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Embodiment and Human Development: Exploring Fairy Tales and Myths as Developmental Markers

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The hero is helped by being in touch with primitive things—a tree, an animal, nature—as the child feels more in touch with those things. . . . The fate of these heroes convinces the child that, like them, he may feel outcast and abandoned in the world, groping in the dark, but like them, in the course of his life he will be guided step by step, and given help when it is needed. (Bruno Bettelheim, 1991, p. 11)

Through our bodies—“earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust”³—we are connected to origins and the cosmos. How does the human body, mind, and spirit find comfort in life? Through what means do we find security, placement, and pleasure in a universe more vast, complex, and changeable than our fantasies can explore? How might our relationship to our body change, were we to cherish the human body as the site where spirit finds its home in the world?

This paper and conference presentation explore fairy tales and myths, both products of human imagination, that communicate and transport us along a path of ever-changing, ever-integrating development, step by step, as we “discover” what the stories tell. Portraying the contemporary film *Avatar* as a modern fairy tale and a myth in the making, this paper provides quotes from the film script by James Cameron that

exemplify each developmental stage. All quotes from the script for *Avatar* are Copyright © 2007 of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.

Fairy Tales and Myths and Development

Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment: Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, first published in 1975, has influenced two generations of child psychologists, childhood educators, and parents on the importance of the Brothers Grimm's (Grimm & Grimm, 1812/2002) grim fairy tales. Bettelheim warns that the desperate, life-and-death struggles of the heroes and heroines of fairy tales model and reflect the fantasy world of children and, therefore, help them to cope with their genuine fears of abandonment, sibling rivalry, betrayal, danger, and displacement in the world. Far from frightening children, the severity of fairy tales comfort the children because they acknowledge that their fears are real, provide ways to overcome these threats, and give hope via happy endings that in the end they will be successful and happy. In Bettelheim's (1991) own words:

The child intuitively comprehends that although these stories are *unreal*; that while what these stories tell about does not happen in fact, it must happen as inner experience and personal development; that fairy tales depict in imaginary and symbolic form the essential steps in growing up and achieving an independent existence. (p. 73)

In contrast to fairy tales, according to Bettelheim, myths provide a cosmic story often with catastrophic endings portrayed by characters too giant or grand for children to imitate. Therefore, generally, myths do not reflect the world of children or provide them psychic comfort. The film *Avatar* might be described as partly a fairy tale and partly a myth by Bettelheim's definitions. Whether fairy tale or myth, *Avatar's*

worldwide popularity among people of all ages and particularly among teenagers

speaks directly to another of Bettelheim's (1991) themes:

I have known many examples where, particularly in late adolescence, years of belief and magic are called upon to compensate for the person's having been deprived of it prematurely in childhood, through stark reality having been forced upon him. It is as if these young people feel that now is their best chance to make up for a severe deficiency in their life experience; or that without having had a period of belief in magic, they will be unable to meet the rigors of adult life. . . . Trying to evade reality in such ways has its deeper cause in early formative experiences which prevented the development of the conviction that life can be mastered in realistic ways. (p. 51)

In addition, in my own view, *Avatar's* popularity reflects James Cameron's ability to offer fresh perspective, metaphors, and actions appropriate to many different developmental stages. Therefore, the movie "rings" true because its symbols speaks to every age and every developmental stage.

Embodiment and Development

When analyzed for commonalities, theories of human development describe similar sequences or continua of developmental stages, differing to various degrees in the (a) dynamics emphasized in the theory, (b) names of stages, (c) demarcations between stages along the developmental continuum, and (d) span of development explored. Of dynamics emphasized, developmental theories have emphasize cognitive skills (e.g., Kegan, 1994; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969), personality and identity (e.g., Erikson, 1963, 1968/1980; Loevinger, 1976), spirituality (e.g., Fowler, 1995, 2001; Vaughan, 1995; Walsh, 1999; Washburn, 1995, 2003; Welwood, 2000; Wilber, 1993, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2006), relational awareness (e.g., Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer, 1989; Gilligan, Rogers, & Tolman, 1991; Gilligan, Ward, & Taylor, 1988), morality (e.g., Kohlberg, 1981;

Kohlberg & Ryncarz, 1990), and psycho-spiritual structures (e.g., Cook-Greuter, 2005; Fisher, Rooke, & Torbert, 2002; Hall, 1994, 2000; Ruumet, 1997, 2006; Vaughan, 2000; Wade, 1996). Names of stages and demarcations between stages vary across theories. While most developmental theories examine the span of life between life and death, Anderson (2004, 2005, 2008), Grof (1975, 1985), and Wade (1996) explore developmental processes that begin before birth and continue after death.

Although the role of the body in the development of infants and children is more or less obvious (e.g., Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975), the role of the body and embodiment in human development remains largely unexplored theoretically. Writers and practitioners such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Francisco Varela in phenomenological philosophy; Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner in education; Janet Adler, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, F. M. Alexander, Elsa Grinder, Moshe Feldenkrais, Thomas Hanna, Marion Rosen, Ida Rolf, Ilana Rubenfield, Charlotte Selver, and Mary Whitehouse as body and movement specialists; and Antonio Damasio (among others) in neurological research have advanced the role of the body and embodiment in human personality, development, and memory. While rhetorically overstated, Candice Pert's (1997) pronouncement that the "body is the unconscious mind" is worth considering anew.

Unique among theories of human development, Rosemarie Anderson's Axial Model of Human Development (2004, 2005, 2008) emphasizes the role of the body and embodied experiences in human development to fill this gap. For Anderson, human development begins before birth and ends at some indeterminate point after death.

Anderson's Axial Model follows upon earlier research on the role of sacred weeping and of embodiment in psycho-spiritual growth (Anderson, 1996), the development of embodied writing, a writing style that documents the lived experience of the body (Anderson, 2001, 2002a, 2002b), and the Body Intelligence Scale, which assesses bodily modes of knowing (BIS, Anderson, 2006).

Anderson's Axial Model of Human Development

Anderson's Axial Model emphasizes the urgency of organic life, that physical, psychological, and psychic life force that compels us forward until that life force ends. The model contains ten axes (stages) of human development and five spiral returns that move human life toward wholeness and integration. Each axis represents a forward development of expanded awareness from the perspective of the body. The concept of spiral returns were first articulated as "return cycles" by Hillevi Ruumet (1997, 2006) and relate conceptually to Michael Washburn's (1995, 2003) understanding of regression as a critical dynamic in healthy human development. The spiral returns in Anderson's model represent the need to human consciousness to heal and transform inquiries of the past before forward development movement is possible. The five spiral returns may also be viewed as critical junctures in development in which *regression serves transformation*. Healthy regression heals and transforms inquiries of the past and what did not happen that might have happened. All of us are inquired, often from real trauma and abuse but also what did not happen in ways appropriate to and genuinely needed in earlier parts of our lives. Through healthy regression to earlier developmental axes, human development "jump starts" forward once again.

As illustrated in Table 1, each level of development revolves around a central axis, a primary mode of embodiment for that axis. For example, the infant's physical body is actively exploring and engagement with its immediate environment and vigilant to avoid pain and survive so Axis 2 concerns dynamic engagement. At the other end of the continuum of development, Axis 10 describes the epitome of embodiment, the Enlightened Body, in which genuinely new forms are generated in consciousness, perhaps for the first time.

Table 1
Primary Modes of Embodied Activity for Body-Map Developmental Axes

Developmental Axes (Stages)	Modes of Activity
Axis 10, Enlightened Body	Generating New Forms in Consciousness
Axis 9, Awakening Body	Spontaneous, Creative Action
Axis 8, Awareness Body	Pleasuring With Life As It Is
Axis 7, Presence Body	Flowing with Belonging to the Moment
Axis 6, Compassion Body	Serving and Caring for Others
Axis 5, Competence Body	Acquiring Mastery & Skill
Axis 4, Belongingness Body	Demanding "TLC" & Mirrored Self-Worth
Axis 3, Pleasure Body	Seeking Pleasure & Delight
Axis 2, Dynamo Body	Forming Boundaries Through Engagement
Axis 1, Archetypal Body	Generating Genetic, Neonatal, & Perinatal Imprints in Consciousness

Anderson's five spiral returns as illustrated in Figure 1 below. Progressively moving development forward, the five spiral returns integrate Axes 6 with Axis 5, Axis 7 with Axis 4, Axis 8 with Axis 3, Axis 9 with Axis 2, and Axis 10 with Axis 1.

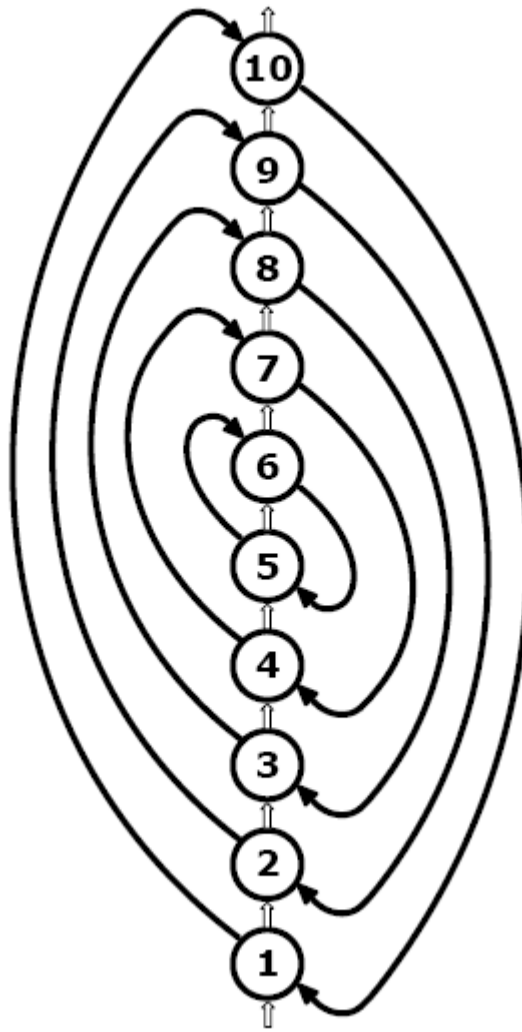


Figure 1. Anderson Axial Model of Human Development, Hierarchical Axes, and Spiral Returns

Ten Developmental Axes, Characteristics of Axes, and Illustrative Quotes from *Avatar*

It is the child who makes the man, and no man exists who was not made by the child he once was. (Maria Montessori, n.d.)

Axis 1, Archetypal Body

Primary Activity: Generating genetic, neonatal, perinatal imprints in consciousness.

Depending on the reader's belief systems, imprints also include karmic imprints.

Overestimating the force of these impressions on the formation of our physical

constitution, personalities, and life is impossible. As most mothers will say, every baby is different from birth, even from conception.

Developmental Comparison: From a developmental perspective, only Stanislav Grof (1975, 1985) and Jenny Wade (1996) explore pre- and perinatal experiences in depth.

Forward Development: The transition from Axis 1 to Axis 2, Dynamo Body, occurs at birth or shortly thereafter. Some babies, especially those with challenging births, do not seem to fully embody their essence into their physical bodies for weeks or months, even up to a year, after birth.

Spiral Return: Reconfiguring and refining the “imprinted” patterns of this life occurs in the final stages of psycho-spiritual development in the Spiral Return of Axis 10, Enlightened Body.

Portrayals of Generating Imprints in Consciousness, Quotes from Avatar:

- The **AMNIO TANK**. There is a **FIGURE** floating languidly inside, which looks like a man. A very large, very blue, man. Blood circulates through a synthetic **UMBILICAL** in the abdomen. As the figure turns in the amniotic fluid, we see that it has a lemur-like **TAIL**. The skin is cyan-blue. Long black hair drifts, graceful as seaweed.
- The **WELL OF SOULS** is a deep caldera 100 meters across. It is ringed with enormous **WILLOWS** whose roots seem to pour down the sheer rock walls like candle wax. **AT THE BOTTOM**, in a natural amphitheater, the Omaticaya refugees are clustered around a central rock outcropping which forms a kind of dais and altar. Shafts of dawn light reach to the bottom of the grotto, lighting a single willow -- the **MOTHER TREE**. Ancient and gnarled, it grows in the center of the rock. Its **ROOTS** spread down to the grotto floor, where they merge with the roots of the willows ringing the Well -- forming a braided mat resembling the surface of a brain.

Axis 2, Dynamo Body

Primary Activity: Forming Boundaries Through Engagement

Developmental Comparison: Axis 2 development characterizes most infants during the first few months of life. Between months 5 and 9, healthy babies begin a process of bodily differentiation from mother known to researcher Mahler, et al (1975) as hatching . Hatching from fused identity with mother signifies the transition from Axis 2 to Axis 3, Pleasure Body. Axis 3 is fully realized in emotional and libidinal differentiation from the mother, occurring between months 15 and 24 in healthy development. Axis 4 is more or less parallel to Cook-Greuter's Stage 2, Impulsive.

Forward Development: Transition to Axis 3, Pleasure Body, is marked by a willingness to relax one's guard and explore the world. The sympathetic nervous system is no longer over-stimulated by real or inchoate threats to one's physical well-being. Hyper-vigilance and fear of the unknown relax over time, albeit gradually. Physical stance is alert but more relaxed. No longer needing to maintain high alert for threats to one's physical safety, life energies begin to focus on exploring the world, attending to novel stimuli, broadening one's perceptual reality, and reciprocating in response to touch, attention, and affection from others.

Spiral Return: Overcoming the impressions and urgency of vigilance and concern for self in Axis 2 is the transformational task of Axis 9, Awakening Body.

Portrayals of Forming Boundaries Through Engagement, Quotes from Avatar:

- Blinking, Jake slowly sits up on the gurney. He looks down at his AVATAR BODY, touching his chest with one hand. MAX Take it slow, Jake. We need to check your motor control. Try touching your fingertips together -- But Jake isn't listening. He's staring at his legs. He eases them off the gurney and --HIS BLUE FEET touch the concrete floor,

taking his weight. JAKE STANDS, feeling the strength in his legs. His expression is child-like with wonder. HIS POV -- looking down at the med techs, who seem the size of children next to his 9' tall frame. He sees something like a blue tentacle curl across his arm and he JERKS AROUND in alarm. HIS TAIL. As he turns to see it, the tail sweeps instruments off a table with a crash. Jake laughs and grins at Max. MED TECH Easy, Jake, I need you to sit down -- But Jake takes a step, then another. The wires to the bio-monitors pull taut, and he yanks them off his chest. MAX Jake! Wait, we have to run some tests -- But Jake pushes past the protesting med techs, toward the door and -- EXT. AVATAR COMPOUND -- DAY Jake emerges, blinking in the morning sun. He finds himself in the AVATAR COMPOUND -- a living and training area. Nearby, a couple of AVATARS are playing one-on-one in front of a (non-regulation height) basketball net. Others go about their daily activities around the compound. Jake flexes his legs -- JUMPS -- and lands a little unsteadily, but his expression is joyful. He takes a few steps and breaks into a RUN. People are calling to him, somewhere, but he doesn't hear them -- he's running. RUNNING!

- JAKE: . . . realizing he can still see *the forest is transformed* knowing he should be afraid -- but somehow he's not. *I have to trust my body to know what to do.* JAKE FOLLOWS in a leap of faith.
- JAKE: My feet are getting tougher. I can run farther every day.
- Neytiri catches him with one hand, gripping his bicep. seems shaken, seizes his hand and pulls him after her surprised that he followed. That he lived.

Axis 3, Pleasure Body

Primary Activity: Seeking pleasure and delight.

Developmental Comparison: Emotional and libidinal differentiation from mother is a

difficult transition from the paradise of being physically and emotionally at the center of one's own world to being separate from mother (their world) and, therefore, vulnerable. In healthy development, the young child (2-3 years) learns to feel secure and comfortable without relying entirely on the actions of others. In so doing, the child acquires a rudimentary capacity to maintain emotional and libidinal self-boundaries. Axis 3 is more or less parallel to Cook-Greuter's Stage 2/3, Self-defensive.

Forward Development: Stable mental picturing of the world as separate from oneself

marks the end of Axis 3 development and beginning of Axis 4, Belongingness Body. The transition to Axis 4, reflects a shift from preoccupation with our own security, comfort, and pleasure by the ability to extend self-boundaries to include the needs and wants of others, especially family, neighbors, and friends. At Axis 3, the types of pleasures sought are now less based in physical pleasures and found in the pleasures of love, affection, and attention from others.

Spiral Return: Most of us are concerned for ourselves most of the time whether we wish to admit it or not. Overcoming the impressions of Axis 3's demand for ongoing physical and emotional pleasure and nurturance is the transformation task of Axis 8, Awareness Body.

Portrayals of Seeking Pleasure and Delight, Quotes from Avatar:

- He finds himself in the COMPOUND GARDEN, and stops amid neatly tended rows of ALIEN PLANTS. He looks down, wiggling his toes in the warm soil. Then inhales deeply -- reveling in the alien smells -- earth, plants, the nearby forest.
- JAKE Wait, don't -- Jake blinks around at the darkness -- realizing he can still see. In fact, with the blinding torchlight gone, *the forest is transformed*. The jungle has come alive with BIOLUMINESCENCE -- spots and patterns, ghosts and galaxies of blue-green light.
- TRACKING WITH JAKE as he gazes about him in growing wonder. He touches leaves as he passes, watching the bioluminescence shiver through them.
- Jake looks down as -- they cross a bed of purple MOSS which reacts to the pressure of their footsteps. Rings of green light, like ripples on a pond, expand outward from each footfall. Exploding rings of light where his feet touch down. Dream-like, surreal.
- EXT. WILLOW GLADE. Laughing, they run together into a stand of WILLOWS. Their trunks are as gnarled as bonsai. Long faintly glowing tendrils hang straight down in pastel curtains. Underfoot, a bed of moss glows faintly. It REACTS to their footsteps with expanding rings of light. It is an exquisitely beautiful spot. The willows stir, responding to their presence. She holds up her hands, letting the TENDRILS caress her. Neytiri: This is a place for prayers to be heard. And sometimes answered. Jake puts out his hands and

the tendrils play over his fingers, his palms, his forearms. His eyes go wide. Neytiri: We hear the WHISPERING of ancient Na'vi VOICES.

Axis 4, Belongingness Body

Primary Activity: Demanding TLC and mirrored self-worth.

Developmental Comparison: In Jean Piaget's terms, Axis 4 begins with preoperational thinking and continues through concrete operational thinking. The start of Piaget's formal operational thinking marks the transition to Axis 5, Competence Body. Axis 4 is more or less parallel to Cook-Greuter's Stage 3, Conformist.

Forward Development: The skills of autonomy, self-worth, and emotional control are essential to the transition from Axis 4 to Axis 5, Competence Body.

Spiral Return: Overcoming absorption in self-nurturance and belonging to anyone or anything in Axis 4 is the transformational task to Axis 7, Presence Body.

Portrayals of Generating Imprints in Consciousness, Quotes from Avatar:

- GRACE You're still losing weight. Here -- She hands him a microwaved burrito. He looks at the now alien food. Bites into it without enthusiasm.
- GRACE Jake, I'm serious -- you look like crap. You're burning too hard. Jake takes the cigarette out of her mouth and stubs it out.
- GRACE (furiously) Goddammit, Jake, you can never be one of them! Norm looks up, startled at the VEHEMENCE in GRACE' voice. . . . GRACE (softening) You can never truly be with her. Jake stops, pinioned by the truth. He seems suddenly very lost.
- HUMAN JAKE is in a hurry to get back to the link. GRACE, still groggy, chases him with coffee and microwaved eggs.

Axis 5, Competence Body

Primary Activity: Acquiring mastery, skill, and competence.

Developmental Comparison: Axis 5 development more or less parallels Piaget's formal operational thinking that allows for mature reasoning and self-reflection. Axis 5 is more or less parallel to Cook-Greuter's Stage 3/4, Self-Conscious.

Forward Development: Once we have achieved a sufficient level of mastery and competence in the world, we can begin to explore integrating our competencies in ways that give our lives unique meaning and value, the development mode of Axis 6, Compassion Body. Transition to Axis 6, is signaled by the development of higher mental functions, such as integrative or synthetic thinking, and meta-values, such as beauty and meaningfulness. Only a small percentage of the adult population continues beyond Axis 5, though many individuals may have peak experiences that offer glimpses of these more advanced cycles of development.

Spiral Return: Overcoming absorption in the Axis 5 tasks of competence, mastery, and control is the principal task of Axis 6, Compassion Body.

Portrayals of Acquiring of Mastery, Skill, and Competence, Quotes from Avatar:

- JAKE: I became a Marine for the hardship. To be hammered on the anvil of life. I told myself I could pass any test a man can pass.
- THE MAN from the balcony -- **COLONEL MILES QUARITCH** -- is the HEAD OF SECURITY for the Hell's Gate colony. A hundred new arrivals watch raptly as he paces like a panther across the front of the large cafeteria. He stops, stance wide. Without his mask, we see that Quaritch's features are rugged and handsome, except for the SCAR, which runs from scalp to jaw down one side of his face. On one hip he carries a very large PISTOL.
- GRACE: Alright, look – I don't have the answers yet, I'm just now starting to even frame the questions. What we think we know – is that there's some kind of electrochemical communication between the roots of the trees. Like the synapses between neurons. Each tree has ten to the fourth connections to the trees around it, and there are ten to the twelfth trees on Pandora –

- TSU'TEY Jakesully will go first. Tsu'tey smirks at Jake, a challenge in his eyes. The two teenage Hunters are scared but trying to act tough. Tsu'tey scowls when Neytiri leads Jake out onto the ledge.
- TSU'TEY Your warriors -- hide inside machines -- fight from far away.

Axis 6, Compassion Body

Primary Activity: Genuine concern and caring for others and the world. Heartfelt action in the world. In spiritual terms, the heart begins to open.

Developmental Comparison: Parallel to Maslow's (1971) healthy self-actualizers and Wilber's (1993, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2006) vision-logic cycles of development.

Transition to Axis 7, Presence Body, is signaled by the development of Being Values, such as seeing beauty in everything and everyone and an utter simplicity that goes to the heart of things effortlessly. Axis 6 is more or less parallel to Cook-Greuter's Stage 4, Conscientious.

Forward Development: In time, we may learn that we cannot fix the world through our own activities. Despite our accomplishments and the accomplishments of others, nothing fundamentally changes. This realization attenuates our ego identification or attachment to fixing the world's problems and provides us enough humility to enter Axis 7, Presence Body. We begin to realize that the world is the mess it is and cannot be changed through our singular or group efforts. If we fall into despair or lethargy, we will fixate in Axis 6 or in time regress. If our religious or spiritual lives allow us to envision our place in the world as it is, we begin to explore the territory of Axis 7.

Spiral Return: Overcoming absorption in the Axis 5 tasks of competence, mastery, and control is the principal task of Axis 6, Compassion Body.

Portrayals of Genuine Concern and Caring for Others and the World, Quotes from Avatar:

- Neytiri -- looking away. Finally, reluctantly, her eyes MEET HIS for the first time -- a riveting gaze with those big gold orbs. NEYTIRI Why save you ? JAKE Yes, why save me? NEYTIRI You have a strong heart. No fear.
- ANOTHER DAY -- Neytiri stands close behind Jake, adjusting his position as he draws his bow. Only now her hands are GENTLE as they move on his arms, his shoulders. Aware of her touch, Jake's focus is broken. Their eyes meet, and she pulls away quickly.
- NEYTIRI'S BANSHEE falls into formation with him. She signals "follow me" and DIVES.
- NEYTIRI You are *Omaticaya* now. You may make your own bow from the wood of Hometree. (she looks away) And you may choose a woman. The Amazon warrior trying so hard to sound casual. Jake suppresses a smile. . . . JAKE I've already chosen. But this woman must also choose me. She takes his hands and their fingers intertwine, moving gently over each other. NEYTIRI She already has.

Axis 7, Presence Body

Primary Activity: Flowing with and belonging to the moment

Developmental Comparison: Aspects of Axes 7 and 8, Awareness Body, are parallel to Maslow's (1971) transcendent self-actualizers. Axis 7 is more or less parallel to Cook-Greuter's Stage 4/5, Individualistic.

Forward Development: Transition to Axis 8, Awareness Body, is signaled by the development of being present and content with whatever happens and less concern, or even interest, in expressing one's own voice or unique personality.

Spiral Return: Overcoming absorption in self-nurturance and belonging to anyone or anything in Axis 4, Belongingness Body, is the transformational task of Axis 7, Presence Body.

Portrayals of Flowing With and Belonging to the Moment, Quotes from Avatar:

- When I was lying there in the VA hospital, with a big hole blown through the middle of my life, I started having these dreams of flying.
- NEYTIRI STANDS – a FURY released. A classic archer figure, she NOCKS another arrow. Then draws and releases smoothly. TH-WAP!
- GRACE (without looking up) This isn't just about eye-hand coordination out there. You need to listen to what she says. Try to see the forest through their eyes.
- Jake (V.O.) It's hard to put in words the deep connection the People have to the forest. High in the branches of a tree, Jake watches as Neytiri gently bends a large pitcher-like flower toward her, sipping nectar which is sweet and thick as honey. An incredibly sensuous image.
- EYTUKAN (subtitled) *You are now a son of the Omaticaya. You are part of the People.* All the members of the clan press forward, crowding around and putting their hands on Jake's shoulders, back, chest --hands upon hands, until he is connected to everyone.

Axis 8, Awareness Body

Primary Activity: Pleasuring in life as it is.

Developmental Comparison: Axis 8 is more or less parallel to Cook-Greuter's Stage 5,

Autonomous.

Forward Development: Signaling the onset of Axis 8, Awakening Body, the love and compassion we feel toward those around us includes more and more of the world. Individual begin to experience deep, personal grief about the suffering and pain of the world. A sense of soulfulness arises as a palpable sensation that is felt by others. Compassion is felt apart from person needs or the desire to fix anyone or anything. In Tibetan Buddhism, true *bodhicitta* arises as a steady state and our psyche and body begin to align with the needs and requirements of the world far more than with our own.

Spiral Return: Overcoming the desire for ongoing pleasure, security, and nurturance in

Axis 3, Pleasure Body, is the transformational task of Axis 8.

Portrayals of Pleasuring in Life as it is, Quotes from Avatar:

- Jake (V.O.) They see a network of energy that flows through all living things. They know that all energy is only borrowed – and one day you have to give it back.
- JAKE: Everything is backwards now. Like out there is the true world, and in here is the dream.
- Jake kneels and Tsu'tey opens his eyes. Through a haze of pain, he recognizes Jake. TSU'TEY (Na'vi) I See you, Jakesully. JAKE I See you, Tsu'tey te Rongloa Ateyitan.
- TIGHT SHOT – the tendrils interweave. Jake's pupils dilate and his mouth drops open. The horse's eyes also go wide and it honks nervously. Neytiri touches her fingertips to the neural interface. Neytiri: This is *shahaylu* – the bond.
- JAKE rocks with the direct contact between his nervous system and hers. *The ultimate intimacy.*
- TSU'TEY SCREAMS in agony, his nervous system exploding on overload. Grinning, Lyle holds up the queue -- Tsu'tey's only connection to the world-consciousness which is his life.

Axis 9, Awakening Body

Primary Activity: Spontaneous, creative action.

Developmental Comparison: Axis 9 is more or less parallel to Cook-Greuter's Stage 5/6,

Construct-aware.

Forward Development: Probably more than any of the other hierarchical transitions, the

transition from Axis 9 to 10, Enlightened Body, is more a matter of grace or

mystery than anything else. Who can predict who will die before they die?

Spiral Return: In order to awaken, we must transform the survival and safety needs

inherent to human existence (Ruomet, 1997, 2006). Believing that death and

suffering are illusory is not enough. Death and suffering must take the form of

experiential knowing, that is, fully embodied in awareness as experience.

Overcoming the impressions of constant vigilance and concern for the self

imposed in Axis 2, *Dynamo Body*, is the transformational task of Axis 9.

Portrayals of Spontaneous, Creative Action, Quotes from Avatar:

- NEYTIRI (whispering) Now you choose your *ikran*. This you must feel -- inside. If he also chooses you, move quick, like I showed. You will have one chance. JAKE How will I know if he chooses me? NEYTIRI He will try to kill you.
- Jake scrambles up and leaps straight at it. Claws rake his leg but he gets his arms around its head and CLAMPS DOWN HARD. They flop to the ground and he scrambles on top, pinning it and --Grabs its whipping antenna, locks it under his arm, and jams the end of his queue into it. They FUSE together and --The banshee stops struggling. It lies there panting. They are locked together, literally eye to eye.
- JAKE (V.O.) *The way I had it figured, Toruk is the baddest cat in the sky. Nothing attacks him. So why would he ever look up?* FROM ABOVE -- THE SMALL SHADOW of Jake's banshee falls across the back of the mighty Toruk. JAKE (V.O.) *But that was just a theory.* JAKE DIVES and WE RUSH DOWN toward the great beast and our own shadow then – CUT TO; EXT. WELL OF SOULS.
- Toruk lowers its body. They stare in awe as Jake dismounts and strokes the magnificent animal's flank. NEYTIRI, TSU'TEY and MO'AT watch in stunned amazement as the legendary *Rider of Last Shadow* walks toward them.

Axis 10, Enlightened Body

Primary Activity: Generating New Forms in Consciousness

Developmental Comparison: Axis 10 is more or less parallel to Cook-Greuter's Stage 6,

Unitive.

Forward Development: n/a

Spiral Return: All of us will face death. We can only choose whether we will die

consciously or not. Reconfiguring and refining the archetypal patterns of this life

imprinted before birth in Axis 1, *Archetypal Body*, occurs in the final stages of

psycho-spiritual development in the Spiral Return of Axis 10. Individuals experiencing this Spiral Return are among the living dead, sharing their illumination with others spontaneously and fearlessly, and are refining archetypal imprints now in preparation in some way for whatever comes after death.

Portrays of Generating New Forms in Consciousness, Quotes from Avatar:

- MACRO SHOT -- fine, hair-like THREADS have emerged from the roots and are gently spreading over Grace's HUMAN skin. JAKE, still holding her hand, watches her body being fused to the root-floor by a thousand connections. GRACE'S AVATAR is gently connected by the same questing ROOTCILIA--they entwine with the QUEUE and spread over the body. The grotto is dark except for the spectral GLOW of the willows. The CHANT continues, hypnotically. MO'AT, on her knees beneath the Mother Tree, writhes her arms in the trance state. Her eyes are rolled back, showing only WHITE. GRACE GASPS and her eyes SNAP OPEN. Her expression is AMAZED as if seeing something so beautiful it can never be explained.
- VIDEO IMAGE -- Jake sits in a chair, talking straight TO CAMERA. He is thin, pale. He looks around the high tech room. JAKE The science guys will keep the lights on, here. But I won't miss this place. . . . JAKE (V.O.) *I better wrap this up. There's a funeral tonight, and I don't want to be late. It was someone very close to me.*
- JAKE and his AVATAR lie head to head. Human Jake is wearing an exomask. Both figures are still, hand folded, covered in translucent silken shrouds of ROOT-CILIA. CAMERA CLOSES IN as Neytiri removes the mask from Jake's human face. . . . ECU JAKE'S EYES. Hold a beat, then – They open. CUT TO BLACK.

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³ This phrase is spoken aloud by a priest as earth is cast upon a coffin in the Christian ritual for the Burial of the Dead.

⁴ First names are given in acknowledgment of feminist styles of notation.