



A scene from the movie, AVATAR

AVATAR: A Legend of Biosynergy, Compassion & Union

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From the movie:

Jake Sully: *Well, if I'm like a child, then maybe you should teach me.*

Neytiri: *Sky People cannot learn, you do not SEE*

Jake Sully: *Then teach me how to see.*

Neytiri: *No one can teach you to SEE.*

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In light of the stunning worldwide impact of the film AVATAR, we wrote this essay to offer an antidote to the modern human folly of "Ignoring Nature" by building on the film's presentation of a planet where global harmony of all life prevails. As the brilliant director James Cameron shows in his depiction of the movie's planet Pandora, so it was on Earth before the spread of human hegemony. Turning a blind eye to nature robs humanity of the capacity to SEE the vital biosynergy and compassion that permeates life on earth. Without that vision, we put all earth-life at risk of destruction and extinction.

Our essay examines AVATAR in light of recent biosynergy research and theory that emphasizes the psychosocial and emotional benefits of seeing all beings as kindred spirits in a cohesive universe. We focus on three allegoric elements from the film: 1) Eywa - the Tree of Life; 2) the synergy of Navi and other animal clans; and 3) the bonding of Navi warriors with their flying Ikran steeds. The first two cinematic constructions reflect the life-source icons of major religions and the power of positive interspecies relationships. The allegory of Navi-Ikran bonding reveals profound personal examples of interspecies unity, reflected in rare interspecies unions like that of Penny Patterson and Ron Cohn and gorillas Koko and Michael, and even more widespread in the personal, cultural, and mythological connections between humans and horses here on earth.

The first section of our essay emphasizes the benefits of seeing and treating all earth-life and ourselves as kindred spirits in a harmonic universe, and includes personal experiences of Tony Rose. The second section focuses on the transformative and healing power of the human-horse connection, with experiences and research of Gabriela Rose. Together these broad and focused inquiries result in a clarion call to SEE the world through one another's eyes. While our goal is to search for biosynergy and compassion, the personal union of horse and human transcends this pursuit and provides us with the penultimate mission: to BE UNITED with the whole of nature.

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About the Authors: **Anthony Rose** is a conservation psychologist, author, and Director of Conservation Programs for The Gorilla Foundation. His daughter, **Gabriela Rose**, is a special needs instructor at The Bay School and equine therapy associate at BOK Ranch. Dr. Rose's co-development of The Gorilla Foundation's Compassionate Conservation programs using Koko's & Michael's life stories, and Ms. Rose's efforts to identify the emotional and visionary aspects of Koko's and Michael's many recorded conversations, helped inform their writing of this essay.

Part 1: A Persistent Blindness

The most seen film of all time – AVATAR – exposes the moviegoer to a deep flaw in modern human life. We have become blind to the personal and universal soul of nature. Animal nature. Plant nature. Human nature. All Nature. We look at other beings, at the multitude of living forms, at the myriad of landscapes and life spaces, and at ourselves... and we do not SEE. Myopia and rapid judgment result in stereotypes and knee-jerk reactions that diminish our insight into the deep inner meaning, emotion, beauty, and spirit of the myriad beings that circle our ego-centered worlds. James Cameron's masterpiece about the awakening of the sleeping human soul by the love-energy of synergistic life on a far-off planet instructs us that while we cannot teach others to SEE, we must encourage one another to open our eyes.

This essay explores antidotes to the modern human folly of "ignoring nature" by building on AVATAR's messages of planetary harmony, spiritual and species communion, and global conservation. We shall examine the wisdom implied in key quotes, events and images from the film, and shall interpret these ideas in light of biosynergy research and theory (Rose, 1994 to 2013 — see References), ancient myth and folklore, and our own personal experiences. The first section of the essay emphasizes the benefits of seeing and treating all earth-life and ourselves as kindred spirits in a harmonic universe, and includes personal experiences of the first author. The second section focuses on the transformative and healing power of the human-horse connection, with experiences and research of the second author. Together these broad and focused inquiries result in a clarion call to SEE the world through one another's eyes.

Alas, to truly SEE, we must acknowledge and lament the attitudes, actions, and social systems that drive our persistent blindness. This author's lifetime of observations as an applied social psychologist, working in schools and hospitals, military and religious institutions, businesses, governments, and charities, have been sparkled with a rainbow of colored visions evoked by synergy between humanity and nature. At the same time, and often for long periods of inquiry into the human condition, I've seen nothing but the black and white shadows of sadness and anguish reflected in empty eyes and shiny cars that pass through jagged shards of fleeting sunlight that punctuates impossibility in the gloom of an existence immersed in man-made canyons and caves bereft of natural life.



(Photo by Joshua S. Rose, 2014)

In those times of entrapment in un-civilization, I've often turned from psychology to poetry to unload the toxins of inhumane existence. Perhaps this ardent lament turned rant will evoke the angst of our blind folly and our dire need to SEE!

We humans, by the billions, have vision so narrow and myopic that our senses of self and of place are clichés and our visions are rusty nails buried in the detritus of lost and failing civilizations. Urban-homo-sapiens are blindfolded, boxed, lined up on treadmills, and heaped into trailers and jet planes that propel us on linear journeys from delivery room to morgue. We begin dieing with the first cry of abandonment and start going blind when our eyes are trained to focus on twirling overhead figurines to distract us while mom and dad watch TV or drive off to the work cubicle.

Our minds focus on surfaces, eye candy, makeup and bling, muscles and curves, grins and frowns, feathers and fur, petals and thorns, signs of possible pleasure and pain to lose or gain from the myriad objects and individuals that happen to come into view. In the end what we see is all about Me, rarely about You.

Sadly, nature is ignored most by the high achievers; those who heed the cry to “focus child, focus worker, focus leader!” Focus on the algebra equation, the production output, the homeland security, the corporate resources – human, natural, technological, organizational, economic, opportunistic, ballistic resources. Focus on your task and I’ll focus on mine and we’ll get it all done fast, so we can accomplish the mission, whatever it might be. Save the neonate conceived in a test tube to live in vegetative oblivion. Catch the teenager raised in a ghetto to lock-up in emotional fury. Hire the graduate trained in an autocracy to be yoked in lifelong ennui. Hamstring the scientist, physician, executive, visionary -- endowed with genius -- to follow the common path. Shallow inarticulate unexamined lives emerge as artifacts of blind and artificial societies.

We who transcend the discord are obliged to report what we see, what we feel, what we imagine our natural world might be when experienced in unfettered glory. Escape, imagine, report, restore! (Anthony Rose)

As the dominant species on earth, we must escape our selfishness, imagine biosynergy, report our visions, and restore this planet. But we live in a sound bite, selfie, and twitter quip culture where opinion flies off-the-cuff in snipes and barks, not rants and discourses. The educated citizens’ capacities to analyze, postulate, and innovate rise for the college thesis and fall after graduation. The easy way becomes the only way, and thus we accept the down-spiraling fate of self, society, and biosphere. So if you find the above rant to be too politically incorrect, forgive me the transgression. I am only trying to wake us up.

I woke up in 1996 when I went to Cameroon to talk at a Ministry of Environment conference about the social psychology of wildlife conservation. Having analyzed and reported the life changing impact of “Interspecies Epiphanies” in scientists, naturalists, conservationists, and animal caregivers across Europe and America, I was challenged by my friend Jane Goodall to go to Africa and study attitudes towards apes and other animals among people who live in the forests with the wildlife. Two weeks later a compelling email from conservation activist / wildlife photographer Karl Ammann invited me to attend a “bushmeat” conference in Equatorial Africa. “Yes, I’ll arrange for you to interview local people; there’s a gorilla hunter who will be glad to talk with you” said Ammann. I agreed to go.

Six weeks later in April, 1996, I was “Monsieur le Representant de la Biosynergy Institute et de l’ American Society of Primatologists” at the Seminaire sur l’Impact de l’Exploitation Forestiere sur la Faune Sauvage. While my biosynergist’s perspective on the importance of primates inspired African conservationists to explore new solutions, their forthright reports, highlighted by Ammann’s intense photos of the terrible effects of logging and hunting on flora and fauna in the rain forests, literally blew my mind, and severely shocked my heart and soul.

I stood face to face with terrified newly orphaned baby gorillas, saw the stream of dead trees fly down clay roads on trucks bound for the seaport in Douala, and became mentor to gorilla hunter Joseph Melloh-Mindako during that trip. I committed to join Ammann to protect African wildlife, to confront the timber barons through The Bushmeat Project (<http://bushmeat.net>), and to help Joseph Melloh convert Poachers to Protectors through Wildlife Protectors Fund (<http://biosynergy.org>). I devoted eight years to witnessing and reporting on the horrible destruction of rain forests and wildlife that global enterprise had fostered. It was then that I saw, first-hand, the arrogant northern invaders stealing sacred homelands from the indigenous forest people and recognized that my society’s arrogance had made us blind to the importance our biosynergistic living ancestors. With Ammann’s photos and guidance, and with support from friends (especially Russell Mittermeier of Conservation International and Hans Wasmoath of The Wasmoath Wildlife Foundation), I documented the ghastly tale of my exploitive society’s persistent blindness in the African rainforests (Rose et al, 2003-4).

A few years later I saw the same story made into galactic legend in the AVATAR movie. James Cameron’s brilliant film opened eyes around the world in a new way, and gave me hope that the human tyranny over nature may be overcome – that our blindness may not be terminal.



Is Our Blindness Terminal? Central Africa’s forest people, the B’aka pygmies, watch the European invasion as it destroys their ancient homelands, their society, and their lives. (Rose et al, Consuming Nature, 2003-4; Photo by Karl Ammann)

2. Envisioning Another Reality



Scene from the movie, AVATAR

To produce the movie AVATAR, James Cameron and his colleagues escaped the persistent blindness, imagined biosynergy, and reported with utmost brilliance! They constructed a planet to contrast our own, and called it Pandora: a place where living beings are united in loving spirit and entwined in common ancestral history and karmic opportunity. A place endowed with human-like beings (the Navi) who coexist in ecological harmony with clans of great and powerful beasts that roam the jungles and soar the skies sensitive to each other's natures. All life on Pandora communes in mutual service to the greater good and mingles spirits in the glistening ever-present synergy of existential and eternal life.

But the filmmakers threw a wrench in the works. Cameron and company invented a flock of self-righteous technologically advanced human earthlings and sent them flying in space ships to Pandora. The planet's indigenous Navi civilization called these interlopers "the Sky People."

The “Sky People” traveled in inter-planetary warships from an ecologically shattered earth to conquer and pillage the mineral resources of Pandora – the lush and life-rich moon of a far-off giant planet. Jake Sully, a paraplegic ex-marine, joined the mission to be freed from the confines of his wheelchair and to experience the vigorous life of an “avatar”. His solo adventure in a holomorphic body designed to emulate the planet’s humanoid Navi inhabitants begins with exhilaration but soon turns tragic. Jake stumbles into the forest den of giant rhinoceros-like creatures that recognize him as an invader and roar their warning to him. Rather than kneel down submissively and lower his eyes in respect, he turns and runs. The creatures pursue him.

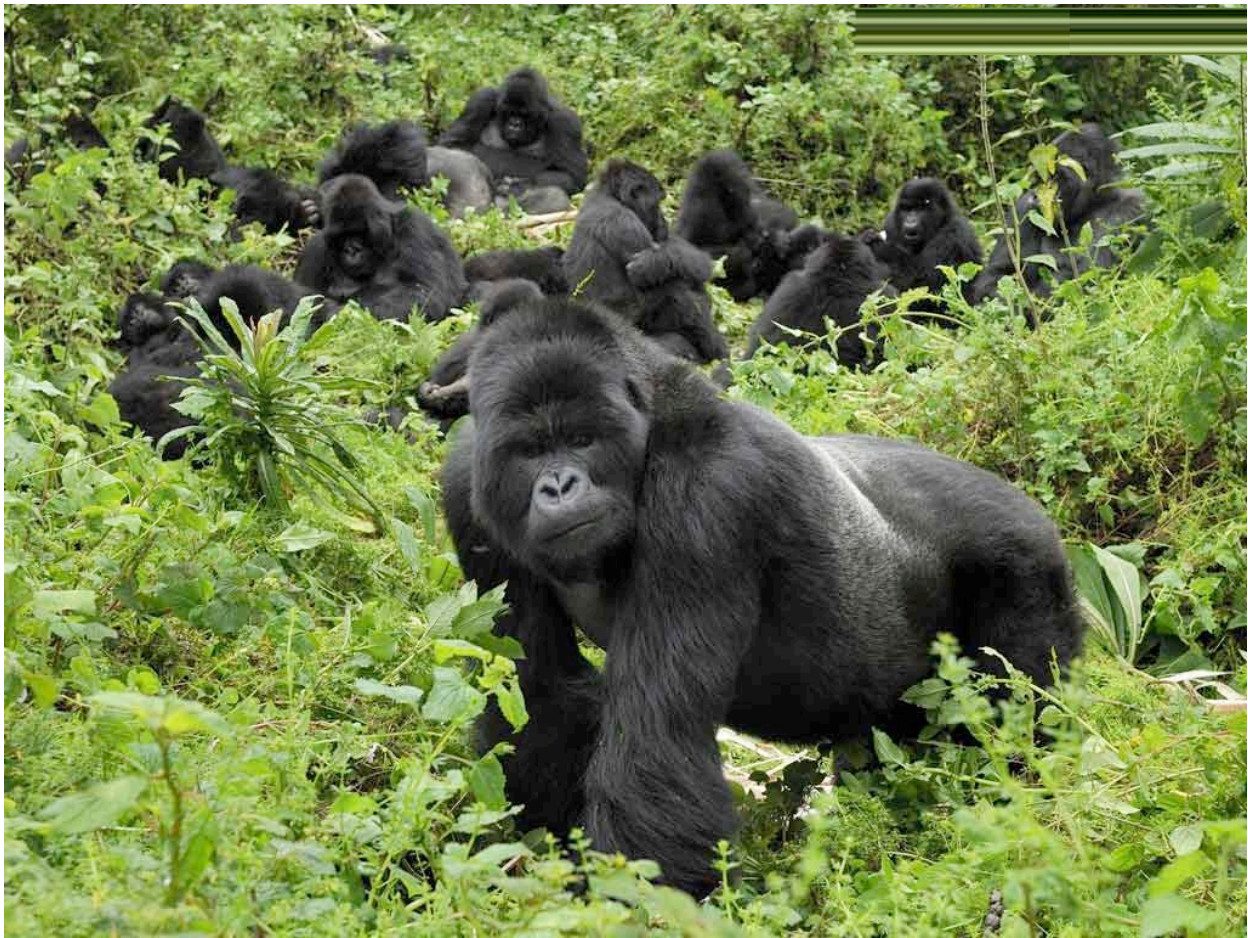
The Navi princess, Neytiri, emerges from her hiding place in time to kill the lead creature just before it crushes Jake. This causes the other behemoths to run away, while Neytiri mourns the passing of life she had affected. Jake Sully possessed the body of a Navi warrior, but was blind to nature’s ways and had put himself and other animals at mortal risk. The human proclivity to flee in terror was insane behavior for the human-Navi avatar who had invaded the lair of great beasts of the forest. The right response was to kneel and bow in reverence. When Moha, the mother-queen of the Navi people, learned of his transgression, she told Jake how he might overcome his madness and acquire the Navi capacity to SEE.

Moha: “Do as we do, and learn it well. Then we will see if your insanity can be cured.” (Cameron, Avatar, 2009)

The insane terrors that cause humans to fear, flee, or fight those other beings who are strange to us have been imbedded in our psyches and our societies for millennia. They emerged when we shifted from collaborating with earth-life to conquering and controlling it: from gathering and hunting to farming and industrializing. Entwined with our mad sense of God-given dominion is a projected negativity about the natural world. We diminish wild animals to the status of mindless-heartless hostile beasts, and consider humans who commune with and protect wildlife to be fools standing in the way of our righteous hegemony. Still, there are women and men who have set aside their terror and elected to follow experienced guides in search of the beast in his lair.

In 1984 my wife and I traveled from urban Los Angeles through Paris to Kigali and trekked up Mt. Karisoke to visit with mountain gorillas. Two men who, like the Navi, were attuned to nature in these primeval rain forests led us on the trek to find the Sumi group. Back home people thought us insane to attempt this adventure. When I expressed my concerns, the Rwandan guides merely shrugged and told me to follow their lead. Six hours later we came

upon a large troop of shaggy black haired apes of all sizes. Exhaustion turned to exhilaration! When a male gorilla stood to face us and pound his chest, a surge of terror almost compelled me to turn and run. Obedient to my guides and my experience with other primates, I dropped to my knees and lowered my head. The great silver back huffed and the gorillas returned to their repast. I didn't possess the body of a gorilla tracker – far from it. But I did as my guides did, honored the gorilla's preeminence, and was privileged to SEE our kindred great ape cousins in their peaceable world. (Anthony Rose)



We who have faced the beasts and been accepted by them have begun to restore our sanity. Since that profound event in the Ruwenzori Mountains I've traveled the world to SEE and commune with other great apes, as well as elephants and rhinos, dolphins and sharks, tigers and lions, wolves and bears, and scores of other animals. Discussing these kinds of experiences with hundreds of fellow travelers, I've found that interspecies epiphanies turn fear of nature into fondness for it (Rose, 1998/2006). This discovery has informed my work with colleagues across equatorial Africa to undertake conservation education programs that promote compassion and biosynergy (Rose, 1996b; Rose et al, 2003, 2008).

It was an encounter with another silverback gorilla that moved me directly onto the path of compassionate conservation. After meeting Dr. Penny Patterson at a Great Ape Conference in Malaysia in 1998, I visited her research station at The Gorilla Foundation in California.

I brought a long strand of brightly colored cloth from Cameroon as a gift for Koko and Michael. Koko played tug-a-war with me gently for a while: then Michael asked for “that blue want.” I tore a three-foot section off and stuck an end through the fence into his enclosure. He took it between thumb and forefinger, crumpled the end into his fist, stared into my eyes, and yanked. I let go, just escaping a harsh skin-burn, and watched the rest of the cloth trail slowly into his enclosure. Had I held on, my hand would surely have been broken, smashed against the fence. Michael watched me rub my palm and I watched him sniff, taste, and tangle the cloth around his hands and arms. In barely a minute he dropped it and came closer to the fence, to watch me. Then he asked Penny to “give that” -- he wanted me to come into the enclosure with him.



Michael — the sensitive silverback (Photo by Ron Cohn)

Michael held on to the fence and I stared at his huge fingers. I wanted to join him. My pulse quickened as I imagined him holding my hand fully enclosed in his palm, his warm breath and musky aroma soaking into my pores, the leathery skin and coarse hair rubbing against my face and arms, the enormous metal-hard muscles of his chest and arms engulfing my shoulders and torso. It would be surrender -- giving myself back to the primordial ancestor. Resting in the safety of that father-protector we all dream of -- encompassed by a dark and mysterious past.

To join Michael would be the test of an evolution we both sensed in our bones, a regression to that eternal Eden from which man and ape continue to ascend. We are brother beings, Michael and I, evolving as leaves on one branch, harkening back in our eyes and our fingertips to the moment when one walked out of the forest and the other stayed. Might we spark some genetic recognition, ignite the atoms of our common DNA, uncover the infrastructure of kinship -- if we were to touch, to breathe the same air, to embrace? Would he recognize my yearning for communion, accept my faith in our heritage, withhold his capacity to crush and allow me to live, despite those men whom he remembered having murdered his mother and father when he was an infant in an African rainforest?

I sat down in front of the door to his enclosure and tried to tell him that I would love to join him, but could not. He seemed to understand. Michael ambled over to the crushed blue cloth, picked it up, and pushed it through the other side of the fence into Koko's enclosure. He then moved off to the far corner of his outdoor area and turned his back to our potential friendship.

"I'll be back, Michael ... another time," I said. (Rose AL 2002)

Michael died before I could return to visit him. The stress protecting his adopted family of apes and humans seized his heart at age 28. Michael was the only Africa-born great ape to learn sign language. We wrote a book about his life, his bravery and his compassion (Rose & Patterson, 2002; 2015). One morning at age eight Mike awoke in a sweat and told his caregiver about a dream – a nightmare of the day he had witnessed men murder and butcher his mother in the rainforest where he was born. He later described his dream many times; it was a childhood trauma he'd never forget. That dream is the centerpiece of Michael's life story, now part of a Compassionate Conservation education program that will spread to schools and rainforest villages across equatorial Africa, wherever great apes are in danger of losing their forest habitat and being slaughtered into extinction.

When we talk about Michael's story with Africans, they often recite the popular folktale of a hunter who had compassion for a mother gorilla after she begged him not to make her baby an orphan. These forest people whose ancestors revered gorillas had learned from colonialists that woodlands and wildlife were simply resources to be exploited for money. Their taboos against eating apes must be revived, and Michael's story helps that happen. But the invaders from other continents, like the Sky people in Avatar who travel to primeval planets for power and profit, are infected with a deadly insanity. Again, it is blindness that keeps the insanity safe from exposure and treatment. Photographer Karl Ammann had tried in vain to get major media to publish his photos of the horror in Africa for six years, before I joined him in the struggle. It took us another six years to produce a book that would open the eyes of the political leaders of Europe, Africa, and America (Rose, Ammann et al, 2003-4).

Now another decade has passed, and the blindness has been overcome in all but the most ignorant and self-centered of people. Open-minded citizens, politicians, conservationists, business and religious leaders, loggers and poachers, prime ministers and UN ambassadors have recognized the terrible result of our insane conquest of nature. Human folly exposed, we still must ask the question "can our insanity be cured?" Research on human psychophysiology has demonstrated that empathy for the suffering of others is as likely to cause denial and flight, as it is to effect acceptance and support. Compassion fatigue is a well-studied phenomenon from media impact on welfare donors (Moeller, 1999) to burnout of animal caretakers (Figley, 2006). When people see the tragedy, and our megalomaniacal insanity, they must be helped to envision a new Reality towards which to channel their compassion and their supportive energy and actions.



Can our Insanity be cured?
Gorillas are slaughtered and stacked for transport along logging roads, to be sold in the billion-dollar illegal bushmeat trade that is emptying the equatorial forests of wildlife. Will we maintain compassion long enough to alter our insane ways? (Rose et al, 2003-4; Photo by Ammann)

3. Biosynergy: Giving Back

Neytiri: “She says that all energy is only borrowed; at some point you have to return it.” (Cameron, *Avatar*, 2009)



Jake has explained to the Navi leaders that the invaders, the “Sky People”, have come to harvest minerals on Pandora and bring them back to earth to fuel the remains of human civilization. In the above quote, Neytiri translates her mother’s declaration of the mega-principal of biosynergy. For life to survive in the universe, from the most Spartan natural ecosystem to the most diverse planetary biosphere, biological energy must function in synergy. No individual, no species, no society, no nation, no continent, no planet can take, hoard, and consume the energy of others for long. Ultimately consumers must return the resource to those from whom they have taken it, or they will burn themselves out and die while those from whom the resources were taken diminish and disappear. Only through a continuous cycle of give and take will living systems function synergistically and will life thrive sustainably (Corning, 2003; Rose, 2010).

My first adventure into tropical rain forest occurred in 1982 at Ketembe research station on Gunung Leuser in Aceh, northern Sumatra. After days of searching, we came upon the first wild-born orangutans I had ever seen. A mother with infant in arms and her female daughter were feasting in the lower branches of a huge fig tree. The three red apes stared into my eyes, acknowledged my awe, shifted and settled into full view, and continued foraging. I was profoundly impacted by this encounter, which set the stage for the next three decades of devotion to great ape conservation. Yet, it was a different interaction that was the peak epiphany of those life-changing travels in Indonesia:



I stopped at the bend in a narrow trail, studied the thin lines that crisscrossed my soiled map, and was about to tilt a water bottle toward my lips when I saw the wormy creatures. At least 20 leeches were wiggling out of the leaf litter and heading my way. The prior evening I had extracted thirteen of these

bloodsuckers from my toes and ankles. Now a company of annelids was streaking toward the scuffle and heat of my feet, gnashing their teeth in the excitement of a probable feast. I deftly hopped over the encroaching circle and stood fast. In an instant they had whirled 'round and were heading my way. I leapt back over them again. They turned again. I bent down, offered my forefinger to the leader of the pack, and watched him crawl on board and attach his jaws to my skin. In a minute or two he had doubled in size, filled with my blood. I removed him and looked closely at the small red dot on my finger. In thanks for my liquid offering, he had injected anticoagulant. "Tit for tat – you feed me; I clean up after," he seemed to be saying.

Biosynergy! The realization awakened me. I was part of an ecosystem that was in a state of biosynergy, with all life forms engaged in mutual service. More than service, in mutual attraction, fascination, interdependence, harmony. I had entered to explore and learn, and the biosynergy of the place had transformed me from observer to participant, from interloper to inhabitant, from utilizer to synergizer. (Rose, 2007; p. 124)

The profound personal discovery of biosynergy in that rainforest changed my life goals and redirected my professional energies; in the three decades since that incident I've been giving back to nature constantly. Still, the years of immersion in tropical forests and in the struggle to save them have not yet transformed me into one who SEEs the infinite soul of nature at every turn. Like Jake, the human hero in Cameron's cinematic world, I cannot help but fall back into seeing nature from a human-centered perspective. The blinders that narrow my vision, attached at the start of my civilized urban life, are still in place. For example, while composing this treatise on SEEing, I stopped to describe the scene in my own backyard in the vernacular of the ethologist.

Outside the window a hawk sits in still silence on the top branch of the coral tree, facing north. To his right he sees our half acre garden reaching uphill to the house and in our long string of picture windows he notes reflections of the trees, rooftops, and cliff-sides that roll down to



the ocean around him. With the double vision of his habitat provided by our mirror walls, the kestrel appears safe from predators. He can spend more than the usual time searching for mice, lizards, and birds in the brush and bushes beneath him. (Anthony Rose)

This report of what the hawk sees is entirely about material surfaces, with the exception of the suggestion that he “appears safe from predators.” Ethologists and naturalists, like myself, are trained to stick to these external observations and simplistic assumptions. We do so in part to assure that our status as “scientists” will be safe from predatory professionals who might hammer us if we stray into non-material, ethereal, and mythological arenas.

Can we risk setting aside our fixation on human constructs and imagine what the hawk himself sees, feels, dreams? Suppose we become hawk avatars! Enter this garden by the sea as raptor. Perch atop the coral tree and SEE.

I see spaces, white airways rising empty to the clouds, safe places high above the crowds, corridors of clear blue light that streak straight to the sea, zigzag flight paths from tree to tree to tree: familiar trails and clearings in the sky where my ancestors and I can hover, dive, and fly. All's well now atop this isolated glade. I inhale the Glory winged Isis made, and look for quarry hiding in the shade. (Anthony Rose)



Poetic fancy or perceptive intuition? No student of falconry will challenge the premise that the hawk is a creature of the airways whose first concern is finding room to fly. What’s on the ground is important, but secondary, to birds of prey. Few would deny this. On the other hand, to impute raptor awareness of the centuries old Egyptian goddess of the heavens, as done in the last sentence of this hawk rapture, is anathema to most human-centered minds.

Still, if we can create deities in our own image, why do we deny the same ingenious capacity to other creatures? While objectivists and speciesists may consider other animals as inferior faithless beings, much of humanity past and present has felt otherwise. In countless contemporary and ancient cultures humans SEE other animals and nature as James Cameron's AVATAR depicts them: as sacred, numinous beings living in harmonious clans, devoting their bodies and souls to enriching the biosynergy of all life on their planet. These visions have been recorded as myth and folklore for millennia.

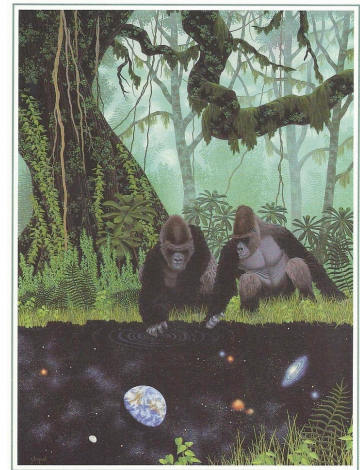
4. The Navi/Pandora Tale and Interspecies Myth & Union



Of the allegoric elements from the film that parallel human mythology, three are strong antidotes to our human blindness to nature: the **unifying power** of Eywa - the Mother Tree; the **biosynergy** of Navi and other animal clans; and the **union** of Navi warriors with their great flying partners, the Ikran. These cinematic constructions are similar, respectively, to life-mother icons of most human religions, to animistic human-animal relationships, and to special cases of human biosynergy with animals that evolved in conjunction with our species.

The **unifying powers** of the “Tree of Life” in Judeo-Christian-Islamic and in Vedic-Buddhist myth are honored by billions of people. Eywa - the “Mother Tree of all Souls” on Pandora presents this icon inspiringly as a dynamic and gloriously depicted three-dimensional video graphic phenomenon. To watch the mystical concept of life’s eternal connections perform as the central force in this heroic tale reinforces our archetypal dreams of paradise. The Hebrew Etz Chaim from the Book of Proverbs, the Christian healing tree from the Book of Revelations, the Hindu tree of immortality from the Rig-Veda, the Buddhist Boddhi Tree from tales of Siddhartha Gautama, the Sidrat al-Muntaha from the Qur'an ... all these sacred religious ideas come to life in AVATAR. No wonder hundreds of millions of people worldwide were uplifted spiritually by this film.

Portrayals of **biosynergy** between the Navi and other animal clans on Pandora reflect the research and theories of modern ecologists, as well as interspecies connections reported by people indigenous to natural environments, and by animists worldwide. AVATAR presents vivid examples of animistic beliefs about human kinship and mutuality with other species, reflecting folklore expressed by aboriginal peoples from the Congo Basin to the Australian outback to the American plains. Millions of people of the predominant faiths (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism) hold animistic beliefs, and social movements within these religious institutions now call for renewal of reverential relations to nature. Over a billion people practice religions that consider other species as sacred kindred beings and even more heed the call to care for the Creation.



Painting by Shim Schimmel

Thus far we have focused on the concept of global biodiversity (Rose, 2011). The two AVATAR allegories reviewed briefly above support this big-picture outlook. Societies that accept the unifying power of the Tree of Life and the importance of interspecies biosynergy are on the path to SEEing. But in Cameron’s film, as in human life, the key step is the **personal quest for union**. This entails progression from SEEing one’s place in nature, to BEing part of nature. Adventurers, naturalists, and conservationists who engage in wild environments can take that step, if they open to moments of biosynergy like my communion with leeches in the Sumatran rainforest. It is profound bonding experiences between humans and other animals that change our individual and societal worldviews most (Rose, 1996, 2006). The balance of this essay will explore how such bonds have evoked our species most enduring unions with non-human beings.

5. Human Unions with Non-Human Beings



Humankind's most frequent and enduring interspecies unions occur with the animals that live in our midst, and participate in our endeavors. The AVATAR depiction of the bonding of Navi Warrior and loyal steed – the four winged beast called Ikran – harkens humanity's most vital historic, mythic, and personal interspecies bond: the **union** between human and horse.



It's long been recognized that biosynergy with animals that have evolved in conjunction with our species has had enormous influence on the human condition. The evolution of wolves into dogs, for example, has produced a plethora of treasured service animals, and has led to the presence of cherished canine companions in many millions of human homes. Similarly, cats and other animals kept as companions and pets advance interspecies awareness and bonding. But it's the synergy of humans and horses that has influenced human civilization and inspired human mythology and world-view most profoundly.

Horses enabled human pursuits such as herding and plowing, trading of goods, migrating to more fertile territories, and the conquest of distant lands and societies for millennia (Chamberlin 2006). In fact the concept of "horse-power" affirms our equine partners as the antecedent icons of our modern modes of

transportation: our synergy with automobiles grew out of our biosynergy with horses. Clearly horsepower has given advantage to those who harness it. European hegemony on horseback enslaved and trampled the peoples and landscapes of the Americas, much as cars, trains, airplanes and their byproducts contribute to the destructive conquest of biodiversity today.

Perhaps ironic, perhaps prophetic, the ancient depiction of the apocalypse of human civilization as represented by demons on four ghostly horses foreshadows our harnessing of nature, from fossil fuel that powers overdevelopment to homogeneous seeds that feed human overpopulation. In early Christian writings, Pestilence, War, Famine, and Death bear down on earth life as horse-men unified with their white, red, black and pale steeds. We have long visualized the horse as carrier of ogres and angels, enabling our humanized devils and dieties to hold dominion over and commune lovingly with life on earth.



For better and worse, our bonds with horses throughout time have enabled humanity to experience and appreciate earth life in superhuman ways. In AVATAR, when Jake bonded with his Ikran and they charged across the Pandora skies, both human Navi-avatar and his faithful steed merged their bodies, hearts, minds, and souls. Thus unified, they could soar, SEE, and BE as one.

The balance of this essay will focus on human-equine bonds that transcend most other human interspecies connections. Like the mythic Centaur, humans astride horses embody a union wherein two creatures merge into one. Shifting our search from nature's biosynergy to the compassionate union of human and horse moves us from I SEE YOU, to WE ARE ONE! In effect we will attempt to take the I-Thou relationship postulated long ago in theology (Buber, 1923/1970) and embraced in psychology (Rogers, 1980; Rose & Auw, 1974) beyond the limits of humanism and apply it to the connection of all beings on our planet.

5. The Human-Horse Connection



“War Horse” – award-winning drama depicts the power of human-horse bonds.

“Limitations live only in our minds. But if we use our imaginations, our possibilities become limitless.” -- Jamie Paolinetti (2003)

In contrast to modern man’s proclivity to ignore nature, Cameron’s film depiction of the synergy of Navi and Ikran offers a vivid allegory similar to one of humanity’s most profound interspecies relationships – the human-horse bond. Human history and myth are filled with tales of the connection between people and horses. The horse has carried us across plains and over mountains to explore, exploit, commune, and conquer. Horses have enabled our communities and civilizations to expand; they’ve helped us plow our fields, herd our livestock, transport our goods, carry our cavalries. Horsepower in its many forms has enabled the global conquest of earth by humankind.

In AVATAR, the union of Navi warriors and their flying steeds, the Ikran, blocked the human conquest of Pandora. The SkyPeople's warships, with all their gun power, were still no more than mechanical extensions of nature-blind human invaders. They were no match for squadrons of interspecies fighters, inspired and guided by their vision of an eternally unified biosphere. While the political message of AVATAR has inspired moviegoers with renewed hope for the preeminence of global biosynergy, the personal message of communion among individuals of different species touches an equally great audience. Hundreds of millions of people have watched and extolled the love that allowed Jake and Neytiri, human and Navi, to truly SEE one another. We identify most easily with interpersonal communion when both parties are similar: the human-humanoid bonds in AVATAR are accepted by film audiences, much as human-ape bonds are acknowledged by natural scientists (Rose, 1996a). But when the bond is between two beings of different evolutionary lineage, like horses and humans, it's importance requires explanation to be genuinely understood.



Lascaux Cave, France: Horses as prey painted around 19,000 years ago.

The original connection between human and horse was that of hunter and prey. The earliest record of human concordance with horses dates to the mid Paleolithic (100,000 to 35,000 BP) in Western Europe where cave paintings, engravings, and portable effigies have been discovered. Monumental Upper Paleolithic cliff drawings and cave frescoes have been found in Siberia and Western Mongolia as well (Kelekna, 2009). "Early in the history of human civilization, on the prairie grasslands and boreal forests of central Asia, horses became like the buffalo to the Blackfoot – both suppliers of goods and sacred

gods” (Chamberlin, 2006, p. 62). The human-equine connection changed to one of cohabitants when we began to herd them, but it was their initiation as beasts of burden for carrying, pulling, driving and riding that raised their position from resource providers to personal allies and enablers. Only then did they emerge in our minds and myths as transcendent beings; as earthlings and as deities with extraordinary elegance and mystic powers that matched and sometimes surpassed our own.

Arabian scribes have celebrated the horse as “A drinker of the wind, a dancer of fire” and declared, “The sum total greatness in the Arabian (horse) is not just her incredible beauty – it is her ability to bond with humans,” (Hausman and Hausman, 2003 pg.4). American novelist John Steinbeck (1939) put it quite simply: “A man on a horse is spiritually as well as



physically bigger than a man on foot.” Across centuries and continents writers of all ilk have extolled the horse as a paradoxical compatriot – wild and tame, dangerous and devoted, mundane and magical. From the divine winged-horse Pegasus to the horse-man Centaur, myths of human relations with magic horses reinforce research findings that humankind’s most *profound interspecies events* (PIEs) tend to emerge in relationships that are fraught with challenges (Rose, 1998/2006). Human bonds with horses, as with other animals, become indelible when confronted by the seven elements of the “ultimate PIE” (Rose, 1994). Those elements are:

1. Initial extreme difficulty for the human to gain access to the animal.
2. Attraction and perseverance by the human in pursuit of a connection.
3. Reversal of mistrust by the animal with regard to the pursuing human.
4. A striking first contact, followed by closer and longer interactions.
5. Intervening events that separate the pair, leaving the bond unfulfilled.
6. Heroic acts by the pair to reach/protect/reconnect with one other.
7. Profound shifts in perception of self/other by both members of the pair.

While these crucial elements were factored from data on human bonding with wild animals, they trace precisely the development of the bond between Jake and his Ikran as portrayed in AVATAR. The difficult beginning, human perseverance,

reversal of mistrust, and a striking first contact are all in Cameron's screenplay. Similarly, these events transpire in the bonding of horse and rider. Profound shifts in worldview occur on the silver screen, as they do on the riding trail. Separation and heroic reconnection also take place in the film, as they often do in the life of horse and rider. Once humans and horses share these experiences, their bonds remains no matter how long the separation, like a flame waiting to be fanned and refueled.



I returned to horse riding after 8 years and it was just like coming home. My love of horses reawakened in an instant. What I had lost in riding skills was offset by the gain of life experience. In those years my capacity to love had grown, expanding my passion for riding. Getting back in the saddle hasn't been easy, but that has driven me to connect with each horse I mount. Scores of people have told me "when you become a horse person, you are a horse person forever". My hiatus was less than a decade, but I've seen connections that span a lifetime. My aunt Gail rode her black stallion almost daily from age twelve till she went off to college at 17. Upon returning to a stable for the first time in 60 years, she lit up when a young horse looked in her eyes, walked over and nuzzled her. In their own ways they had said, "glad to SEE you again." (Gabriela Rose)

6. The Compassionate Bond of Horse and Rider

There is a fire that burns inside every horse lover – a flame that lasts a lifetime. Once refueled, the bond gains strength through adversity. Separation in time and space can be matched in its bonding power by recovery from a sudden fall from grace. Human and horse confirm their mutuality during smooth riding and expand it by meeting challenges; some intended, others accidental.

Ironically, my love of horses and riding skyrocketed when I fell off Nellik. Luckily I cracked my helmet, not my head! I stood up at once, climbed back on, and realized that my fear of falling was gone. She seemed to sense my newfound calmness, shivered relief and snuffled. This was my first fall since returning to riding; it felt good to be done with it. We slipped into a trot, this time with no resistance from Nellik or tension in

me. My seat was better, my core tighter, and my legs were looser. The fall had bounced my attention out of my head: left me thoughtless, mindful only of our connected bodies and intentions. Once the technicality of the movement is learned there is no reason to get caught in your head. You have to let go of the gripping going on in your mind and realize that your body will do what it needs to do. It's easy to love something that is always pleasant. True love compels one to get beyond a negative experience. My love for horses strengthened after I fell. My need to ride increased. I no longer fear falling. I can relax and sense the horse; allow feelings to guide us. Nellik and I now experience our connection more naturally; riding has shifted from a fear-driven cognitive process to a physical and emotional – and spiritual – connection. (Gabriela Rose)

Native American horse trainer Gawani Pony Boy (*Horse Follow Closely*) says that riders use various methods of “telling” to instruct their horse. This, he says, conditions the animal to do what is expected of it – to obey. “The problem with demanding obedience is that there are only two possible outcomes for the horse: to obey and be rewarded or disobey and be punished” (Hausman and Hausman 2006, p 113). The limits of telling another animal what to do are confounded by memory. Pony Boy explains that if you raise your hand in anger as if you are about to hit your horse when she disobeys, she may shy away whenever you raise your hand, fearing punishment. Animal trainers of all types are aware of the adverse effects of punishment. Horses evolved as prey animals that instinctively run from threat, so aversive commands backfire eventually. Looking back on my accident with Nellik, it's clear that I had been pulling her reins, trying to turn her head physically in a direction I had chosen, rather than leading her gently, asking her to affirm my intentions with my own body movement, and hers.

Most Native Americans understood that a horse's movements are directed subtly by the cooperative nature of the herd as a whole. The horse is an imitative being that learns by watching, looking, and thinking – but mostly by following or emulating the movements of the leader. Pony Boy calls this the relationship of Itancan (leader) and Waunca (imitator). He says that when a person establishes leadership in the proper way the horse will want to follow your lead naturally.

Once the leader-imitator relationship is established, human and horse can become the best of friends. The gentleness of an animal so large is astounding. The way he nuzzles your arm and hand to show affection. The way she exhibits her comfort simply by letting her tongue hang out. The whisper of their breath, asking for contact. Their stillness and solidity in preparation for the mount. All these small behaviors exhibit the solidarity of the bond between horse and rider.

The Horse Song Of The Navajo

Holy wind blows through his mane,
His mane of rainbows.
My horse's ears are of round corn,
His eyes of stars.
I am wealthy because of him.
I am eternally peaceful.
I stand for my horse.

(Hausman and Hausman, 2003, pg. 85)



What the Navajo knew as part of their ongoing way of life, industrialized people strive for on weekends, vacations, and holidays – if we dare to take the risk. Communing with horses is not just another road trip in the convertible or minivan. Not a motorcycle or bike ride. Freedom, speed, and mobility become visceral body/mind experiences while on horseback.

The challenges of the work-week melt away when I'm on a horse. I live in the now. What is happening at each moment: the sensing of the horse's great body, the scenery moving around us at a pace governed by two beings, all give me the feeling I could do anything, go anywhere, be anything. The horse and I have six legs and one intention. We feel as one, see as one, move as one. He knows what I am thinking; I know what he's feeling, we do what we want. There are no limits; only those we believe we have. Together we fly! Fortunately, my horse and I are whole, healthy, and equally able to gain from our relationship. Such is not the case with some riders I've known. To participate in the human-equine relationship can give even more to people with disabilities. (Gabriela Rose)



7. The Healing Power of the Horse

“When a person is unable to access what is going on in his or her own body and mind, the horse will express it behaviorally or even become locked up in his own body.” (Kohanov 2001, p 202)

The hero of the film AVATAR, Jake Sully, is a man crippled in war, unable to use his legs, giving up his will to live. He escapes his wheelchair and his depression by volunteering to be transported to another galaxy and serve as the avatar of an indigenous tribesman in a place called Pandora. Initially it was the power of technology that gave Jake back his legs. But it is his bonding with the Navi people, his Ikran steed, and ultimately with the giant flying dragon Toruk, king of all Ikrans, that healed him of his earthly human maladies. By becoming unified with these otherworldly beings, Jake transformed into a healthy, loving, and spiritually fulfilled person.



Horses bond with man injured by motorcycle accident at ForeverFlorida.com

Like AVATAR's earthling hero, people with physical and psychological limitations can find tremendous healing from bonds with other beings, and with horses in particular. Whether born on the autism spectrum or disabled by illness or accident, those with special needs are in many ways imprisoned by their maladies. But as soon as they get on that horse they begin to set themselves free. Over time, many can go on horseback anywhere the healthy human goes, but with an even greater appreciation. The invalid's imbalance is corrected by the secure upstanding steed. Four strong and powerful legs that carry the person with speed and agility replace two wobbly limbs. People can experience nature as never before – on a moving, living, feeling platform 16 hands in the air. There is a fluidity of movement available to them that they find no other place. Not the mobility enabled by wheelchair, automobile or airplane – cold mechanical movement. On horseback, they become enabled by a warm organic living being. As infants, kindred grownups carried us where we couldn't otherwise go. Now the horse has become the carrier and the kin: a kin of a very different kind. This author's experiences working with special needs riders affirm the truth of remarkable events such as this one, reported about the observations of Barbara Rector, co-founder of the Equine Facilitated Mental Health Association (EFMHA):

“Barbara found that instinct alone couldn't explain the sophisticated reactions horses exhibited in the presence of people dealing with all types of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual challenges. Josh, a student attending one of her early workshops, happened to be blind from birth, and he did surprisingly well in getting an Arabian gelding named Dundee to cooperate with him in the round pen after some initial adjustments. When his session was over, however, Josh asked if he could have a few minutes to himself before the next person took her turn. He just wanted to wander around the ring alone because he'd never experienced the sensation of moving at liberty in a new environment without his cane. The horse, who had never encountered a person with a visual impairment, watched Josh's tentative steps for a moment before walking directly to the young man's side and putting his withers in the same position a guide assistant would take. Each time Josh lost his footing, Dundee moved in close, providing his body as balance. Together, they walked, jogged, and ran. Even Barbara was amazed as they began to move in figure eights. No one has ever been able to explain how Dundee knew Josh was blind, or why the horse was motivated to act as the boy's guide.” (Kohanov 2001, P 202-203)

In recent years as we study human interspecies bonds in earnest, hypotheses abound to explain why the horse moves close to help the person in need. The mother mare helps her newborn colt to stand in the pasture. The therapy horse helps the blind man to make his way around the ring. Horses have evolved for millennia as herding helpers of horse and human kind. For decades, beginning in Europe and spreading around the world, equine therapy programs have developed to place disabled people on the backs of sensitively trained horses and enable them to go where they can't go on foot.

To see people, young and old, become transformed by this healing experience is astounding. Like the crippled Jake Sully who became Navi-avatar and bonded with his Ikran mount, special needs people are no longer defined by their disability, but by the conjoint spirit and desire they share with a horse. The joy on the faces of riders as they break through their limitations is exhilarating. To watch them attain the eternal love of horses is heartwarming. To know that a horse can heal a human is inspiring. Still, there is more to the horse-human bond than merely mounting and riding, loving and healing, showing and going.

Ultimately, as we've discussed earlier in relation to bonding among all beings, human and horse must "SEE" one another – peer into their bonded hominid and equine souls – and become internally connected. Once this is done rider and steed can take the next step: they can look together from inside outward and truly SEE the world through one another's eyes. This shared vision becomes the platform on which they rise to BEing One.



Equine assisted therapy for children with autism.

8. We Must SEE and BE as ONE

When Cortez came to the new world the Aztecs had never seen a horse and rider before and assumed it was one being of magic. (Hausman and Hausman, 2006, p 147)

For the Aztecs to mistake Cortez and his horse for one being, there must have been a strong connection between the two. Envisioning horse and rider as one magical creature signifies complete melding of the two beings in their feeling and vision, as well as their movement. Ask any professional rider who has performed with horses in equestrian competitions; they will confirm that to excel in dressage, jumping, slalom, cross country and circuit racing requires that human and horse feel and see as one united being. For Cortez to take his cavalry across the sea and ride into a new world, every horse and rider had to be strongly united. The Aztecs were right.

In Greek mythology Centaurs were beings with a human upper body and the lower body of a horse. They have been treated as possessing of special wisdom, and as dangerous uncanny characters. Chiron, the foremost of Centaurs, was of a special more civilized lineage and had been schooled by Apollo (god of light, medicine, and music) and Artemis (goddess of wild animals and healer of young women). Chiron was admired for his visionary wisdom, beneficence, and healing powers, and for his ability as a teacher and mentor (Tripp, 2007). It is reasonable to assume that the integrity of horse and human in Chiron reflected Greek experience with well bred and trained horses; the Greeks knew that horse riding uplifted people and expanded their capacity. From the Olympian tales of ancient Greece to the AVATAR stories of modern times, people have depicted the human-equine bond as an epitome of interspecies integrity.



The interplay of human and horse takes SEEing to another level, beyond that of any other interspecies connections we can make: even those between people and dogs. Herding dogs manage other animals as they see them, in accord with human training and instruction. Guide dogs become the eyes for blind humans. Sled dogs pull the weight and follow the voice and line commands of seeing humans. These canine-human connections approach, but don't quite reach that of horse and rider. People simply don't ride dogs. For human and horse to reach the

full potential of their bond – to walk, trot, gallop, run, and jump together safely and swiftly over trails and barriers – they must function in unity. Ultimately, horse and human rider must synergize their mutual devotion, shared intentions, and physical capacities so as to SEE through one another’s eyes and move through the world as One Being.

Turning a blind eye to nature robs humanity of the capacity to see the biosynergy and compassion that vitalizes life on earth. Without that vision, unable to SEE one another, we are lost as blind men in wilderness, and all life is put at risk of destruction and extinction. “I SEE YOU” in the form expressed between Jake and Neytiri in the film AVATAR was extended to all living beings on the imaginary planet Pandora. The Navi saw into the hearts and souls of all nature, and knew that the vision was reciprocal. It is thus that they united to defeat the human invaders. But in the end it was the higher-level bond between Navi warriors and their faithful chargers, the Ikran, which would finish the fight. Navi and Ikran could SEE through one another’s eyes, and soar as ONE through the embattled skies to achieve the final victory for themselves and all life on their planet.



The people of the Mongolian Steppes have retained their synergy with horses into modern times. Children are placed on a horse as soon as they can sit, and the synergy of humans and horses is key to success of their seasonally organized nomadic movement. Horses are respected as cohorts in family and community life, providing transport, mare’s milk, and personal and social communion and pride through ubiquitous

equine-based economic, spiritual, and ritual practices. Perhaps the last ancient horse-human culture, the Mongolian plains people and the wild horses they commune with warrant conservation and study as they offer a rare insight into the human-animal union that once flourished worldwide.

What we learn from the unity of horse and rider on Earth and of Navi and Ikran on Pandora is a lesson we must expand to our relationships with all of nature. Yes, we must SEE through the eyes of every living organism, but there is another step to take. Somehow, through imagination, intuition, and insight, we must find ways to unite with each living being as many people do with their kindred horses.

Scientist and conservationist, filmmaker and moviegoer, farmer and forester, therapist and theologian, lay person and professional – all humans who care about nature must commune in partnership with all the diverse flora and fauna of this earth. We must do more than stop ignoring nature. We must do more than see through the surfaces into the soul of nature. We must envision ourselves astride all life in the biosphere, entwined with all spirits, seeing with all eyes, riding with all beings into a future that will restore our biosynergy, energize our compassion, inspire our unity, and save us from the global catastrophe that will surely befall this planet, if we humans continue to go blindly and selfishly into this world with the delusion that our species is called by a higher power to conquer and subdue all life on earth, and across the universe.

I See You must expand to *We Are One*, if biosynergy and compassion are to enable the **Unity** required for **All Life** to prevail on Earth.

* * *



All The World's Children – Schim Schimmel

About the Authors



Anthony Rose, social psychologist, biosynergist, and author has been promoting the synergy of humanity and nature for three decades. His global explorations of biosynergy and his investigations of interspecies empathy are reported in scores of books, films, and professional journals. Rose's work as wildlife protector and conservation educator has introduced psychosocial and spiritual dimensions into a field in dire need of new visionary approaches. His search for biosynergy, compassion, and union begins in Palos Verdes and Warner Springs, California, and reaches around the world.

Gabriela Rose is a developmental psychologist and horsewoman devoted to facilitating the learning of people challenged by special needs. She lives in Santa Cruz, CA, teaches at a school for autistic children, and is a trainer in equine assisted therapy. Her interest in compassionate bonds between people and other animals began in childhood with horses and was reinforced by interactions with gorillas, chimpanzees, elephants, and hippos in Africa and dolphins and monkeys in Mexico and Central America.



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Postscript

In the world of human-animal relations where we have focused many decades of study and immersion, there is an interspecies connection that transcends all others we have witnessed. The most devoted horse-person, from America to Mongolia, goes home at night to commune with his/her human family. Blind men and women who rely on Seeing Eye dogs to guide them, and elders whose house cats bring them restorative companionship, still primarily seek fulfilling associations with other people. In short, the union of humans and those domestic animals with whom we have coevolved for



hundreds of thousands of years are secondary to our own human union. Yes, we unite with other animals at key moments in our lives; sometimes as the highlight of every day. But we rarely make them our co-equals in mind, emotion, and life story. We possess and treasure them for the value they share with us. We ride our beloved horses as one united being of one mind moving through the world as centaurs of one body and soul. Thus we taste Unity. Then we dismount.



Practically none of us communes as equal partners with other animals. Only in a tiny niche have people built capacity in themselves and other animals to share as equals their world-views and personal ideas and emotions: in the arena of interspecies communication between humans and our great ape cousins.

This essay described the senior author's connection with a great ape who lived and died as part of the most integrated higher-order interspecies relationship in history. That brief transforming communion with Michael gorilla is but a hint of the tale of Penny, Koko, Ron and Michael – two females and two males born as human and gorilla and living as one family. Their family is the embodiment of cross-species compassion, biosynergy, and union.

Penny Patterson and Ron Cohn adopted Koko and Michael as infants. Together they have developed common language and shared livelihood, communal biosynergy, and mutual commitment to maintain their interspecies family for life. Other people have tried to do the same with other apes: chimpanzees, orangutan, and bonobo have all been part of such experiments in interspecies living. Only the two humans and two gorillas at The Gorilla Foundation in Woodside, California have succeeded in maintaining a complete interspecies nuclear family that is designed to be together in communion so long as they all shall live.

Next year we intend to initiate a Blog entitled "*All the World's Children: Tales of Interspecies Communion*" and publish it on the Biosynergy.org website. This work will illuminate the indelible bonds formed by humans with other independently evolved animals, beginning with the tale of the Gorilla Foundation family. Profound connections of people who have opened their homes and hearts to wild horses, elephants, lions, porpoises, bears, eagles, hippos, tortoises, and wolves will complete the collection. The "*All the World's Children*" Blog will offer deep understanding of the challenges and profound discoveries that come when humans try to live in communal biosynergy with the other animals on earth.

With Love,

Anthony Rose and Gabriela Rose

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