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Reweaving the Story of the Forest:

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It's all a question of story. We are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story. We are in between stories. The old story, the account of how the world came to be and how we fit into it, is no longer effective. Yet we have not learned the new story. (Berry, 1988:123)

## **The Power of Story**

Stories, myths, worldviews - these are the ways by which we learn to see and act in the world. To the extent that we believe them, the stories we are told shape our sense of origin, history, and purpose; they give us ways to understand and value ourselves and the world around us; they provide “a context in which life [can] function in a meaningful manner” (Berry, 1988:123). Through these stories, the complexities of the world in which we live are 'framed' into a socially constructed sense of reality which contains selected parts of the whole. Consequently, the framework provided by these stories influences both what we see, and what we do not see.

Stories are human creations. As such, they reflect the assumptions, values, and beliefs, as well as the perceptions, imaginations, and sensibilities of the storytellers. In believing their stories, we too accept the assumptions, values and beliefs which shape their stories. In believing their stories we accept both their definition of the world, and their prescription for what constitutes proper behaviour in the world. In the telling, these stories can be used to reassure or frighten, to persuade or dissuade, to affirm or negate, to empower or to disempower. There is, therefore, great power in storytelling. As we examine old and existing stories, and as we attempt to weave new stories, we need to pay attention not only to what the stories say (including the underlying values, assumptions and beliefs), but to who the storytellers are, and how the stories are told.

## **The Dominant Story of the Forest**

The dominant story of the Canadian forest is the story of wood fibre and money. It is the story which tells how the 'natural resources' of the forest have made a 'significant contribution' to the Canadian economy. In the words of Ray Smith, recently retired president and CEO of MacMillan Bloedel Ltd:

The forest industry is the largest net exporter in Canada. The balance of trade in forest products equals mining, energy, autos, agriculture and fishing combined. (Vancouver Sun, November 30, 1990)

The story of how this came to be begins with the arrival of the first Europeans on the eastern shores of the 'New World'. Lured by the promise of adventure and economic gain, and by "the desire to break loose from ancient ties and limits" (Mumford, 1970:4), these early Europeans discovered a land whose natural riches were seemingly inexhaustible.

Though the Western hemisphere was indeed inhabited, and many parts of it were artfully cultivated, so much of it was so sparsely occupied that the European thought of it as a virgin continent against whose wildness he pitted his manly strength (Mumford, 1970:8).

Seeing the forests more as an obstacle to survival than as a source of sustenance or wealth, these earlier settlers set about to clear the forest for their own use. Using the tools and equipment they had brought with them, they "cut a living space out of the forest" (Swift, 1983:31) and proceeded to settle on and farm the land. The value of the fallen trees was limited to the many uses that the settlers could put them to (houses, firewood, furniture, tools, etc.).

It was the Napoleonic wars that initiated large scale export demand for Canadian forest products - and for Canadian pine in particular. Cut off from their supplies in the Baltic, Britain turned to Canada as a source of ship timbers. Fortunes were made by operators who rushed to meet this demand by chopping away at the eastern forests. Initially timber was cut by small operators and part-time farmers, but as forests receded, the costs of maintaining distant crews and transporting the timber favoured "large, well-capitalized operating units that could take good advantage of economies of scale" (Swift, 1983:37). When export demand changed from rough timber for military use to sawn lumber for commercial markets in Britain and America, it was the larger companies that were able to finance the capitalization of the required sawmills.

This shift in the character and market orientation of the forest industry led to further concentration of control into more powerful industrial hands. Those who had been part of the small gangs of self-employed timbermakers from the farm now became wage labourers in an increasingly-centralized forest business. And the business became more fully integrated: The timber barons ran not only bush camps but also sawmills and plants producing shingles, lath and doors (Swift, 1983:37).

As demand shifted from military to commercial uses, the Crown, who regulated the allocation of land to agriculture and wood extraction,

...realized that the exploitation of the forest could bring in important revenues, so they started to issue licences to cut timber on specific “timber limits” or “timber berth”. People cutting wood on Crown land would have to pay a licence fee as well as a duty on the wood actually cut (Swift, 1983:40- 41).

Although export demands have continued to shift, and sawmills have been joined by pulp and paper mills, the overall weave of the dominant story of the Canadian forest was already in place by the early 1800’s. The key players in the story - the large businesses and investors, the Crown, and the paid employees were increasingly tied to the economic success of an expanding, integrated and centrally controlled forest industry operating in international markets. The dominant story of the forest, then, is primarily a story of export-led economic expansion facilitated wherever possible by government, large-scale extraction and processing of ‘economically valuable’ fibre, concentrated corporate control, receding forests, and cycles of ‘boom and bust’.

With every wave of expansion the edge of the forest has retreated toward northern and western frontiers, leaving behind empty land and devastated communities - the cost of ‘progress’. When the heavy capital investment of pulp and paper mills made it impossible to move plant operations to new sources of fibre, attempts were made to replace the receding forests with tree plantations - vast, orderly, genetically manipulated monocultures of ‘economically desirable trees. The introduction of ‘scientific management’ of the forest at the beginning of the 20th century was an acknowledgement that, contrary to original perceptions, the forest was not an infinite resource. It was also an assertion that ‘science’, technology and human ingenuity could solve the problem of scarcity. Professionally-trained foresters “who knew the principles of managing the forests for the perpetual production of wood” (Swift, 1983:52) were hired by government and industry to ensure long- term economic prosperity.

If the forests could be treated like a factory, with maximum control being exerted by efficient, scientifically-trained technicians, the waste and chaos of the past could give way to a bright future in which growth would never be impeded by shortages of supply. (Swift, 1983:53).

The centralized, industrial system of forest management was directed not only at ensuring a future supply of fibre, but at devising means to extract this fibre in the most cost-efficient manner possible.

This, then, is also the story of men, might and machines. It is the story of a management system that utilizes the least costly means to ensure a steady supply of cheap wood. Up to the 1950’s this meant that “the extraction of wood from the forest depended largely on muscle power, both human and animal” (Swift, 1983:125). But as the supply of labour declined and men moved

to cities and less dangerous work, union gains and a 'sellers market' increased the price of labour and forced industry to consider technological innovations. Beginning with the introduction of the chain saw in the 1950's, these technological changes increased productivity dramatically - replacing muscle power with machine power, and starting a chain of technological innovations for cutting, hauling, transporting and processing increasing volumes of fibre to feed an industry intent on ever-expanding growth.

As far as management was concerned, logging mechanization gave companies added flexibility in their attempts to bring down wood costs and boost labour productivity (Swift, 1983:134).

In an increasingly competitive global market, rapid technological change has enabled increasingly large multinational corporations to rationalize their operations - replacing men with machines, reorganizing and reorienting inefficient operations, and closing down those plants which no longer have sufficient cheap sources of fibre nearby.

### **The Telling of the Dominant Story**

The dominant story of the Canadian forest is the story of how the vast forests 'discovered' by the first settlers have come to provide great 'economic return' as a source of wood fibre for export. The successful sale of this fibre has provided huge profits for large corporations, revenues for governments, and good-paying jobs for workers. Working within their own centralized, bureaucratic organizations, the three major components of the 'forest industry' - corporations, government and labour - have protected their own interests while weaving together a dominant story of 'scientific management', government legislation, negotiation, and economic efficiency.

Missing from this story are the voices of the indigenous peoples displaced from the forests they had lived in for thousands of years; single-industry resource communities left devastated by corporate decisions to close down local operations and move on to more 'profitable' ventures and new sources of fibre; small operators squeezed out by competition and land tenure systems favouring large corporations; unemployed workers displaced by increasing mechanization; women living in resource towns organized around "a large male labour force and...a strong family support" (Wall, 1987:14) where they are expected to provide care and nurturing in the face of high rates of family violence, alcoholism and suicides, and with few support systems or economic opportunities for themselves (Eco-Vision, 1988:1-2); men who deny the nurturing side of themselves in living up to the male stereotype of 'a real man' which dominates single industry towns; children who are forced to uproot themselves from their homes in order to pursue education and economic opportunities; and the forest which continues

to dwindle in size and vitality as corporations persist in their pursuit of cheap wood fibre and profits.

The tellers of the dominant story of the forest are the corporate elite, government and labour bureaucrats, 'scientific' managers, and 'professional' experts of all kinds. With few exceptions these are the voices of white, middle class men. They tell us their story as they would have us believe it. In these stories we are assured that we can rely on their 'expert' knowledge and skills to 'manage' the forests and to keep things under control. They do, after all, have our best interests at heart. When their motives and abilities are challenged they use logic of their own story to assure us that there are no alternatives. The decisions they make are (of course) the best decisions possible - given the need for 'economic efficiency' - given the desirability of 'continued growth' -given the results of 'careful scientific study' -in the face of 'global competitiveness' - given the dependence of the economy on the success of the 'forest industry'. Witness the rationalization that Ray Smith of MacMillan Bloedel Ltd. gives for his company's clearcutting practices on Vancouver Island -

Clearcutting is the only feasible practice on most of Vancouver Island - and the entire coast for that matter. ...a ban on clearcutting would shut down the industry almost as certainly as a ban on old growth harvesting. ...That would decimate the economy of BC, and I'm not talking only about our direct industry-based communities. It would put a lot of people in this room out of work - whatever business you happen to be in. (Vancouver Sun, November 30, 1990)

These storytellers play on the fears of those entangled in and dependent on the success of their story, and vulnerable to the possibility that this story will fail. Challenges to this story are dismissed as emotional, extreme, irrational, unreasonable, biased, unscientific, unprofessional, selfish. But challenges persist in the face of mounting evidence that this story is dysfunctional.

## **Unravelling the Dominant Story of the Forest**

The strongest challenges to the dominant story of the forest are coming from those concerned about the global scale of ecological destruction that has resulted from the forms of economic activity prevalent within this story. Alarming rates of deforestation are part of this pattern. As the Worldwatch Institute points out:

-Over the centuries, a combination of land clearing for crop production, commercial timber harvesting, cattle ranching, and fuelwood gathering has shrunk the earth's forests to...a third less than existed

in pre-agricultural times. ...With the inexorable march of deforestation, the ecological integrity of many areas is disintegrating - causing severe soil loss, aggravating droughts and floods, disrupting water supplies, and reducing land productivity. ...In addition, trees and soils play a crucial role in the global cycling of carbon, the importance of which has been magnified by the emergence of carbon dioxide -induced climate change as arguably the most threatening environmental problem of modern times.(Postel & Heise, 1988:83)

The health of the remaining forests, and the success of reforestation efforts are threatened by the effects of accelerating industrialization and urbanization - air pollution, acid rain, contamination of soil and water, ozone depletion, and global warming. Furthermore, the actual forestry practices used in 'scientific' management of fibre - clearcut systems, heavy machinery, chemical sprays, logging roads, excessive rates of extraction, etc. - contribute to the destruction of both local ecosystems and the biosphere. The story of the forest, then, is intimately connected to, and needs to be understood within the context of a much larger story.

This larger story is rooted in historical events which gave rise to the domination of Western industrial society with its set of stories and myths. The dominant Western 'scientific' worldview, of which the dominant story of the forest is part, did not always exist. As Morris Berman points out, for more than 99humans saw the world as an enchanted place and themselves as integrally participating in it.

The view of nature which predominated in the West down to the eve of the Scientific Revolution was that of an enchanted world. Rocks, trees, rivers, and clouds were all seen as wondrous, alive, and human beings felt at home in this environment. The cosmos, in short, was a place of belonging. A member of this cosmos was not an alienated observer of it but a direct participant in its drama. (Berman, 1984:2)

Rooted in the historical development of the Scientific Revolution of the 15th and 17th centuries, the Western 'scientific' worldview challenged and displaced holistic worldviews and the sense of 'participating consciousness'. It offered instead a mechanistic understanding of reality.

The mechanical structure of reality (1) is made up of atomic parts, (2) consists of discrete information bits extracted from the world, (3) is assumed to operate according to laws and rules, (4) is based on context -free abstractions from the changing complex world of appearance, and (5) is defined so as to give us maximum capability for manipulation and control over nature...

The mechanical framework with its associated values of power and control sanctioned the management of both nature and society. (Merchant, 1980:235)

Within this mechanical framework nature was reduced from a living, active force to a collection of dead, inert matter available to meet the needs and wishes of humankind.

This scientific worldview did not develop within a social and economic vacuum.

The collapse of a feudal economy, the emergence of capitalism on a broad scale, and the profound alteration in social relations that accompanied these changes provided the context of the Scientific Revolution in Western Europe. (Berman, 1984:37)

The emergence of the 'scientific' worldview, then, was intricately interwoven with the emergence of an economic model based on growth, accumulation of capital, and competitive self-interest. The development of 'modern science' within the context of capitalism and industrialization provided the tools and technologies for the exploitation and domination of nature, other men, women, and cultures by an emerging European, male elite. The hierarchical, dualistic forms of thinking which characterize the Western worldview provided the rationalization for doing so.

A logic of domination i.e., a value-hierarchical way of thinking...explains, justifies, and maintains the subordination of an "inferior" group by a "superior" group on the grounds of the (alleged) inferiority or superiority of the respective group. (Warren, 1987:6)

This 'logic of domination' not only justifies real exploitation, inequality and domination; but it marginalizes and silences the voice of the 'other'. Other cultures, other ways of knowing, other ways of 'being' are devalued and denied.

When the early European settlers arrived in the 'New World' they brought with them this 'scientific' worldview, the beginnings of an economic model of industrial capitalism, the accompanying 'logic of domination', and the tools and technologies that enabled them to conquer and subdue both the vast wilderness and the indigenous cultures who lived there. "For most Europeans...there was no question of living in and from the forest." (Swift, 1983:30) The dominant story of the forest in Canada begins here with the disruption of a way of life that had evolved within the context of the forest, and the imposition of what many now claim to be an aberration called 'modernity'.

The 'scientific' worldview is reflected in how the story of the forest has reduced the complex interrelationships of the forest ecosystems to a focus on the



'scientific management' of particular species of trees as sources of fibre. The economics of industrial capitalism are reflected in the centralized management of an industry designed to extract economically valuable fibre in the most economically efficient manner in order to ensure maximum profitability and growth for the powerful few who control the dominant corporations. The 'logic of domination' is reflected in the marginalization of all but the dominant voices in the decision-making processes which determine the future of the forests and the human communities that depend on them, and by the trivialization of concerns expressed by this marginalized majority. While this Western worldview, economic system and logic of domination serve the powerful, they are also embedded, to some degree, within all who live within the Western industrial world. They shape the way we see, the way we act, our institutions and organizations, our relationships, and our sense of 'self'.

## **Reweaving the Story of the Forest**

Unravelling the dominant story of the forest is not enough. We need a new story to guide us - a story which will help us to act in ways which are respectful to the Earth, our communities and ourselves - a story which reclaims the sense of relationship and holism lost within the dominant story. In constructing this new story it is a mistake to assume that we start with nothing. Many of the strands of this story are already present. Weaving this new story will be a process of both recovery (of what we already know), and discovery (of what we still need to know). This story is 'becoming', but it is still incomplete - there are confusions, disagreements, inconsistencies, and traces of the dominant story that still need to be sorted through. In weaving this story, then, let's leave room for questions and dialogue, and not be in a hurry to declare the weaving finished. Let's leave room to learn from each other and collectively search for the unfinished strands.

The threads of this 'new' story do not rest with those who have a vested interest in maintaining the dominant story, but with those voices which have been silenced and excluded from its construction - voices which presently exist in the 'repressed shadows of industrial civilization'.

Holistic society is thus coming upon us from a variety of sources that cut across the traditional left-right political axis. Feminism, ecology, ethnicity, and transcendentalism (religious renewal), which ostensibly have nothing in common politically, may be converging toward a common goal. These holistic movements...by and large...represent the repressed "shadows" of industrial civilization: the feminine, the wilderness, the child, the body, the creative mind and heart, the occult, and the peoples of the nonurban, regional peripheries of Europe and North America. ...Their goal is the recovery of our bodies, our health, our sexuality, our natural environment, our archaic tra-

ditions, our unconscious mind, our rootedness in the land, our sense of community and connectedness to one another. What they advocate is not merely a program of “no growth” or industrial slowdown, but the direct attempt to get back from the past what we lost during the last four centuries; to go backward in order to go forward. In a word, they represent the attempt to recover our future. (Berman, 1989:282)

The reweaving of the story of the forest is part of this larger project of recovery.

The first strand of this new weave is the one which was initially discarded by the early European settlers - the story of the forest as understood by the original peoples.

The forests gave to Indian peoples...their basic means of survival, providing everything from food and shelter to clothing and tools. And it had another important dimension in native life, enriching the cultural and spiritual lives of people who conceived of themselves as being at one with nature and the forests. (Swift, 1983:29)

This is not the story of forests as a source of fibre, but of forests as 'home' - as the source of sustenance and life. Although historically disrupted, the traditional knowledge of First Nations people has not disappeared entirely - it has continued to evolve within the larger context of Canadian society. To the extent that they have retained their land- based cultures, their ways of 'being' and 'knowing' are based on an intimate understanding of their own 'place', and dependent on continued access to their traditional lands. The influence of Native cultures is evident in Herb Hammond's concept of 'wholistic forest use'.

Wholistic forest use involves a new way of thinking. People must see themselves as part of the forest. ...Native cultures have provided me with the following priorities, which I have transferred to my concepts of wholistic forest use:

Priority One: Love the forest. Appreciate the forest. Give thanks to the forest that sustains us.

Priority Two: Protect the forest and use it wisely for vital human needs.

Priority Three: Trade or barter the excess of forest goods which are not required for needs, thereby practicing sustainable economics (Hammond, 1989:100).

In weaving the story of First Nations peoples into the fabric, we acknowledge both respect for what they know and a responsibility to support their efforts to protect traditional lands threatened by actors in the dominant story.

Another obvious strand for our story is the contribution to our understanding of the complex forest ecosystems provided by ecologists and foresters committed to challenging the mechanistic approach to the forest. Through their work we are learning to see the forests not as a collection of individual trees, but as a complex set of relationships and processes “characterized by a predominance of trees” (Maser, 1990b:76) but home to biologically diverse life forms. Many of these hidden processes threaten the health of the forest. “Each tree, each stand of trees, each forest is only a mirror reflection of the soil’s ability to grow that tree, stand, or forest once “ (Maser, 1990a:58). Activities which disrupt or destroy these hidden processes threaten the health of the forest. In this story of the forest we acknowledge that our understanding of complex processes is imperfect. With humility and care we “accept Nature as our teacher” (Maser, 1990a:179) and commit ourselves to finding ways to live within, and remove products from the forest while sustaining its integrity.

At this point we weave in the stories of those who are already acting in ways which are consistent with this new story of the forest. These stories are essential for they are proof that it is possible to live respectfully and carefully within the forest - proof that there are alternatives to the dominant story. The practices of Merv Wilkinson, for example, are ample proof that “with care and understanding, a forest is harmonious and productive” (Loomis, 1990:2). In Wilkinson’s own words -

-My 136 acre tree farm, “Wildwood”...on Vancouver Island, is a sustained- yield, selectively logged tract of timber that has been producing forest products since 1945, and will continue to do so indefinitely. Here, there is still a forest and it is growing faster than I log it. I make a good living without destroying the forest. I work with nature. I harvest trees periodically for specialized products and on a regular basis for lumber, enjoying the forest, and its tranquillity where all the living organisms are present and healthy. (Wilkinson in Loomis, 1990:5)

Wilkinson lives in the forest, not in a distant place. His intrusions into the forest (roads, tools, techniques, etc.) are careful and appropriate ones, based on intimate knowledge of both the possibilities and the sensitivities of the forest, and on a commitment to maintain its integrity. As he points out - “In forestry, the learning never stops” (in Loomis, 1990:10). Wilkinson’s practices are not only ecologically responsible, but economically promising. His small forest farm has provided him with one third of his income over the past 51 years, for an investment of about 20% of his time. He estimates that -

If I had five or six hundred acres, the Wildwood type of management would keep two people fully employed, plus a crew and trucker at falling time. The full value use of wood at the mills would increase the employment of many wood workers in British Columbia. (Wilkinson in Loomis, 1990:36)

In the Alberni-Clayoquot region, for example, MacMillan Bloedel controls about 376,000 hectares of prime productive forest land through TFL 44, and employs 3,952 people in logging, one pulp mill, two sawmills, and a plywood mill. (Swann, 1990:1) If we were to apply Wilkinson's practices to the 376,000 hectares of TFL 44, the forests alone would keep 3,096 to 3,716 people fully employed, plus supply work to numerous crews and truckers at falling time! In addition, the sustainability of the forest practices would contribute to the sustainability of the communities living there.

Unlike the dominant story which ignores everything except fibre and money, the community is an essential strand of the 'new' story of the forest. In our story, commitment to the integrity of the forest translates to a commitment to the well-being of the community. This is a commitment to the well-being of all who live there - men, women, children, and all living beings of the forest. Indispensable to the weaving of this strand is the inclusion of the voice of women in shaping the meaning of 'well-being', work, and economics; and the rejection of all relations of domination found within the dominant story. Activities which are valued within the community are those which ensure or enhance the quality of our lives within the limits and possibilities of the region. These nurturing activities are the 'work' of the economy.

The aim of all work and human endeavour is not a never-ending expansion of wealth and commodities, but human happiness...or the production of life itself. (Mies, 1986:212)

The 'production of life' ranges from the nurturing work of 'wholistic forest use' to the care of children, the sick, the elderly. It is work which all community members can share. Using technologies which enable their participation, women, as well as men, participate in the activities of the forest. Men, as well as women, participate in the work of supporting, nurturing and caring for families, friends and community. And both men and women actively participate in making decisions that affect their community and region.

These decisions give "priority to the protection of natural factors, recognizing that healthy ecosystems are the basis for healthy economies and societies". (Hammond, 1989:101). Because the economy is not focused solely on the extraction of cheap fibre, healthy forests encourage diversification.

Other forest activities possible with wholistic forest use such as tourism, service businesses, water production, trapping, and fish and

wildlife harvesting, result in more total sustainable employment opportunities. (Hammond, 1989:101)

A sustainable economy is possible because forest practices are sustainable, work is nurturing and regenerating rather than destructive, forest use is community-controlled, products of the forest are directed first towards meeting local and bioregional needs, and revenues generated remain within the communities and region. A sustainable economy nurtures both the land and those who live there. It provides a sense of place and permanence - the opportunity to become rooted and connected to the land that sustains us.

The final strand that I will weave into this story (although others no doubt exist) is the recovery of our biological self and the recovery of our sense of connection to and participation in the processes of the Earth. As biological beings we have a place in the all-encompassing life process - a process of life, death and recycling. We are born, we live, we die; and our bodies function in intricate ways to see us through. We are born sensual and sensitive - with the capacity to feel, think, intuit, to 'know' with our whole self. In the process of being socialized into the dominant Western story this capacity for 'wholeness' is split - the detached intellectual self (the mind) comes to dominate and repress the emotional, sensual and participating self (the body). (Berman, 1989:112-13) Fortunately our minds do not rule us completely. We can begin to reclaim our 'whole' self by paying attention to the deep-seated feelings of uneasiness, distress, and unhappiness that many of us feel as we go about our daily lives. As John Livingston says, this malaise illustrates "the frustration of a fundamental biological (and thus human) drive toward wholeness, toward belonging". (Livingston, 1981:117) We can also pay attention to the feelings of connection, joy, peacefulness and humility that we experience in 'Nature'. The continued capacity to 'know' with our 'whole self' is illustrated by the responses of Harrowsmith readers who participated in a 1988 readers' survey on the health of Canada's trees.

The forest is an extension of my life. Walking through the woods each day is like a dose of serenity. I see it dying around me and can't help wondering what will happen when it all dies.

Forest is a sanctuary for learning and meditation.

I feel deeply moved and at home in the forest. Without trees, something within me dies. They are crying for help. (Excerpts from Havas, 1989:56-61)

The storytellers of the dominant story of the forest will discount this knowledge for it lacks rigorous 'scientific' proof. But if we are to weave a new story we need to pay attention to, and affirm, the ways in which we can still sense the distress

of the forest - the ways in which we notice the absence of the forests from our towns and cities. In doing so, we begin the long process of regaining our bodies and of engaging our 'whole' self in the task of reclaiming and regenerating the forests, and in recovering both life and our future.

### **How will we tell this story?**

The telling of the 'new' story of the forest is more than anything, a process of listening. To weave this story from the voices of a few would be to repeat the pattern of exclusion found within the dominant story. In the words of Joanna Macy –

If it is true, as I have become convinced, that everyone at some level feels distress over the world's future, then we all have a lot to say to each other - once we break through the fears and taboos that keep us silent. (Macy, 1983:95)

Rather than try to impose our story on others, we need to find ways to tell our story and listen to those of others. It is in the collective weaving of these individual stories that we will have a story that makes holistic 'sense'. The telling of this 'new' story is not directed at the storytellers of the dominant story - although they are invited to listen if they so choose. As a process of recovery, it is directed at what Berman calls the 'repressed shadows of industrialization'. By touching sides of us that have been buried within the dominant story, we can begin to break out of the isolated prisons in which we live. The telling of this story, then, is a process of connection with holistic voices that have been marginalized by the dominant story; a process of affirmation of what we already know about the 'new' story; a process of acknowledgement and support for those who are already moving towards the 'new' story; a process of uncovering the ways in which we all participate in the dominant story and the ways in which we can support each other as we move away from that story. In telling this story, and in acting in ways which are consistent with this story, we reclaim our own power - we affirm our capacity to be active agents of change, and active participants in the web of relations within which we live. And of course, those who begin to doubt the truth of the dominant story are welcome to join us.

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