

HUMAN EVOLUTION, BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL DOMAINS

Michael Charles Tobias
Jane Gray Morrison



TERMINAL PHILOSOPHY SYNDROME

Ecology and the Imponderable

NOVA

Review of the Terminal Philosophy Syndrome – Ecology and the Imponderable

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By Michael S. Bostick

Terminal Philosophy Syndrome (TPS) is the latest piece of masterwork in the extensive literature of Michael Charles Tobias and Jane Gray Morrison's deep ecological universe. It is the culmination of the Authors' timely, methodological, visionary, radically compassionate and highly attuned thinking. Their rarified yet informed treatise explores the sobering, if terminal nexus between ecological conscience and our historical incapacity as a species to meaningfully reconfigure the nature of who we are, who we've become and perhaps who we are destined be remain - uncontrollable biodiversity and earth destroyers.



TPS refers to a seeming inherent, perhaps psychotic penchant of human beings to be collectively incapable of imagining and manifesting their future beyond the biological boundaries of a crude survival instinct or what voracious human attention now demands. Philosophy and ethics, as they have thus far sought to provide perspective, insight, clairvoyance and a roadmap for a future course, have, despite many indigenous attempts, fallen gravely short. The forces of overpopulation, resource extraction, autocracy, pollution and failing governance make it clear that our species has superseded its capacity to engender compassion and restraint. By virtue of the immense destruction we've wrought upon the earth and its unsuspecting inhabitants, with the baked-in future mass extinction and climate chaos, the Authors' allege that *Homo sapiens* may have proven that consciousness itself, as thus far collectively achieved, appears insufficient to steer the human presence on earth beyond a terminus of limited understanding, and avoid the full extent of our suicidal plight. This, to say the least, constitutes a syndrome.

The Authors' elaborate on this phenomenon, with head-spinning breadth and a remarkable range of multidisciplinary examples, as to how the human experiment has gone so evolutionarily and predictably awry. We are complacent as a species and our forward movements on a macro population level remain deleteriously inert in the wake of the damage we have unconsciously forced.

For example, one of their primary tenets establishes extensively the implications of ignoring "the Others," the vast assemblage of species on earth whom we know hardly little about but, nevertheless kill, eat, destroy their habitat and deny their right to co-existence in vast, incalculable numbers. Further, our faltering disinterest to appreciate and comprehend their languages and modes of perception, all adds to a cumulative, immeasurable deprivation. That we fail to recognize their presence as potential ambassadors to our future state of *biosemiotic* homeostasis, a place wherein our capacity to communicate and receive essential survival awareness from Those, whose own consciousness inhabits realms of ecological thought and philosophy, represents a irreversibly lost opportunity for humanity. A crisis our minds, only partially tuned by evolution, have yet to conceive. Their *immanence*, the authors'

allude, potentially holds the key beyond the terminus, both philosophically and biologically. The Authors' write:

“If all human evolution appears presented by problems that must be solved, the obvious first question for philosophy is this: Is all of Nature equally so confronted? Or are the proposed solutions to each specific test or challenge inherently resolved for the Others by dint of their soupçon of Being and connectedness?”

TPS is a serious, probing, utterly erudite, scintillating, poignant and expansive vision of a brilliant duo conveying ideas and life-long convictions from the deepest well of reflection and forethought. Their



approach is almost painfully sensitive at times, refreshingly direct at other times. One can't help but obtain a feeling that their methodology is not only meant to question one's tired presuppositions, but clearly intended to explode latent and long atrophied notions of how to conceive the paradigmatic core dynamics of ecological Possibility. All those potential effects of transforming our thirst for domination and control into wonder and deep philosophical sustenance.

This profound work, *Terminal Philosophy Syndrome: Ecology and the Imponderable*, seeks to break apart the tendency towards resignation, insufficient incremental change, and habituated depression that appears to be so rife within the earnest eco-philosophical community. Tobias and Morrison challenge these largely failed domains of future prognosis and open the reader to a new way of thinking, beyond the terminus of our faded hopes and grief in this, the diminishing age of the Anthropocene.

Michael S. Bostick is an environmental professional, artist and freelance writer.



About Michael Charles Tobias

President and CEO of the Dancing Star Foundation, global ecologist, anthropologist, historian, explorer, author, and filmmaker. Tobias obtained his Ph.D. in the Department of History of Consciousness from the University of California-Santa Cruz. He was an Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies & Adjunct Assistant Professor of English and the Humanities at Dartmouth College. Tobias is the author of more than 55 books (both fiction and non-fiction). He has written, directed, produced, executive produced, or co-executive produced well over 100 films – TV series, documentaries and dramas, most pertaining to environmental, cultural, social, or scientific issues.

About Jane Gray Morrison

Executive Vice President of the Dancing Star Foundation, Morrison is an author, filmmaker, and ecologist whose work has taken her to dozens of countries. As a filmmaker, Ms. Morrison has produced numerous films for such networks as Discovery, PBS, and Turner Broadcasting -for which she served as Senior Producer for "Voice of the Planet," a 10-hour dramatic series based upon the history of life on Earth. Among Ms. Morrison's other films are a feature film documentary trilogy, "Mad Cowboy," "No Vacancy" and "Hotspots," as well as such projects as the short film "Yasuní – A Meditation on Life" for the Rio+20 Summit. Her many books include Sanctuary: Global Oases of Innocence, The Metaphysics of Protection, Bhutan: Conservation and Environmental Protection in the Himalayas, God's Country: The New Zealand Factor, and The Hypothetical Species: Variables of Human Evolution.