Our main intention in this article is to shed light on certain aspects of the present moment in human evolution. More concretely, we want to identify a new evolutionary potential from the perspective of the historical development of human consciousness. Before we describe this new evolutionary potential, however, it is essential to say some words about the nature and origin of the following reflections. Our article is not the product of a theoretical study, but an attempt to convey some of the fruits that we have harvested during several decades of lived, practically-based inquiry, with the help of the experience of hundreds of individuals in healing and psychospiritual processes.

For more than thirty years, Ramon Albareda, motivated by his perception of the great gap between his own experience of life, accessed particularly through nature and spirituality, and the life experiences of most contemporary human individuals and societies, developed an approach to integral growth to help human beings move toward a higher quality of life. His work has been enriched and strengthened by the presence and contributions of Marina Romero, whose personal needs and concerns pushed her to seek responses to the same questions.

The work we have co-created is a radically new approach to integral growth that is not based on already existing techniques or practices. Its main purpose is to facilitate natural conditions that allow each person, free from the constraints that are subtly imposed by psychospiritual models and ideals, to lay down his or her own unique path of integral evolution. Essentially, the practices we have created seek to ground our consciousness in our own vital potentials. As we explain in this article, this integration generates a new energetic axis that guides our evolution from within. Although this may sound somewhat abstract, and although space does not allow us to describe these practices here, it is more fruitful in our experience to evoke resonances with this work than to offer decontextualized descriptions of specific practices. The practices only have meaning within the context created in the work, and it makes little sense to describe them outside that context, and even less in the limited space of a journal article.
While reading this article, then, it is important that the reader bear in mind that the ideas we present have germinated, grown, and matured autonomously through several decades of practical work with hundreds of individuals, and that they should not be confused with an elaboration, integration, or synthesis of the theories or approaches of others. We are aware that some of the topics that we explore (e.g., gender, sexuality, and consciousness) have been the subject of sustained discussion for decades. If we do not engage those discussions here it is mainly because our purpose is to share our experientially grounded perspective on those topics—a perspective we believe is a new approach. It is in the spirit of knowledge sharing, not of philosophical argumentation, that we offer our ideas. Needless to say, although many of these insights come from experiences supported by numerous people and we firmly believe that they accurately reflect profound aspects of reality, they are, like life itself, in a process of continuous change, enrichment, and evolution.

A New Evolutionary Potential

A new evolutionary potential is currently available to human beings. For the first time in human history, we believe it is possible to integrate what we call the “dark energy” with the “energy of consciousness,” not only in isolated or extraordinary individuals, but also on a collective level. The dark energy is the source and organizing principle of what we call the “vital-primary” dimension of life. Its quality is dense, and its state of unity is amorphous and undifferentiated. In the human realm, this energy is the source of our sexuality and gives us vitality and natural wisdom. When sexual development is not aligned with the essence of the dark energy, individuals cannot fully embody this energy.

The energy of consciousness is the source and organizing principle of what we call the “conscious-spiritual” dimension of life. Its quality is subtle and luminous, and its state of unity is infinitely differentiated. In the human realm, this energy brings forth our spirituality, and grants us light and awareness. When spiritual development is not aligned with the essence of the energy of consciousness, this energy cannot be fully embodied in the person either. In the absence of blockages or conflicts, however, both energies naturally connect human beings with the immanent and the transcendent sacred dimensions of life, respectively.

One of our working hypotheses is that the energy of consciousness in human life may have emerged by means of an inhibition of the dark energy. As we see it, the process of inhibition may have been evolutionarily necessary to avoid the reabsorption of a still relatively weak, emerging consciousness into the stronger presence that the dark energy once had in human beings. What characterizes our present historical moment, however, is precisely the possibility of connecting the dark energy and the energy of consciousness in an integrated way, that is, without either energy absorbing the other. We suggest that such an integration can generate an evolutionary potential of tremendous significance for humanity. Before we describe some aspects of this potential, we must briefly examine the present state of humanity.
A Small Map of Humanity

Although it is possible, to integrate the dark energy with the energy of consciousness is tremendously difficult. As we mentioned, we believe that our modern Western culture derives from a historical process of dissociation of these energies. That dissociative process produced two interfering energetic layers that separate us from both the dark energy and the energy of consciousness—a layer of accumulated conflicts and a layer of false knowing. First, a layer of accumulated conflicts, wounds, and fears exists between the modern self and the essence of the dark energy. (And here it is fundamental to discriminate between this conflictive sediment and the evolutionary essence of the dark energy.) Second, the dissociative process engendered a layer of false knowing, or ungrounded theoretical constructions, between the modern self and the energy of consciousness. (It is also important to not get lost in this layer because the essence of consciousness dwells beyond it.) In other words, although we have the seeds for integrating the dark energy with the energy of consciousness, neither our soil nor our fertilizers are adequate.

A simple image of four elements may help convey the situation (see fig. 1):

1. Heaven, which is the center and first organization of the energy of consciousness.

2. Civilized constructions that separate us from nature and seek to find the “right path” and “enlightenment.” These constructions include clouds of ungrounded theories that in many cases conceal the light from heaven.

3. Layers of conflicts resulting from the influence of these constructions on life and human beings. These layers have accumulated in what we could call the sewers or garbage dumps of our civilized constructions.

4. Virgin nature, which is the center and first organization of the dark energy.

Currently, the foundations of our inner and outer civilized constructions (social, cultural, philosophical, psychological, religious, and so forth) are largely based on the dissociation and opposition of polar realities (sexuality/spirituality, masculine/feminine, light/darkness, and so forth). We seek a supposed “right path,” for example, through the intentional cultivation of some poles and the inhibition of others. Furthermore, this “right path” is often mentally and/or externally imposed, rather than being engendered from within the whole person. We can observe this situation, for example, in religious systems that define certain human qualities or potentials—as well as specific paths to develop them—as intrinsically higher or more “spiritually correct” than others that are considered lower, regressive, or even detrimental to spiritual flourishing (equanimity versus intense passions, transcendence of the body versus sensual embodiment, etc.). We must note, however, that although the prevalent cultivation of a particular pole can have a temporary evolutionary value (i.e., to foster its differentiation and strengthen it), its absolute elevation ultimately leads to a blockage of evolutionary movement, which in our experience tends to unfold naturally through the differentiation and integration of poles. Furthermore, the imposition of a supposed “right path” tends to force individuals to construct themselves according to its values, which often disconnects them from both their reality and their unique potentials. Again, this may be a necessary phase of a genuine evolutionary process, but if we consistently uproot ourselves from our reality.
and our unique potentials, we may never be able to develop who we truly are.

Let us briefly explore how this situation affects us as human beings. In general terms, we can talk about four basic types of individuals and collectives according to their relationship to the four elements outlined in figure 1. First, some people live mainly identified with the civilized constructions and the clouds that those engender. These people usually suffer from the conflicts derived from the dictatorship of some poles over others, and from imposing upon their essential beings a mentally decided “right path” (spiritual, psychological, sexual, social, etc.). They tend to live disconnected from their own nature, paradoxically alienated from the very sources of meaning that they are searching for through the constructions. At times, compensatory mechanisms emerge from this situation, such as the attempt to reproduce mentally a reality from which one feels unconsciously alienated. Sometimes, individuals become perpetual seekers who never find the truth for which they are seeking. The reason is that the meaning that they are seeking belongs to essences that the ungrounded constructions cannot integrate. In the best of cases, this perpetual seeking becomes for some people a way of life that somehow compensates for their disconnection from their own nature because its impulse vitalizes them and gives meaning to their lives.

Second, some people live identified mainly with a variety of conflictive dynamics. In addition to being dissociated from their own nature, such individuals cannot integrate themselves into civilized constructions. Frequently, they are so identified with their own conflicts that they cannot avoid experiencing life through them. Their lives thus become closed circuits in which they repeatedly reproduce the same conflicts. Those individuals do not have the orientation of either the natural principles that could transform their conflicts into evolutionary triggers or the constructions that would at least help them to live removed from their conflicts.

Third, certain individuals live identified mainly with nature and are, consequently, disconnected from the values that have been developed in the civilized constructions. Such individuals usually reject the civilized constructions altogether, advocating a “return to nature” that is independent from any value developed by the constructions. Obviously, such a path cannot nurture the emergence of the new evolutionary potential we are talking about here. To simply “abandon the city” and “go native” is a regression in the historical and evolutionary process.

Finally, some people live in the context of the civilized constructions, but they do not embrace them. Those individuals sometimes attempt to transcend the constructions to access vital potentials associated with the dark energy or the energy of consciousness. Given the current dissociative structures of the civilized constructions, seeking transpersonal paths that will lead to the essence of our being beyond this concrete reality is understandable and may be occasionally valuable. However, we firmly believe that human beings can only develop fully by grounding their most vital potentials in their persons and everyday lives, not by systematically transcending them.²

To facilitate a genuine new beginning, we must also consider other aspects of our present situation. First, it is widely accepted today that a person is composed of different aspects or dimensions, that is, body, instinct, heart, mind, soul, and so forth. Although excellent theories exist that describe these dimensions and their functioning quite accurately, a tragic mistake plagues most of them: The understanding and development of all the aspects of the person is often approached from the standpoint of only one aspect, namely, the mind. Although the mind is highly developed in Western culture, there is not much room for the maturation of the other aspects of the person. This situation generates a vicious circle that justifies itself: Because we do not create spaces for the maturation of the instincts, the body, and the heart, it becomes true that they cannot participate in an evolutionary path if they are not mentally guided. The problem is that insofar as they are always mentally guided, they cannot mature autonomously, and thus the need for their mental direction becomes permanently justified. A tragic consequence of such a one-sided maturation is the generation of a limited and distorted vision of reality and the subjugation of reality to that vision. The maturation of all the aspects that constitute us, however, is essential to access our genuine human potential and ground in ourselves both the dark energy and the energy of consciousness. What we need is to create spaces in which these aspects of our being can mature according to their unique developmental principles and dynamics, not according to the ones that our minds think are most adequate.

Second, we would like to mention three dynamics historically embedded
in the collective unconscious that generate many conflictive and paralyzing situations:

The pride of the mind. The pride of the mind can manifest in a variety of subtle ways. Essentially, the mind creates a vision of life and, unaware that that vision is partial, thinks that it can orient the evolution of the whole person without considering other aspects such as the body, the instinct, or the heart. At times, it can be tragic because the mind can construct extremely sophisticated but false knowing out of genuine insights. In terms of figure 1, the pride of the mind is what generates the white clouds that separate Heaven and Earth. In the context of deep experiential work, when a person becomes aware of not-knowing, it can be a sign that the mind is ready to let go of its pride and collaborate in the elaboration of genuine knowing, which necessarily involves all aspects of the person.

The shame of the body. There are many levels of shame, but here we refer to the one that is energetically inherited by all human beings and that operates, often unconsciously, at an organic level. Organically embedded shame manifests through unconscious energetic contractions that block or inhibit many of the essential potentials in the body. In figure 1, the shame of the body generates the sediment of conflictive experiences that accumulates between the person’s consciousness and the essence of the dark energy. In the context of deep experiential work, when sadness emerges in the heart, it can mean that this ancient state of struggle is starting to be transformed.

It is important to stress that pride, shame, and the state of struggle affect all levels of the person. Their respective association with the mind, the body, and the heart simply indicates the centers where these dynamics originate.

Finally, there is one further difficulty involved in the development of the new evolutionary possibility. Nowadays there are individuals and collectives structured mainly according to the constructions and values of the dark energy, and others structured mainly according to the constructions and values of the energy of consciousness. Their somatic, emotional, and mental experiences have different qualities, and they communicate and access transcendental realities in different ways. To illustrate this difference, we can draw an analogy with the different states of matter—solid, liq-

Totem of Light

uid, and gaseous. These three states have different qualities, are governed by different internal laws, and generate different processes. If a solid were able to perceive the world and talk to us, it would tell us very different things than a liquid or gas. And how would a solid perceive and define a liquid? How would a liquid perceive and define a solid? We use this analogy to convey not only how reality can be variously perceived from different dimensions, but also to show how easy it can be to gain a distorted perception of these dimensions if we approach them in ways that are inconsistent with their qualities. For example, how would the conscious-spiritual dimension perceive and define the vital-primary one? How would the vital-primary dimension perceive and define the conscious-spiritual one? When we approach a dimension from the standpoint of another, it is easy to fall into projective dynamics, to confer upon a dimension qualities that it does not have.

From the standpoint of the conscious-spiritual dimension, for example, the vital-primary reality can be seen as a world of symbols, myths, rituals, and magic—even as primitive, archaic, or unevolved. Similarly, from the standpoint of the vital-primary dimension, the conscious-spiritual reality can be seen as a world of abstractions, constructions, and artificial conditionings—perhaps even as disconnected from natural principles and values. Even when we consider the integration of both dimensions important, it is rare that we understand that a process of transformation will be necessary to achieve it. To facilitate the transformation, we must also understand that the structures that foster the development of one dimension are not the same as the ones needed for the development of another. Coming back to our analogy, the means to transform solids, liquids, and gases must be different; for example, we can touch and mold many solid elements, but not gases. Similarly, for the vital-primary dimension to be genuinely transformed, it is necessary to
involve the body, and not merely the mind or more subtle forms of consciousness.

The development of the new evolutionary potential involves a new beginning in addition to a genuine process of personal and social transformation. Because the vital-primary and conscious-spiritual dimensions are largely developed separately from each other, the construction of bridges of communication between them is sorely needed. What we need is to recover the primary values of life, but without denying all the new, constructed ones, to recover the connection of the person with nature, while planting there the new seeds of consciousness and its spiritual sense.

Toward a New Path

Although no material or spiritual referents exist in our present reality to orient us in the development of this new historical possibility, a path can be laid down, or more precisely, there are as many paths as there are human beings existing today. Yet without inner or outer referents, how can we orient ourselves? To illustrate a possible answer to this question, we will use another simple image. Imagine that we face two magnets and keep them at a certain distance. Unless other forces are present, a magnetic field will be generated that will arrange any metallic object that enters the field across identical lines.

Now imagine that one magnet is the dark energy and the other the energy of consciousness. This situation generates a new energetic movement in the interior of the person. The movement affects the individual, as a magnetic field influences metallic objects. Essentially, the individual is impelled toward a new order from within. Under this influence, and depending on a variety of factors, an individual can have two kinds of experiences: First, he or she can experience dissociation, which reveals those personal structures or energetic tendencies that preclude or hinder the alignment of both energies, for example, conflicts, blockages, struggles, fears, empty holes, and so forth. In this case, the individual can become aware of, relate to, and start to transform those elements. It must be stressed that the orientation of this process is neither external to the individual nor provided by already learned schemes. Rather, the orientation naturally emerges out of the new energetic axis generated by the alignment of the dark energy and the energy of consciousness.

Second, an individual can experience connection without resistance between the dark energy and the energy of consciousness. Such an experience can become an inner reference point for that person to lay down the new path, even in those moments when it may seem very hard or impossible. It will also be an experience of profound regeneration and pacification of both the primary and the spiritual worlds of the individual. Both types of experiences are necessary to develop the new path.

We want to emphasize that the possibility of connecting the dark energy and the energy of consciousness is simply a new direction toward which we can orient our everyday experience. At no time should it be made into a goal to be achieved. What is fundamental is to live every moment and situation as fully as possible and to take the corresponding steps according to the new inner orientation. When we do so, we soon realize that there is ultimately no difference between the path and the goal.

Vitalized Enlightenment: From Persons to Complete Human Beings

We have suggested that the alignment of the dark energy and the energy of consciousness generates a new energetic axis within the person that opens up a rich variety of new evolutionary potentials. In this section, we would like to briefly refer to four of these new possibilities:

The evolutionary alignment of the interfering layers that separate the person from the essence of both the dark energy and the energy of consciousness. The energetic layer of conflicts that exists between the person and the essence of the dark energy is today very dense and intricate. It is truly difficult to break through this layer without getting lost, and even more difficult to make contact with this layer to be able to transform it. A parallel situation occurs when one tries to penetrate the layer of ungrounded theories. It is very hard to engage this layer so that it can offer us an evolutionary orientation. In our experience, it is only when we can connect with the essence of both energies that it is possible to rearrange all the primary and spiritual aspects of our reality. When this occurs, the two interfering layers align themselves with the evolutionary principles of the dark energy and the energy of consciousness and can be gradually transformed or resituated.

A new orientation of the person toward the emergence of a fully embodied consciousness or conscious matter. With their integration, both the vital-primary and the conscious-spiritual dimensions
undergo mutual transformation. The vital-primary dimension gains a new evolutionary direction beyond itself, and the conscious-spiritual dimension obtains greater embodiment and vitalization. On the one hand, without being sublimated or transcended, the primary drives spontaneously collaborate in making the individual more porous and thus receptive to the presence of consciousness and spirit. We want to distinguish this relationship between primary and spiritual energies from the one sought in some Tantric and neo-Tantric practices, in which vital energies are often used as fuel to catapult consciousness to more or less disembodied states.

On the other hand, the integration of primary potentials vitalizes, embodies, and eroticizes the energy of consciousness. The transformation of the energy of consciousness leads to a state of vitalized enlightenment that gives the person greater discernment, spontaneity, passion for life, rootedness, and freedom. Vitalized enlightenment differs from the kind of spiritual illumination that emerges from increasing inner freedom at the expense of a devitalization or marginalization of primary qualities. In other words, a vitalized enlightened human being needs to be sharply differentiated from what we might call a "transpersonalized person," that is, a person who heightens his or her spiritual consciousness at the cost of marginalizing, inhibiting, or sublimating his or her primary reality. Using the image of a tiger to represent the primary dimension, we could say that what is needed is not to ignore, repress, pacify, or even tame the tiger, but to run with it and allow its race, without losing force or vitality, to ground and foster our spiritual evolution.

The emergence of the fleshy heart. The heart is the energetic center that connects us and allows us to participate directly in our concrete reality. We call "fleshy" the heart that emerges from the integration of our primary and spiritual dimensions. Once the new energetic axis is grounded in the person, the heart can guide him or her in ways that are coherent with both primary and spiritual evolutionary principles. This will then allow us to faithfully follow the call of our heart to develop all of what we are and share ourselves fully with others as complete human beings.

The fleshy heart is the center of genuine human love. Genuine human love is both embodied and unconditional. It does not spring from cultural or inherited conditionings, but from the new energetic axis, and it becomes the true evolutionary drive of the person. Human love invites the person to live and develop, grounded in this concrete reality. One of the fundamental qualities of human love is compassion, that is, to moment, a complete human being is able to be both primary and conscious, sexual and spiritual, without needing to remember or demonstrate any of these qualities through specific intentional practices. If we create specific spaces or practices for the primary or spiritual dimensions, it will not be out of need, but as a gesture of gratitude, celebration, or desire to share these qualities with others more directly.

From this perspective, the transcendence of our concrete reality cannot be a path for the emergence of the complete human being. The search for meaning and fullness beyond our concrete reality can be valid as a phase of the process, but not as an ultimate path of development. Of course, when our energetic structure is not porous enough to the dark energy or the energy of consciousness, we will need to transcend the concrete reality to find essential meanings. The systematic transcendence of our reality cannot be the path, however, because in a very profound way, we are that reality. What is needed is that our primary and spiritual dimensions become, in our concrete reality, doorways of communication with the Mystery of Life.

The First Polarization of the Dark Energy: Centrifugal Movement (Being Man) and Centripetal Movement (Being Woman)

To begin, let us define what we understand by being man and being woman. When we refer to being man and being woman we are not talking about gender. In contrast, we use these terms to define two energetic movements or presences that emerge from the first polarization of the dark energy. On a primary energetic level, being man is
"centrifugal energy and presence" and being woman is "centripetal energy and presence." Whereas centrifugal energy expresses, develops, and impregnates, centripetal energy gathers, regenerates, and gestates. These energetic presences need each other to co-exist in evolutionary fashion and to develop the life potential of the dark energy. The generation of both movements is the first phase in the process of evolutionary transformation generated in the dark energy. The polarization activates a creative and regenerative movement of life in its very first manifestation in this reality.

Anything that separates us from these two movements arrests the processes of deep transformation of our vital-primary dimension and gives it a regressive character. When the movements are dissociated, centrifugal energy generates destructive dynamics by violation-invasion, and centripetal energy generates destructive dynamics by absorption.

In a primary energetic sense, the capability of being man and being woman is potentially available to both genders. Furthermore, both movements can manifest in all human dimensions (somatic, instinctive, emotional, mental, spiritual, etc.) and all aspects of everyday life. However, influenced by the deep wounds that are part of the collective heritage of humankind, as well as social and cultural referents that are in conflict with primary evolutionary values, contemporary individuals are usually disconnected from the essence of those potentials. The development of both movements in individuals and collectives is fundamental for the generation of the new axis forged by the alignment of the dark energy and the energy of consciousness. To offer some orientation for this transformation, we will now talk about one of the deepest and most ancient wounds that precludes the constructive development of these energetic movements.

This ancient wound fosters the development of our being man and our being woman in terms of dissociation and struggle. Being man historically stores the wound of castration. Castration makes this energetic potential take refuge in its origin, the primary world, where it is closed to or in opposition with the heart. Being woman historically stores the wound of violation. Violation makes this energetic potential take refuge in the heart, out of its origins, where it is closed to or in struggle with the primary world. These two aspects of the wound can breed deep tensions and struggles in the person, both internally and in relation to others.

Once again, it is fundamental to stress that we are not talking in terms of gender, that is, of relationships between biological men and biological women. Rather, we are talking about a dynamic between two deep and primary energetic movements that belongs to the first layers of the collective heritage of humanity. With its basis of fear and pain, this wound generates a variety of dynamics that constrain, condition, and distort the essence and development of being man and being woman in individuals and collectives, blocking the creative movement of life in its first manifestations. These dynamics, which cause a large number of inner and relational conflicts, include the blind unleashing of the most primary drives, the destructive tendencies of absorption, and the castration, conditioning, or violation of primary impulses and contents.

We cannot explore these dynamics or their associated conflicts fully in this article, but we want at least to refer to one basic distortion of the potentials of being man and being woman. This distortion interferes both with a correct understanding of these potentials and with their constructive development. The two basic poles of life and human existence are frequently defined in terms of masculine and feminine. It is generally considered that the feminine and the masculine are complementary and exist in both men and women. Because of the profundity and antiquity of the aforementioned wound, however, and the prevalent situation of disconnection from the dark energy and its primordial order, both terms are associated only with part of their overall potential, and that tends to perpetuate unnecessary conflicts and distortions. More concretely, the masculine is associated with vitality, strength, and rationality, and the feminine is associated with emotionality, gentleness, and intuition. With this understanding, the strength and vitality of being woman are often overlooked, as are the fragility and emotionality of being man. Likewise, there is not much room in our culture for the development of the rationality of being woman or the intuition of being man.

Common definitions of feminine and masculine stem from the fact that whereas the energetic seeds of being woman have taken refuge in the heart, the energetic seeds of being man have taken refuge in the primary world. Given this situation, it may be possible to develop our being woman and our being man as polar aspects that complement each other, but they would still remain dissociated and unable to generate an integrative creative movement.

Finally, we would like to situate more precisely the locus of this wound and its associated conflicts. Normally, we are not consciously identified with the deepest, most ancient layers of our heritage, but rather with contents and constructions closer to us in time. Nevertheless, these ancient layers influence the constitution of subsequent layers; and many everyday events can activate their contents and tendencies and thus condition our present experience and behavior directly.

To illustrate this point, we can use the image of the geological layers that constitute our planet. From the oldest geological layer to the present one, we can find elements that tell us about how life was on Earth at the corresponding time. Although each layer shapes the next one, in the geological reality of the planet it is very difficult for elements of the oldest layers to manifest in our present reality (as in the case of an active volcano). Therefore, their influence upon our reality, rather than being dynamic and direct, is static and mediated through accumulated successive layers. In terms of human heritage, however, the situation is somewhat different. Whenever we mobilize our vital-primary energies (e.g., during sexual activity), we feed older layers by this energetic flux and enable their archaic tendencies to become active in our present experience.

As previously mentioned, the wound associated with being woman and being man belongs to basic and ancient collective materials embedded in the deep-
est layers of our primary energy. Therefore, even though individuals or collectives may consciously construct themselves according to more wholesome values, the wound still conditions their deep energetic levels, unconsciously affecting and shaping their present experience and behavior. We cannot emphasize enough the unconscious depth of this wound. It may be easy to confuse it and situate its origins in biographical events, and it may be easy to approach it erroneously in terms of gender, and not as potentials that are independent of biological reality and sexual orientation. But because of its profound, collective origin, this wound cannot be healed through ordinary therapeutic and psychospiritual approaches. In our experience, only an approach that systematically works and purifies the deepest layers of our vital-primary energy can help us to recover the capability of being man and being woman in their primordial sense and without distortions. The process needs to involve a gradual and conscious direct contact with the contents and tendencies of our vital-primary energy, as well as working in our everyday life to fully purify and transform them. For this reason, though the process can have different phases and take multiple forms, it cannot be fully developed through verbal or even cathartic-experiential therapies.

Sexuality, Incarnation, and Embodied Spirituality

The gradual restitution of our being man and our being woman opens up the possibility of a new beginning—a beginning that is primary and profound but also conscious and connected to our current human values. This new beginning includes the new possibility of connecting the dark energy and the energy of consciousness at both individual and collective levels and can open a new cycle in the history of humankind for which we already have the adequate seeds. In this concluding section, we suggest that this new beginning is also a path toward the full recovery of the sacred sense of human sexuality and its transformation into a doorway for the creative incarnation of the divine in the world.

Sexuality is, potentially, the first soil for the organization and creative development of the dark energy in human reality. That is why it is so important that sexuality is an “open” soil based on natural evolutionary principles, and not on fears, conflicts, or artificial impositions dictated by our minds, cultures, or spiritual ideologies. In addition, sexuality is one of the spaces where the dark energy and the energy of consciousness can meet and align with each other more easily, directly, and naturally. In the absence of conflicts and dissociations, the sexual impulse naturally facilitates this integration through the generation of two complementary movements. On the one hand, it impels the dark energy toward its manifestation in our concrete reality, opening and enlivening the body, heart, and consciousness in its encounter with ourselves, others, and the world. Sexuality then is a channel through which the dark energy can contact the values of the heart and consciousness, fostering thereby the evolutionary transformation of our most primary instincts. On the other hand, the sexual drive relentlessly attracts consciousness to matter, bringing light to the heart, the body, and the instincts. Sexuality is then a channel through which the energy of consciousness can contact the values of the heart and the dark energy, facilitating the embodiment and materialization of consciousness on Earth.

Several transformative possibilities cultivated by diverse spiritual traditions emerge from this dynamic between the dark energy and the energy of consciousness. Two examples are the use of sexual energies as a threshold toward subtle states of consciousness (e.g., in certain forms of Hindu and Buddhist Tantra) and the sublimation of primary-sexual energies through the intentionality of consciousness and the presence of the heart (e.g., in nonrepressive celibacy). Although these processes may be legitimate in specific evolutionary moments or pathways, our sense is that they derive from value systems in which the transcendence of the primary, and even human, dimensions of existence is considered pivotal for the experiential access to the divine. These value systems tend subtly to exclude primary qualities from the divine, creating the need to transcend the former to access the latter. As we have suggested, however, the present development of the essence and values of consciousness and the heart allows these centers to contact the dark energy without being reabsorbed. Therefore, for a large number of individuals, it may no longer be necessary to transcend or sublimate the dark energy and its values to access and embody the divine.

The gradual restitution of our being man and our being woman makes possible the recovery of the ultimate evolutionary function and meaning of sexuality. Being man and being woman involve an energetic polarization that naturally generates a space for both the heart and the light of consciousness in the deepest layers of the dark energy, that is, in the most primary dimension of the person. This space facilitates the connection of the various essential centers of the human being, and allows the person to access the values of the heart and consciousness without needing to transcend or sublimate primary values.

But there is more. Once we add the integration of being man and being woman to the meeting of the dark energy and the energy of consciousness, sexuality potentially becomes what we call an incarnational doorway for the divine into human beings and the world. Once embedded in the individual, this incarnational doorway emerges as the fleshy heart, that is, a heart that is vitalized by primary energies, made subtle by spiritual energies, and firmly grounded in this concrete reality (see fig. 2).

Once the fleshy heart emerges from the encounter of these energies, it becomes the bridge that naturally connects them. That is why genuine human love has, at least potentially, both primary and spiritual dimensions. Because we have historically inhibited the dark energy, however, we usually understand and live the heart only in its subtle dimension and tend to ignore or forget its primary one. The recovery of the primary dimension of the heart is essential for the integration of the dark energy and the energy of consciousness. The absence of such dimension in the heart not only leads to dissociated sexual experiences (e.g., without the presence of the subtle aspects of the heart or consciousness), but also blocks the experi-
erence of sexuality as sacred, the emergence of the fleshy heart, and the unfolding of the incarnational movement. From this perspective, the formidable force of the sexual drive (Eros) can be seen as an attractor between the dark energy and consciousness. In other words, the sexual drive relentlessly attracts consciousness to matter, facilitating its embodiment and groundedness in the world and the development of an incarnational process that transforms both the individual and the world.

The incarnational process not only naturally transforms human spirituality into an embodied and vitalized spirituality; it also makes our everyday life the adequate and sufficient place for our complete development. It is only in our everyday life, in our being man and being woman in relation to ourselves and others, that we can become complete human beings, simultaneously primary and spiritual, without needing intentional sexual or spiritual practices to develop what we already are.

**An Invitation to the Reader**

We invite readers to contact us with any contributions or questions you might have in relation to the contents of this article. Such dialogue can be mutually enriching and can help build bridges of communication between your experience and what we have discussed here. You can contact us directly via e-mail at: estelira@copc.es.

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**NOTES**

1. In a forthcoming book, we offer a fuller treatment of this work and discuss how it differs from other theories and approaches (Albareda, Romero, and Ferrer, in preparation). For two earlier accounts of certain aspects of the work, see Albareda and Romero (1990, 1999).

2. Note that, as we use it, the term “dark” does not have negative connotations, but simply makes reference to an energetic state in which all potentialities are in amorphous coexistence, that is, without having been differentiated or developed. This state cannot be seen by the light of consciousness, and that is why we call it “dark.”

3. In this context, we believe, it is possible to understand the search for meaning through methods and practices of consciousness expansion (e.g., entheogens, breathwork, meditation, tantra, etc.) in the modern West. Although these practices and techniques can have extraordinary value at particular times, we believe that, when developed outside a wider framework of genuine transformation of everyday life, they can lead to a further dissociation or stagnation of the evolutionary process.

**REFERENCES**


Marina T. Romero is a therapist and teacher. Albareda and Romero are co-directors of ESTEL, a center for personal and transpersonal growth founded by Albareda in 1976 in Barcelona, Spain. They are also the creators of Holistic Sexuality, an integral approach to psychospiritual growth and healing, in which they work experientially with the body, sexuality, emotions, and nature. They are the co-authors of *Nacidos de la Tierra: Sexualidad, Origen del Ser Humano* (1990), as well as many articles and book chapters on integral development, transpersonal sexuality, and human evolution.

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