

COMMENTS FOLLOWING
JOURNEY OF THE UNIVERSE STORY FILM

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1. So many important and inspirational insights and observations in this film that feels almost arbitrary to focus on any subset in particular. So, I will briefly reflect on a few important observations of the many regarding the evolution of the universe and humanity's tiny but vital part in it that resonated most with my own work.
2. Three observations particularly stood out for me:
 - a. First, the universe is as an intrinsically life-generating entity; life embedded in its very structure and inevitable from the start. The source of this creative life-generating process reflects the universe as not a thing, but an activity, a self-organizing process in constant motion.
 - b. Second, this self-energizing force is the source of creativity, the emergent patterns of this creativity reflecting the movement toward ever more complex structures. Life is the self-organizing of matter and energy in flux moving toward greater structural complexity. Human life and consciousness is the

inevitable consequence of this movement toward more complex structures.

- c. Finally, the earth is not, like the universe, simply a platform or background for life, including human existence, but rather an essential partner and participant in the emergence toward more complex evolutionary forms, including human existence and awareness.

3. So, let me relate some of this to my own work. In this work, I have particularly explored how human biology and culture reflects an inherent need to affiliate with nature – the nonhuman world – an evolutionary process we have called biophilia. Moreover, this inherent biophilic affinity for nature is the source of our species physical, emotional, intellectual, moral and spiritual health, fitness and wellbeing. This affinity for nature, in other words, is the ultimate source of our remarkable capacity to extract material comfort and security, to master and control the world around us, to know and understand, to bond with others and to love, to recognize beauty and aspire after an ideal, to symbolize and to communicate, ultimately, to aspire after a just and spiritually fulfilling existence.

4. As the film asserts, these biophilic patterns of inherent human affinity for nature reflect how we are literally of and

dependent on the quality of our connections to the earth and to the universe in which we evolved and continue to depend for not just survival, but as importantly our flourishing and fulfillment.

5. Still, like much of what makes us human, biophilia is a weak biological tendency highly conditioned and shaped by conscious choice. This conscious free will reflects our enormous capacity for individual and cultural creativity and construction, but it is a two-edged sword, carrying with it the potential for making poor choices, for compromising our positive connection with creation, to opt for self-defeating and destructive paths. As the film intimates at its conclusion, the great challenge of our time is whether or not we will use our freedom, our consciousness, to enhance life – to be a whole-hearted participant in its flourishing – or through a narrow misguided understanding of short-term advantage think we can master nature as merely inert and inferior matter, an ultimately self-defeating delusion of transformation and transcendence of the nonhuman world.