
- Instead of relying upon priestly authority, one’s personal Story now required personal responsibility for guiding the imagination and moral activities of the Big Story
- “Moral Man” in an “Immoral Society” metaphor
- Author’s personal Story challenged by thoughts and feelings of works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J.
- Evolution manifests itself through human presence
- There is no “creation from nothing,” so what is most human—thinking and feeling—have always been integral aspects of Evolution. Metaphorically, humans are Evolution thinking and feeling.
- To be human is to be in relationship with a past and a future that creates the now.
- Being human means being transformed through relationships
- Alpha Point is what “pushes” Life, namely, it is Evolution’s starting point.
- Omega Point is what “pulls” Life, namely, a Living Earth, which is Evolution’s end point.
- Teilhard established what the author calls the “worldwide web of human emotion, of human heart.”
- Young Marine witness at trial said:
  - “...instead of a gook, it was a human being.
  - ...instead of a hootch, it was a home.”
  - Young Marine is first Earthfolk author met.

- How do you express yourself nonverbally? Individually? Socially? Globally?
- How did the attacks of 9/11 make you feel? How has it affected your Big and personal Stories?
- Icons, liturgy, habits and rituals reveal the nonverbal language of a society and culture, for example, How is warring a ritual of the Religious Big Story?