

## New Thought for a New Millennium by Thomas Hubl

Trauma is often unspeakable, even invisible. It is its nature to provoke denial—in the survivor, who may dissociate from the experience; in the oppressor, who may seek to avoid, distance, or minimize culpability; and in the community, which remains silent and unresponsive to suffering or encourages outright disbelief. Too often, cultural traumas are made the subject of conspiracy theories in which survivors are not only doubted, but vilified and attacked. These things, too, are the inheritance of trauma.

Whether it reveals itself as denial, rejection, dissociation, or ignorance, the avoidance of trauma shows up as an inability to meet life, which is the foremost symptom of separation. Circumventing awareness of trauma and its effects is the most essential form of spiritual bypassing. Too often, we naïvely seek only “light and positivity,” or we spend hours or lifetimes using a meditation or other witness practice to unconsciously distance ourselves from the pain and grit of our own and others’ suffering.

Our intentions are good, but by avoiding the raw nakedness of what is real in an endless search for the ideal, we miss the deep spiritual intimacy that can only be experienced through a willingness to profoundly be in and with the painful dark. Of course, this is much too difficult to do alone. When we come together, willing to witness and receive one another’s pain without judgment, without turning away, without minimizing or attempting to vanquish, we discover trust, connection, and healing release. We uncover our essential unity, held in the generous embrace of the Divine.

Shadow, like conflict, is a driver of evolution. It eventually pushes us to advance in complexity and clarity. The disassociated, contracted energy we hold in the dark lake seeks integration; dark chi longs to return to the light of consciousness, fulfilling its course along the great spiral of life. A willingness to go into the dark with a light is evolutionary work; it brings healing, clarity, and integration. If we’re committed to the work, it opens us—not to more pain and darkness but to a more brilliant luminosity through which we can access higher capacities, deeper potentials, and a clearer, more creative state of being.

These are the necessary ingredients for authentic future emergence. After years of practicing in we-space with groups of many sizes, I’ve observed directly how states of coherence allow participants to begin speaking from the field, rather than about it. Together, humans are capable of entering into a more aligned sphere, a collective state of being and awareness. From that place, one member of a group (let’s call her Adina) is able to speak from the energy and information of another (let’s call him Gael). I call this transparent communication. Adina can do this by leaning into the quality of mutuality, by suspending her own images and interpretations of Gael and instead embracing or deeply attuning with the energy of Gael’s origins or soul, that part of him that precedes apparent reality and its seeming condition of separation.

When we do this, we find that there is so much more space and so much more light available.

Coherence brings us into the startling realization of mutual contemplation, shared witness—into the fullness and intimacy of the emerging We. Vibrating together in this state of collective awareness, a new level of human intelligence enters. By connecting from that stream of collective intelligence, Adina’s words become a mediator for the greater consciousness the group becomes together, the interbeing. She no longer speaks from her separate and individual self, but from the whole.

When a group engages in this way, its members transcend the personal, subjective mind and its busy, often linear thoughts and are able to process a much higher degree of information more rapidly and holistically. We reach beyond our individual critical thinking or subtle sensing capacities and access our collective intelligence, which leads us toward what has been called “the simplicity on the other side of complexity.” I refer to this quality as field thinking, a kind of systems processing that allows us to see not only ourselves and one another but our points of overlap and interconnection as an energetic whole. I believe this level of perception is an evolutionary emergence.

The Collective Intelligence Research Institute has coined the term *holopticism*, which appears to refer to field thinking and is defined as follows:

From the Greek roots *holos* (whole) and *optikè* (see), holopticism means the capacity for an individual to see the whole as a living entity in the collective in which he/she operates. Sports teams and jazz bands operate in a holoptical context because each player perceives the team as a whole and knows what to do.

We should not confuse holopticism with transparency. Transparency means the capacity to see the actions of everyone. Holopticism applies only when a whole emerges as an autonomous, perceivable entity (the band, the team . . .). For instance, the crowd in a bus doesn’t operate as collective unified whole (unless something special happens). One hundred players on a sports field won’t make a coherent sports team either, although everyone can see everyone. In both examples, we have transparency, not holopticism.

In a holoptical context, the individual knows what to do because he/she gets informed by the whole. Actions don’t need to come from a blind chain of command. Individual and collective actions emerge at crossroads of rules and agreements, player’s roles, individual personalities and styles, the current configuration on the field. Every individual action modifies the whole, which in return informs the player about what to do next, and so on. An unceasing feedback loop allows for the individual and the collective to communicate with one another.<sup>1</sup>

When we find ourselves in groups—whether religious, spiritual, organizational, corporate, or any other kind—and feel the energy rising with a profound quality of connection and shared intention, some degree of coherence and field thinking is occurring. We feel excited and energized by our shared aims and more closely connected with one another, despite our differences. Too often, we leave these groups and return to the ordinary reality of our separate lives, and the vitality and intelligence we felt with the group seems to disappear. Learning ways to stay connected to its living flow are important. All of this belongs to a fascinating and vital area of inquiry for future research.

Complexity is simplicity in the right container. In his 1982 book, *The Evolving Self*, developmental psychologist and Harvard educator Robert Kegan presented his subject-object theory, expanding on it in later works.<sup>2</sup> Kegan’s theory is essentially this: At each progressive stage of development (what he terms “orders in consciousness”), the subject of the previous stage becomes the object of the next. Kegan’s theory is one of ascending complexity. Put simply, subject refers to the “I am” self, which is both attached and nonobjective. The subject incorporates its own feelings, behaviors, personality traits, and/or assumptions about the world into the “I am” without differentiating these qualities from itself. As the subject develops in consciousness, he or she begins to differentiate, making subject into object (“I have”), now detached from self and therefore observable. Thus, at each succeeding stage of development, the subject grows able to reflect and consider—and therefore change—prior forms. As American philosopher Ken Wilber explains, humans develop or evolve in consciousness through a process of transcending but including previous stages.<sup>3</sup>

The Buddhist principle of nonattachment may be rooted here, teaching that when we're embedded in or overidentified with feelings, behaviors, or beliefs, we suffer. But as we grow in awareness and insight through witness consciousness, our suffering decreases.

Complex issues overwhelm a subject who has yet to differentiate and is therefore still entangled with the symptoms generated by the issues. At each higher stage, he is able to reflect on the symptoms with greater detachment and objectivity, holding them with greater presence, inner space, and connection. What was overwhelming in complexity in the prior stage becomes clear and apprehensible in the next. A liter of water (object) cannot be contained by a drinking glass (subject); the glass must "grow." Because issues like climate change and collective trauma are so large and complex, we need greater subject-object complexity (a more spacious cup) to apprehend and solve them.

We can actively advance our personal development in consciousness by presencing and attending to it. To achieve higher orders of collective consciousness requires the same; we must work individually and together to grow our cup. When we do, we find that greater change is possible and comes faster.

***Trauma reduces the flow of energy in a system, creating a consciousness of scarcity. Integrating collective trauma brings more energy into the system, thereby permitting greater abundance.*** The source flow of our cosmos is endlessly streaming and infinitely abundant—and we are a living manifestation of that stream. Growing the cup of interior consciousness is the task; we need to develop ourselves so we are able to host and hold the complexity we meet in our exterior world. As Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, French idealist, philosopher, scientist, and Jesuit priest, wrote in 1955, we see not only thought as participating in evolution as an anomaly or as an epiphenomenon, but evolution as so reducible to and identifiable with a progress toward thought that the movement of our souls expresses and measures the very stages of progress of evolution itself. Man discovers that he is nothing else than evolution become conscious of itself.<sup>4</sup>

As energy flows into form along the individuation loop in the process of early development, vibratory light becomes solid, manifesting in 3D. Both weaving and following the map of a sacred self-replicating code, inspiration and energy become material structure. Light becomes brain and nervous system; skeleton, heart, and lungs; large vessels and tiny capillaries; muscles and fascia; lymph and nodes; hormones and glands; organs and tissues; skin and teeth; hair; even the intricacies of irises and fingerprints, unique to each in all the universe.

Yet, as ancient and perfected as this architectural process may be, a single traumatic experience has the power to create a fracture—a point of dislocation between the energetic field and its 3D expression in the material structure. Wherever it occurs, it creates constriction and disembodiment. In essence, trauma can be said to reduce, separate, fragment, or "flatten" an aspect of the body-mind complex into a 2D representation, which is thereby dissociated and disembodied. (Being cognitively aware that we carry these is not the same as being able to fully witness and feel them.)

In traumatic conflicts, such as war, people reduce, flatten, and separate from their perceived enemies. Fear, adrenaline, and the simple mechanics of shock create the experiences of dread, fury, or numbness, which allow them to fight, flee, hide, and otherwise survive, but these are not the embodied feelings of aware interconnection. Humans must make their perceived enemies into 2D cutouts in order to perpetuate war against them; this is perhaps an evolutionary strategy. When we

perceive others fully in 3D, we feel them just as we feel ourselves—and who can reasonably explode himself?

To turn away at the shore a small and unstable boat, crowded with frightened refugees, many of which are children, requires mass dissociation. To separate immigrant children from their asylum-seeking families and lock them in overcrowded cages requires mass disembodiment. To walk into a school or a nightclub carrying a semiautomatic weapon requires making every person inside into a 2D image, a flattened fiction.

Everywhere people go, they carry mental suitcases full of their own 2D fragments, their own ghosts. They understand on some level that they have them, and perhaps even why. But these dissociated aspects are unavailable to the body, and as such, remain unfelt and unrestored (i.e., unintegrated). Trauma reduces higher capacity, shutting off our energetic connection to the full multidimensional self. As we consciously develop, heal, and integrate, we slowly restore embodiment to the 3D self, accessing deeper resilience and higher capacities.

Trauma work can be a kind of spiritual search-and-rescue mission. It does not require that we endlessly revisit every tortured experience, crying, shouting, or talking it through. But we must locate our disembodied ghosts, buried somewhere in that frozen grave of the dissociated self. Our work is to liberate our 2D shards with the reclaiming energies of integration and love. To revive and restore them back into the body, through the central channel, reintegrating all of our parts into the whole of our essence.

Just as every individual is designed to develop and evolve, so is the collective—every race and culture and nation. When collective traumas slow or prevent our mutual growth, the collective body casts off its own ghosts. Parts of the collective body flatten other parts, reducing and separating—refusing to feel. But all aspects are necessary to the health of the whole. To begin resurrecting and restoring our collective shadows, we must move beyond 3D, incorporating space and time and flow. Mutual presence and group witness are the foundations of collective trauma work.

Whether individual or collective, our shadows cannot simply be buried and forgotten; they will haunt us until we return them to life. And if we never do, they will haunt our children and our children's children, passing each to the next in an endless repetition of karma and time. In the end, the shadows on the cave wall were not a trick or an illusion. They were the frightened 2D forms of our own disowned ghosts, and those of our ancestors and our children's children. The task of the collective hero—which you are, and I am—is to reenter the cave together with a light. To stand in the shimmering power of shared presence and mutual witness. To reclaim our birthright as whole beings belonging to a whole planet within a whole and sacred cosmos.

Our ancestors are not gone; they live on with us and in us. This truth comes as a clarion call from future generations, who require that their ancestors be healed so that they may live in a better world—or that they may live at all. *As we heal and integrate the traumas of our time, we assist in the integration and healing of theirs.*

Like the Oracle in *The Matrix* said, “You have the sight now, Neo. You are looking at the world without time.”<sup>5</sup> In the new dimension we enter together, time disappears, generations cohere, and nations become one. On that future field, may we discover two mystical truths: *We are the ones we've been waiting for. And we have been in each other all along.*

I pray that you and I and all others—our partners, children, families, colleagues, and friends—fill the world with the love of our fullest presence and deepest devotion. We need not worry with how we wish to be, or how we would prefer each other to be. We need not worry with any ideal version of ourselves, one another, or the world. My prayer of love is to meet you exactly as you are; to meet myself exactly the way I am; to meet the world precisely as it is—in the most specific detail, the truest, most naked form. That is my prayer.

**Excerpt from the book: HEALING COLLECTIVE TRAUMA -- A PROCESS FOR INTEGRATING OUR INTERGENERATIONAL & CULTURAL WOUNDS**

**by THOMAS HÜBL WITH JULIE JORDAN AVRITT**

THOMAS HÜBL Biography:

*Thomas Hübl is a renowned teacher, author, and international facilitator whose lifelong work integrates the core insights of the great wisdom traditions and mysticism with the discoveries of science. Since the early 2000s, he has been leading large-scale events and courses that focus on the healing and integration of trauma, with a special focus on the shared history of Israelis and Germans. He has been teaching workshops and presenting trainings for Harvard Medical School since 2019. His non-profit organization, the Pocket Project, works to support the healing of collective trauma throughout the world. His book "Healing Collective Trauma: A Process for Integrating Our Intergenerational and Cultural Wounds" includes an outline of his methodology called the "Collective Trauma Integration Process" which is a safe framework for guiding groups through collective trauma.*

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